

**I. Greetings from the Elder to the Beloved Gaius. v. 1-4****A. Introduction to III John. v. 1**

1. This letter is written from John to Gaius via Demetrius. v. 1 Ro. 16:23 I Co. 1:14
2. III John has much in common with II John.
3. III John addresses a very volatile situation in the early church.
4. III John applies to us today.

**B. John prays that Gaius may prosper physically and spiritually. v. 2  
How would John's prayer impact your health?****C. John rejoices that Gaius is walking in truth. v. 3-4**

1. The brethren (probably the traveling missionaries) have brought John a good report that Gaius is walking in truth.
2. John sets a good example to other leaders (husbands, parents, elders, teachers) by commending Gaius' faithfulness. Gal. 6:9
3. Godly offspring (both physical and spiritual) are the source of great joy. II Cor. 11:23-28 I Th. 2:11 3:1-10

**II. Be like Gaius who exemplifies loving hospitality. v. 5-8****A. Gaius welcomed the traveling missionaries. v. 5-6a**

1. Who were these *strangers*? v. 5b
2. They are in sharp contrast to the false missionaries in II John 1:7f
3. Gaius performed a faithful work. v. 5a
4. Gaius expressed his love for the brethren. v. 6a I Pet. 4:9 II John 1:5-6
5. Hospitality is a test of faith and love. *Could John commend you?*

**B. What does it mean to send such brothers away in a manner worthy of God? v. 6b  
Acts 15:3 20:38 21:5 Ro. 15:24 I Cor. 16:6,11 II Cor. 1:16 Titus 3:13**

1. Give them help (supplies, food, money, even companions) for their journey.
2. John is probably thinking of Jesus' teaching about how we should welcome His emissaries. Jo. 13:20 Mt. 10:9-10,40-42 25:31-46 Heb. 13:2 Gal. 4:14-15

**C. What kinds of people should we support? v. 7-8**

1. They have gone out for the sake of the *Name* (of Jesus Christ). I Jo. 2:12 3:23 II Jo. 1:7 Acts 15:40 4:12 5:41 9:16 15:26
2. They who don't seek money from those to whom they minister. I Cor. 9:14-18 II Cor. 2:17 I Th. 2:5-9
3. Such people deserve our help. v. 8a I Ti. 5:18
4. By supporting such men you become partners with them and with the truth. v. 8b

**III. Beware of those who, like Diotrephes, abuse their spiritual authority. v. 9-10****A. Who is this guy?**

1. Apparently, he is a church leader.
2. Apparently, he is *not* a false teacher. II John 1:7f Phil. 1:15-18 3:1f
3. He refuses to recognize apostolic authority. v. 9a, 10b II Th. 3:4f
4. He refuses to welcome visiting missionary teachers. v. 10b
5. He unjustly and unilaterally excommunicates those who do not submit to his abusive leadership. v. 10c John 9:22,34

- B. Spiritual abusers have wrought destruction upon the church throughout her history.**
1. Abusers seek the preeminence which belongs to Christ alone. Mark 12:38-40  
John 3:25-30 I Pe. 5:3 Col. 1:18
  2. Abusers do not submit to apostolic authority (as contained in Scripture).
  3. Abusers reject and slander true men of God.
  4. Abusers act as if the flock belongs to them. Acts 20:28 Ezek. 34
  5. Abusers overstep their authority.
  6. Not all abusive leaders are “Senior Pastors.”
- C. How can we protect God’s flock against spiritual abuse?**
1. Modern evangelicalism encourages church leaders to be ambitious like Diotrephes.
  2. The church needs a plurality of biblically qualified Elders who keep one another accountable. Acts 14:23 I Tim. 3:1f Titus 1:6f
  3. Church leaders are undershepherds and servants. Mt. 10:42-45 Acts 20:28 I Pe. 5:3
  4. The Elders are accountable, under Scripture, to the membership for their actions.
  5. If you find yourself under abusive leadership, seek outside godly counsel, and if necessary, leave.
  6. Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as the Preeminent One, the Head of the Church. I Pet. 5:4 Col. 1:18 John 3:30
- D. There is a proper use of spiritual authority. I Co. 5:17f II Th. 3: Heb. 13:17 Mt. 18:15f**
1. John will exercise his apostolic authority by dealing with Diotrephes.
  2. The Elders should protect the moral and spiritual purity of the church. Acts 20:29f
  3. Abusive Elders who act like Diotrephes must be removed. I Tim. 5:17

#### IV. Conclusion. v. 11-14

- A. Imitate those who do good. v. 11**
1. Be like Gaius, not Diotrephes.
  2. Your actions indicate your true relationship to God. v. 11b I Jo. 2:29 3:10
- B. Receive true servants of God, like Demetrius. v. 12**
- C. Final greetings. v. 13-14**

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why did John write this epistle?
2. What does verse 2 teach us about how we should pray for one another?
3. What do we know about Gaius?
4. Who were the “strangers” Gaius welcomed?
5. Why was it right that he helped them?
6. To whom should we offer aid?
7. Who is Diotrephes?
8. How does Diotrephes exemplify those who abuse spiritual authority?
9. How can we protect the church against spiritual abusers?
10. How does John exemplify the proper use of spiritual authority?