



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School

Lesson 10 May 4, 2025

COWORKERS WITH THE
TRUTH

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



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COWORKERS WITH THE TRUTH



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

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SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

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SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

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SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

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- Bible Basis: 3 John
- Bible Truth: Hospitality is one way that Christians express their faith in Christ to others, making the faithful coworkers with the truth.
- Memory Verse: "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth". 3 John 8, KJV
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: LEARN the importance of hospitality as written in 3 John; TELL of experiences of hospitality and the reactions to it; and PRACTICE acts of hospitality.
- Background Scriptures: 3 John; 2 Timothy 2:14-19 – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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3 John, KJV

1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

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3 John, KJV

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

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3 John, KJV

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

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3 John, KJV

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Gaius' name could mean "lord" or "man of the earth." He was a Christian in Asia Minor who was highly commended by John. John speaks of him as "beloved." He also appreciates that Gaius is "walking in the truth" and "doing a faithful work." He was known for his hospitality "toward them that are brethren and strangers." Gaius has been identified by some scholars as the Gaius mentioned in the Apostolic Constitution and may have been ordained as the Bishop of Pergamum.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Diotrephes' name means "nourished by Jupiter." Diotrephes is mentioned by John as resisting John's authority. He also used his authority in the church to refuse hospitality to Christian workers. John writes that he is one who "loveth to have preeminence among them" From this we can assume that Diotrephes was a leader in the church. Diotrephes was also known for speaking malicious words against John and other leaders in the church.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will really appreciate the kindness and generosity we have experienced because of good hospitality.

INTRODUCTION

John, the Elder

John named himself "the Elder" in his outreach to Gaius. Although not explicit in his epistle, tradition suggests that he was writing from Ephesus. What is clear, however, in this letter is the importance of strong relationships within the early church. Far different from modern Western culture's obsession with individualism and isolation, the world of John, Gaius, and even Diotrephes depended heavily on a network of closely intertwined community connections.

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INTRODUCTION

John, the Elder

While we are able to choose how deeply we will become involved with people different from ourselves, the early church was a blend of people from various walks of life. As John wrote this third epistle, his words conveyed a key element of hospitality, which is genuine appreciation. He is both a spiritual elder in the church, and a physical elder of advanced age. This earned him a wealth of experience with people at their best and worst.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will know that showing hospitality
shows truth and encourages others to be
coworkers with the truth.

I. THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

The Truth of Jesus Christ

3 John 1-4

In John's Gospel and letters, "truth" (Gk. ale-theia, ah-LAY-thay-ah) includes freedom from affectation, pretense, simulation, falsehood, and deceit. Since John greeted his friend in the truth, loved him in truth, walked with him in truth, and encouraged the church to be cooperative in the truth, we know that truth is at the heart of Christian hospitality (vv. 1-4).

I. THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

The Truth of Jesus Christ

3 John 1-4

This recognition of truth may tempt us to say that we should only associate with others who walk likewise in the truth. While it is important that we as believers connect ourselves with others who hold the truth of Christ at heart, we should also be mindful that our Christian obligation is not just to hold the truth secret. Our job as ministers of Christ is to take and share His truth (vv. 3-4).

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I. THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

The Truth of Jesus Christ

3 John 1-4

1 The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John addressed this letter to Gaius, who appears to be a leader in the church. He stated his love for Gaius in the same way that he stated his love for the elect lady and her children in 2 John. His love is "in the truth." This is the truth of Jesus Christ. He added to his well wishes toward Gaius by saying that he wished "above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

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I. THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

The Truth of Jesus Christ

3 John 1-4

1 The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Many have used this to justify the prosperity teaching that God wants all people to be rich, when in fact this verse does not communicate material prosperity for all. These are actually general well wishes and not a promise from God. John puts these general well wishes in a Christian context by also desiring the prosperity or health of Gaius' soul.

