

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

God is Love

I, II, III John
& Jude

WEEK 5

“Beware of False Teachers”

Study: II John 1:7-13

Reading: Matthew 7:15-23, Colossians 2:6-12

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

In the Second Great Awakening that happened in the early to middle 1800's in the United States. I was amazed to read about several denominations that were willing to work together to preach the Gospel. The reason I was amazed was because many of those denominations no longer preach the truth of the Word of God. Their messages have become watered down and politically correct. They have allowed Christ to become just another good person and not the Savior that the Bible declares Him to be. When I read that book I was reminded how important it is to declare the truth of the Word of God and the truth about Christ.

What Does the Bible Say?

John had given the lady of II John the command to love one another. This was very important because many false teachers were distorting the truth about Jesus Christ. These false teachers were banding together to declare that Christ had never come to this earth. This same type of false teaching exists today when people declare that the stories of Jesus were just made up. When I think of false teachers, some times my mind pictures a strong headed, loud-mouthed man who most people don't really like, but that isn't how Satan works. False teachings were able to infiltrate the church through deception. This is why Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” (Matt 5:17) False teachers didn't and don't wear a label, but they are recognized by people who know and study the Word of God (vs 7).

We have to constantly be on guard against false teachers even in today's society. There are people out there who are false teachers, but they don't even know it. The genuine way to decipher false teaching is by knowing what their view is of Christ. The false teaching about who Christ was and what He did is where Satan leads many people astray.

Though they may have some form of godliness and talk about God often, they are not His children. To be saved, one must know the truth about Christ (vs 8-9).

The threat of false teachers was so great that John warned the lady not to let them into her house. In fact, he told her not to even greet them if she saw them. Greeting them and talking to them would give others the impression that they were teaching the same doctrine. It would give the false teachers greater leverage as they spread their false message (vs 10-11).

John closed the letter out by telling the woman that he had much more to say, but that he hoped to say it in person. He wanted her to experience the fullness of joy that the right doctrine of Christ had brought to him. He wanted the work of Christ to continue and grow (vs 12-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

If someone were to come into your church and teach something false about Christ, would you know how to answer them? Do you know what the Word of God says about Christ? Are you spiritually mature enough to feed yourself, or do you have to rely on your preacher for spiritual food? The best defense against false teachers is knowing the truth. It involves the daily study of the Word of God and seeking answers from His Word. There are many denominations today that once preached the Gospel but no longer do so. They have let false teaching come in and water down the truth of Christ. This has led to millions of people being led astray as they follow dead religions. Don't let this happen to you.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for revealing the truth in His Word.*
- * *Ask God to help you know His Word.*

Thought for the day

What are there many of (vs 7)?

What is one of the great ways that false teachers can be identified (vs 7)?

How does John describe these people (vs 7)?

Why do you think he used the term “antichrist” (vs 7)?

Why do you think Scripture warns us many times about the deception of false teachers?

Why did John tell the people he was writing to “watch yourselves” (vs 8)?

What did John say a person could have if they carefully watched (vs 8)?

What do you think that means?

What does John say about those who do not abide in the teaching of Christ (vs 9)?

What did John say about those who do abide in Christ (vs 9)?

What does John say to do with false teachers (vs 10)?

Why do you think he says this?

What do you do if you welcome false teachers (vs 11)?

What do you think are ways that you can welcome false teachers today?

What did John say about what he wanted to write (vs 12)?

What did John hope to do (vs 13)?

Who sent their greetings (vs 13)? What do you think John meant by this?

“The Truth of Love”

Study: III John 1:1-6

Reading: I Corinthians 13:1-8, I John 3:1-24

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

Several years ago, we had a wonderful funeral service at the church I pastored. After a long battle with cancer, one of the outstanding members of our church passed away at the age of 67. The funeral was so well attended that there was standing room only in the church. There were even some who chose not to stay because there was no room for them to sit or stand. Everything about this funeral reflected the life of that wonderful saint. This woman never held a leadership position in the community, nor did she have much money. She gave one of the greatest gifts to everyone she met, the gift of love. She would take people into her house and make them feel as if they were part of her family. She and her husband would constantly give of the little possessions they had, and God blessed them for it. Everyone at the funeral went away realizing how this woman’s legacy would live on for many years.

