**LIVING A LIFE THAT GIVES EVIDENCE WE BELONG TO GOD**

**3 John 1:1-15**

**THE BIG IDEA: As followers of Jesus, our lives should display God’s love, God’s Truth, Servanthood, and Generous Support for God’s work.**

**OUR LIVES SHOULD REFLECT THE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OF GOD CONSISTENTLY**

* *“The elder: To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Dear friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and are in good health, just as your whole life is going well. 3 For I was very glad when fellow believers came and testified to your fidelity to the truth—how you are walking in truth. 4 I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in truth.”* (3 John 1:1-4)
* **When you are walking with God faithfully your reputation will be evident that you are truly God’s child.**
* “What if I were to pray for you and ask God to bless you physically to the same degree you are healthy spiritually, and what if He answered my prayer? What would happen? Would you be fit, sick in bed, or nearly dead? Would we need to rush you to the emergency room and have you ushered into the ICU or CCU?”
* **Too often a parent’s joy is found in their children being successful in this world while neglecting their success in Christ.**
* *“For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?”* (Mark 8:36)
* **Walking in Truth is the key to living with joy for the parent and the child, whether spiritual or biological.**

**OUR LIVES SHOULD REFLECT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ FOR GOD’S WORK**

* *“Dear friend, you are acting faithfully in whatever you do for the brothers and sisters, especially when they are strangers. 6 They have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God, 7 since they set out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from pagans. 8 Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.”* (3 John 1:5-8)
* **Supporting the work of the Lord, both through serving and giving, shows that we are committed to fulfilling Jesus’ instructions in the Great Commission and the Greatest Commandments.**
* *“And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone…18 But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.”* (Philippians 4:15-18)
* **Not everyone can “go” BUT everyone can serve and support the ones that do.**

**OUR LIVES SHOULD \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ GODLY EXAMPLES RESULTING IN BEING A GODLY EXAMPLE**

* *“I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place among them, does not receive our authority. 10 This is why, if I come, I will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious words. And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome fellow believers, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the church. 11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. 12 Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.”* (3 John 1:9-12)
* **While some people strive to build their own platform, be a person who seeks to make Jesus the headline of all you do and all you are.**
* *“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”* (Galatians 2:20a)
* *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* (John 3:30)
* **Regardless of who tries to interfere with God’s work, or how people may slander you, stay faithful and be an example of righteousness in an unrighteous world.**
* *“Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—even the truth itself. And we also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.”* (3 John 1:12)
* **People are watching us, watching you, and the question is: Does your life overflow with evidence that you truly belong to Jesus?**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Ice Breaker:** What is your favorite food for Thanksgiving?

**Start Thinking:**

* + What do you learn about God from 3 John 1:1-15?
  + Which one of the 4 men in this letter do you most identify with? Why?
  + What is the major them of this letter? (Note: remember to look for repetition.)
  + What are some things that establish a godly reputation for Christians according to John?

**Digging Deeper:**

* + Why is your reputation as a Christian so important? How can a focus on your reputation actually lead to a negative result?
  + If God blessed you physically to the degree of your personal spiritual health, what condition would you be in? (This may be a tough question to be honest with, but being honest with ourselves is the pathway to spiritual growth.)
  + How are you doing at supporting God’s work through the local church in giving and serving?
  + Why is being physically present with other believers gathering as the Church so important today?
  + What is your big takeaway from this message?