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I. THE HEART OF HOSPITALITY

The Truth of Jesus Christ

3 John 1-4

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. **4** I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

John was overwhelmed with joy (twice in two verses) over the report of the balanced spiritual life of Gaius. The first characteristic of the latter's faith is underscored in these verses: he possessed and lived the truth, the fact of which was attested by the external testimony of fellow Christians.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Cost of Sharing the Truth

The heart of hospitality is to have something good and be willing to share it without concern for loss. To share the truth of Christ costs us nothing. Yes, there are expenses for traveling and preparing materials and facilities for the spread and study of the Gospel. Yet, to give to Christ is to increase the family of faith, rather than to lose resources. John desired prosperity and health for his friends and spiritual children. It is important to note that this is John's desire and not necessarily a mandate or promise from God to all believers. This prosperity is not for their own selfish desires but so that they may have strength and ability to continue sharing the most important truth of all (vv. 1-2).

II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community

3 John 5-8

John continued his epistle by providing specific recognition of the hard work Gaius and his congregation performed. Often in church life we find ourselves giving until it hurts. Sometimes this is financial. Other times, our contributions are in large amounts of time spent or in providing supplies and resources for the work at hand. Still, we are human, and it is quite normal for us to feel that our great sacrifices are not recognized. John acknowledged that Gaius' flock is diligent and faithful to the ministers and missionaries they have served.

II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community

3 John 5-8

He received good reports from them and he had firsthand knowledge of their good reputation for superior care (vv. 5-6). Knowing that there may be challenges to their ability to provide accommodations, John praised the church for what they did, confirming their reputation is sure. He reminds them, however, that whatever the cost of their hospitality, it is still no greater than the price Jesus paid for our sins.

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II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community
3 John 5-8

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

The second characteristic of the balanced spiritual life of Gaius is his love, demonstrated practically among Christians, especially in warm and rich hospitality toward Christian missionaries. Such care for missionaries was a great service, particularly at a time when inns and guest houses were scarce and uncomfortable (cf. Hebrews 13:2). Beneficiaries of Gaius' hospitality gave testimonies, confirming the quality of his faith and love publicly in the assembly (Gk. ekklesia, eckklay-SEE-uh, the church).

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II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community
3 John 5-8

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

He is further encouraged to remain committed to this labor of love. The Greek word propempeo (pro-PEHM-poh), translated "bring forward," indicates that the missionaries are to be provided with necessities and escorts for the next stage of their journey. The phrase translated "after a godly sort" or "in a manner worthy of God" (NIV) describes the way traveling missionaries were to be sent on their journey. They were messengers of God, and as such, they were to be treated with the same type of honor that God is worthy of. This is an extraordinary standard of hospitality!

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II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community
3 John 5-8

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

Here, John offered as examples reasons for encouraging such support. First, the traveling Christians were missionaries: they went out on a Gospel mission. Christ, not money, was their motive. The phrase "for his name's sake" is a common Semitic (or Hebrew) reference to God. Because God's actual name was so holy, Jews would say "the name" rather than "Yahweh" when talking about God. Thus, the verse could be translated "Because that for Yahweh's sake ... " Second, they were not "funded" by the Gentiles. They had no means of support other than the Christians.

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II. WORKING TOGETHER REQUIRES WORK

Beloved Community
3 John 5-8

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

The pronoun "we" (referring to Christians) is emphatic. The Greek word *opheilo* (ah-FAY-loh, "ought") carries a sense of obligation. Christians have the moral duty to actively support the work of God. A third reason is that such support is actually a partnership in the truth.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Believers Must Care for Other Believers

Verse 7 reminds us of the early church's limitations, as "they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." In John's day, the average person could literally go only as far as a day's walk. They generally ate what they could carry, then relied on the kindness of strangers for sustenance each night of their journey. The church could have asked for support from "the Gentiles" (v. 7), but the implication was that believers should not have to seek financial support from non-believers.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Believers Must Care for Other Believers

John emphasized this in verse 8, saying that we should be "fellow helpers to the truth."

Notice that John focused attention on the mission, not the missionary. He gave preference to the cargo, not the caravan. The Bible certainly allows for the care and feeding of ministers, but the reason for that is the overall mission to spread the truth.

