

# SPRING QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

## THEME: THE PRESENCE, POWER AND PROPERTIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### UNIT III – HIS PROPERTIES

## “THREE COMMON CHARACTERS IN A LOCAL CHURCH”

Sunday School Lesson X – May 3, 2015  
Rev. Frank A. Davis, III, Pastor-Teacher



Lesson Text: III John 1-14

Required Reading: III John 1-14

Motto Text: III John 7-8 (NLT), *“For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.”*

Reliable Resources: Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Precepts for Living (UMI); Word-Search 10 Electronic Library System; Barnes Notes on the New Testament MacArthur Study Bible; Spiritual Warfare by Dr. David Jeremiah; The Outline Bible by H. L. Willmington;

### Introduction

Many of today’s evangelists and some missionaries carry the Gospel message in far different ways than the ancient apostles and mission workers of old. Paul wrote of the journeys he encountered in his journal of II Corinthians 11:22-33. Note beloved, the difference in the ways most of us travel to do God’s work today. Hotels, amenities, honorariums and armor-bearers. Beloved, the journey of the ancients were many times life and death situations and ours today is a drop in the bucket with the ease and conveniences in which we travel and lodge.

John writes to the believers in II John not to entertain those who were aliens to the truth of Christ’s Gospel (vss. 10-11). But this week he dictates to those who are willing to entertain the itinerate missionaries of the truth, that God is well pleased with their gracious hospitality. In verse 5, John actually points out three examples that we might know how to entertain God’s traveling servants and bring honor or dishonor to the church’s reputation. There are three common characters that are in just about all of our local churches. The question is, “Which one are you?”

With the help of Dr. Warren Wiersbe, who spotlights Gaius, and Dr. H. L. Willmington, who gives us working names for Diotrephes and Demetrius, we will observe three common characters in our local church!

### Anticipated Power Points:

- Gaius, “the Encourager.” III John 1-8
- Diotrephes, “the Egotist.” III John 9-11
- Demetrius, “the Example.” III John 12
- Closing: III John 13-14

## LESSON OUTLINE

### “Three Common Characters in a Local Church”

#### **I. Gaius, “the Encourager.” III John 1-8**

##### **A. The elder’s prayer on his behalf. vss. 1-2**

John who again calls himself the elder, describes himself as a senior statesman for the Lord, one who had the respect of the church because of his age, apostleship, and agapé for the truth! John lifts up prayers of sweetest benediction upon a convert of his whose reputation preceded him. His name is Gaius who Wiersbe calls, “the Encourager.” John in verse 2 wishes the ultimate blessing upon Gaius “the Encourager” because his reputation preceded him. (Read verse 3).

Vs. 2 – John’s wish for Gaius was for all the best. It was a common benediction lifted upon the head of a traveler or one who is wished “the very best.” This is not a universal benediction that would render physical prosperity upon all Christians, but a personal benediction upon a servant who served God well by serving His saints! It is sure that Gaius had a great Christian heart that was expressed by his benevolent actions and loving lifestyle testified by many.

##### **B. The elder’s praise on his behalf. vss. 3-8**

1. Gaius was a faithful steward of the true doctrine as a convert of John. vss. 3-4

2. Gaius’ faithfulness was demonstrated in the lives of fellow saints.

a. He was faithful in his hospitality. vs. 5

b. He was faithful in his benevolence. vss. 6-8

(1). He assisted the traveling ministers to carry the Gospel. (Read Galatians 6:6-10).

(2). Because of Gaius’ encouragement, the itinerate ministers did not have to be undergirded by the unbelieving Gentiles who knew not the Christ. (Some Christians argue as to receive or not receive support from the unbeliever. Paraphrasing Dr. J. Vernon McGee: As the priest carried the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders, so should true believers carry the burden of the Gospel to a dying world. God’s message should be delivered by the clean hands of His people!) John summarizes this thought in verse 8 (NLT), “*So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.*”

#### **II. Diotrephes, “the Egotist.” III John 9-11**

Diotrephes was a dictator in the local church who had a great ego that was causing him to want to be preeminent, or the big boss! His desire to lead the congregation caused him to be an egotistical failure. Note that all of our churches have that one or ones who want to be the boss! Diotrephes was a self-promoting resident dictator. He did not respect scriptural authority...he was dangerous! According to Willmington:

“A. He attempted to occupy the leading place (1:9).

B. He refused to receive John the apostle (1:9).

C. He had slandered the apostles (1:10).

D. He had refused to entertain missionaries (1:10).

E. He attempted to excommunicate believers (1:10).

F. He was not of God (1:11).” I rest my case on him by the scripture! May God have mercy on his soul...please don’t follow him! John closes his case by spotlighting the person of Demetrius.

#### **III. Demetrius, “the Example.” III John 12**

John challenges the church to choose a good example, and points them to Demetrius, who was the exact opposite of Diotrephes. Demetrius, like the Apostle Paul, was a worthy example worth modeling as a true church member. (Read Phil. 3:17; I Cor. 11:1; Heb. 10:24). John declares in verse 10 that he would come and confront Diotrephes. We must stand on the truth for it will make us free!

#### **Closing – III John 13-14**

Verses 13 and 14 close like II John. The elder, Apostle John said, “*some things I cannot write in ink and paper*” (email, tweet, etc.) “*but I must see you face to face.*” Beloved, there are several characters in our local churches. Be sure we are followers of the truth! Truth makes everlasting friends and glorifies God.

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**TV Telecast: WHNO TV-Channel 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.**



**Looking Ahead:**

**May 10, 2015**

**I Corinthians 12:1-11**

**You are invited to attend Noon Bible Study every Wednesday as Pastor Davis teaches the lesson at Bibleway.**