

Adult Bible Study Class 5/16/10

Session 174

The teachings of the Epistles (cont'd)

20. 3 John

a. Read 3 John, chapter 1.

v 5,6 Growing in godliness: Showing hospitality to traveling teachers and ministers of the gospel is part of godly living. Welcome them into your home and provide what they need while they are with you. Then, send them on their way with a gift. By honoring them, you are honoring the Lord. (see Matt. 10:20)

v 6 Gaius is to treat the itinerant preachers "on a manner worthy of God". As His messengers, they represent God and should receive the generosity befitting their sacred calling.

v 7,8 Cultivating dynamic devotion: Show love and devotion for God through practical expression of love. Supporting those sent out in ministry is an excellent way to express your devotion to God. As you support those sent out from the body of Christ, you too share in the fruit of their labor, becoming partners in the gospel. Your support is as vital as their going.

v 7,8 John gives three reasons for supporting the missionaries; 1) they are serving Christ; 2) to avoid all suspicion of unworthy motives in the ministry, they have refused remuneration from those to whom they ministered; 3) Those who support missionaries share in their work of the gospel.

v 9 The letter to which John refers has been lost, probably destroyed by Diotrephes.

v 10 whereas in 2 John itinerant heretics were disturbing the faith of Christians, in this Epistle genuine teachers of truth are making a circuit of the churches. In the previous letter John forbade hospitality toward the false teachers; here he encourages hospitality. However, Diotrephes a domineering person in one of the churches, opposed the authority of John. In addition, he refused hospitality to the traveling missionaries and prohibited others from entertaining them, excommunicating them when they did. John writes to encourage Gaius in his generosity and to rebuke Diotrephes for his uncharitable conduct.

v 12 In fulfilling his purpose, John describes these personalities. The first is Gaius, who has demonstrated his Christian faith by his generous hospitality, even to strangers. The second is Diotrephes, whose selfish

pride was disrupting the harmony of the fellowship. The third is Demetrius, whose life exemplified Christian fidelity and was worthy of imitation. These three men bear positives and negative witness to peoper relationships among Christian brethren. v 14 "Shortly" suggests an urgency to see Gaius, perhaps to discuss the situation involving Diotrephes.

Please read Psalm 53

Memory verse: Col. 3:6 (v5)

God bless you

Ron