



**Growth Group Questions**  
**January 21, 2024**  
**“Helping People Get Closer to Jesus”**

**Context**

A personal letter is rare in the New Testament. Philemon and 2 and 3 John are personal letters, but most letters in the New Testament are written to a congregation. 1 and 2 Timothy could be seen as personal letters, but they really are about how Timothy should pastor the church in Ephesus. 3 John is a letter from one friend to another friend that offers encouragement and hope to Gaius.

There are several men in the New Testament named Gaius, including two of the apostle Paul’s travelling companions. Most scholars believe this letter was not written to one of them, but there is nothing known about the actual recipient of this letter.

3 John is from “The Elder.” Many scholars believe the Elder is John, the disciple of Jesus and the author of the gospel of John and Revelation, along with 1, 2 and 3 John.

People are not certain where John was when he wrote the letter, nor is it clear where Gaius lived, but it does appear that Gaius held a leadership position in his church. It is also clear that John and Gaius were good friends. On numerous occasions in this letter John calls Gaius his “good friend” or more literally “beloved” friend.

In the early church believers opened their homes for traveling evangelists who would carry letters of introduction from their home churches. As these preachers returned home, they talked about how they had seen the love of Jesus in the actions of Gaius. His actions show that it is not just about preaching the faith, but also living out the faith. Gaius was willing to open his home and invite others to his table and show them what a gracious and generous hospitality was all about.

## Scripture:

### **3 John 1-8**

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

<sup>2</sup> Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. <sup>3</sup> It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. <sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup> They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. <sup>7</sup> It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup> We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

### **John 15:13-16**

<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

### **James 1:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup> because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:2**

<sup>2</sup> Do not be quick with your mouth,  
do not be hasty in your heart  
to utter anything before God.  
God is in heaven  
and you are on earth,  
so let your words be few.

### **2 Corinthians 5:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin<sup>[a]</sup> for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



## Questions:

1. In 3 John 4, the apostle John says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.” What does it mean to “walk in the truth”?
2. How does “walking in the truth” enable us to help others get closer to Jesus?
3. Pastor Paul referenced a book by Bill Hybels entitled *Just Walk Across the Room*, in which Hybels says we must learn to live in 3D if we are to help others get closer to Jesus. The first D is “Developing Friendships.” What does the Bible tell us about true friendship?
4. What have you found to be the key elements in developing new friendships?
5. Why do you think building a friendship based on trust is key to helping others get closer to Jesus?
6. The second D from *Just Walk Across the Room* is “Discovering Stories.” Why is it important to understand someone’s story if we want to help them get closer to Jesus?
7. What skills do we need to develop in order to truly discover another person’s story?
8. The third D from *Just Walk Across the Room* is “Discern Next Steps.” Think about the people in your life with whom you have developed friendships and listened to their stories. What potential next steps might you take to help them move closer to Jesus?
9. Why do you think it seems difficult at times to take those next steps?
10. 2 Corinthians 5:20 tells us we are Christ’s ambassadors. Why does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?