III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

John boldly called out Diotrephes (v. 9), who is in church leadership, yet defied the commandment of hospitality. This is a most distressing error that unfortunately can happen even today. Diotrephes represented an even worse threat to the church than the false teachers John warned against in his earlier epistles. As a result, although Diotrephes took position and no doubt made himself lord within the church, we should be cautious not to allow our earthly authority to supersede the truth of Christ, which encompasses Jesus' examples and explicit teaching.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

To call oneself Christian yet refuse hospitality to believers is to commit a disastrous sin. The church needs to reflect God, who welcomes us all to the table. Diotrephes needed to be a better example like Gaius and Demetrius (v. 12), remembering that despite rank, there is no division in Christ; we are all one (Galatians 3:28).

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

9 1 wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Now John cites a contrast to shun: Diotrephes is the self-seeking church leader who exhibited a bad example. He refused hospitality to delegates from John. He was motivated not by truth and love like Gaius, but by personal ambition.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

Other antitheses of truth and love demonstrated by Diotrephes are listed here. First, he spread slanderous gossip against John. Second, he went from words to action: he refused hospitality to delegates who came from John. Third, he prevented others in the church from entertaining the traveling missionaries. And finally, he expelled those who resisted his authority.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

The first command of this letter is contained in this verse. John's exhortation to Gaius in view of the bad example of Diotrephes is expressed negatively and positively. The Greek word mimeomai (mih-MEH-oh-my) means to use as a model, imitate, or follow.

Negatively, Gaius is to forsake the bad example just cited.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

The Greek word kakos (kah-KOHSS) describes what is evil, or harmful. Positively, he is to follow the good model (i.e., Demetrius in the next verse). The Greek word agathos (ah-gah-THOHSS) defines what is morally and spiritually good. John also states the reason for his command: A tree is known by its fruit (cf. Matthew 7:20). A Christian's behavior is evidence of their spiritual condition.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

**12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea,
and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.**

There is much speculation on the identity of Demetrius. Some believe he was the one who carried this letter to the congregation. As such, John wanted the local church to give him a good reception. The phrase "hath good report" is a single verb in Greek (martureo, mar-too-REH-oh, to confirm or testify to). A better translation would be "well spoken of" This verb is in the perfect tense and implies that this good report of Demetrius was given over a period of time and continued to be up to date.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

John also added that not only did people in the church speak well of Demetrius, but his life and teaching was also aligned with the truth of the Gospel itself. To complete the list of Gaius' recommendation, John let Gaius know that Demetrius is well spoken of by John and the local church. This personal recommendation along with all the others would carry weight in the eyes of Gaius and the recipients of the letter.

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III. CHALLENGES TO THE TRUTH

A True Servant's Heart
3 John 9-14

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

John concluded the letter by stating there was more to be said. He wrote that he will tell them in person rather than by letter. This may be due to the credibility attached to speaking in person rather than in writing. John used the word "friends" twice. The Epicurean philosophers of the time also called each other "friends." John could be utilizing this terminology to emphasize the unity and harmony that he and the local churches shared in regards to the truth.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Share Communion

John closed his message with the same sense of fellowship with which he began. He specifically mentioned that he has many things to write, but he preferred to meet in person – something we sometimes lack in our modern world of text messages, e-mails, and other impersonal methods of communication. He closes by expressing peace, friendship, and a desire to share communion.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will learn the importance of showing hospitality to other believers as we study and live the commandment to love.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

John the elder desired that his friends prosper. He wrote a message of love and encouragement and expected that they treat others with the same kindness and compassion. Despite our good intentions or the results of our good works, the task of caring for others can still present risks. Whether we care for traveling evangelists, orphaned children, relatives, or even non-believers who ask for our help, there will always be challenges to our Christian compassion. Thankfully, as God presents us with opportunities to minister, He will open doors for us to include others who desire to help. We are not alone in our time of need or of sharing with others.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will commit to live our lives so that others can see we are walking in the truth of Christ.

STUDENT RESPONSES

We have all missed opportunities to show hospitality. Whether we overlooked someone's need or deliberately ignored a situation we could have easily assisted, we have all dropped the ball at some point. With John's message in mind, take time this week to show hospitality to strangers. Invite someone who is not like you to your home for a meal. At the end of the meal, offer to pray for them.

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Prayer

Dear God,

You are kind, gracious, and caring. We learn from You how to show hospitality, kindness and care for those who struggle or need Your reassuring grace. Thank You and bless You.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday
May 11, 2025
Lesson 11
Gifts of the Spirit
1 Corinthians 12:1-11