What Does the Bible Say?

The book of III John was written to a man named Gaius. Little is known about Gaius other than that his name is mentioned with other believers a few times in Paul’s epistles. What is clear from the book is that John had a great deal of love and respect for Gaius. As John opened his letter, he once again emphasized the importance of loving in truth. Truth can be described as being dependable, consistent, of reliable character. With all the false teaching that existed at that time, the truth had become extremely important (vs 1).

John was thrilled when some who had been with Gaius had reported how well he was doing. Gaius was living in the abundant joy of Christ because he was living in the truth of who God was. From the creation of man, Satan has attempted to distort the truth about the character of God. Believing the lies of Satan will rob us of the joy that God wants us to have. John clearly expressed that one of his greatest thrills in life was to

hear positive reports about those he ministered to. John had followed the example of Jesus and had chosen to give his life for others. His purpose in life was to lead others to know who God was and to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ (vs 2-4).

One of the reports that pleased John the most was the report about the way that Gaius loved people. Not only did he display love to those who were closest to him, but he also showed love to those he didn’t know. This love was the very same love that Christ had shown and which John had displayed to Gaius. This love was what helped win people to Christ and helped them see the character of God. Gaius wasn’t living his life for what he could get out of it, but was living his life for what he could give others (vs 5-6).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What is your life about? Does your life seem to be a continual search to find happiness and fulfillment? What will you be remembered for when you are gone? Will you have an impact upon this world for years after your life is over because of the way that you loved and cared for others? John had learned the importance of life by watching the example of Christ, and in turn, he taught the importance of life to Gaius. Life isn’t about houses, cars and possessions. It isn’t about living from thrill to thrill or pleasure to pleasure. Life is about loving others and making a difference for the cause of Christ. It is about your willingness to give of yourself to help others experience the joy that Christ can give. It is about displaying the character of Christ to all you meet. Those who choose to sacrifice their selfish desires for the cause of Christ will not be miserable. They will be the most joyful and loving people you will ever know.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you examples to follow.*
- * *Ask God to help you be a loving servant.*
- * *Praise God because He is love.*

Thought for the day

How did John describe himself (vs 1)? Why?

Who was he writing to (vs 1)? How did John describe this man?

What two things did John say he prayed for (vs 2)?

What did he say was going well with Gaius (vs 2)?

What do you think he meant by this?

How did John respond when he heard reports of Gaius (vs 3)?

How was Gaius walking (vs 3)?

What did John say was his great joy (vs 4)?

Why do you think he said this?

How have you experienced this same feeling?

What did John praise Gaius for (vs 5)?

Why do you think he described it as “faithful” (vs 5)?

Why do you think the people Gaius helped were described as “strangers” (vs 5)?

What did this people do in response (vs 6)?

What did John encourage Gaius to do (vs 6)?

What do you think “a manner worthy of God” meant (vs 6 - ESV)?

****The following verses, which we will look at tomorrow, reveal how the people Gaius helped were some type of ministers for Christ that needed some food and lodging for a time. It appears that Gaius opened his home to these fellow servants and provided help and encouragement to them.*

“Giving For Fellow servants”

Study: III John 1:7-10

Reading: I Corinthians 2:1-5, I Timothy 5:1-10, 17-18

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

One of the greatest joys in life is welcoming pastors and missionaries onto our property. There are many times when I see them arrive and can see the stress and weariness in their faces. Many often tell me how they have been through a very difficult or busy season in their ministry and are looking forward to a time of rest. At times, I will get to talk to some of these families before they leave and it thrills me to see the change in their faces as they are headed back home refreshed and renewed. They often mention how they have been recharged and are ready to serve the Lord again.

Today, we are going to see how John commended Gaius for giving to those who ministered the Gospel and how he rebuked Diotrophes for thinking of himself.

What Does the Bible Say?

John was thrilled when he heard reports that Gaius not only displayed love to those he knew, but he also displayed love toward strangers. He specifically displayed love to those who had given their lives to travel around and share the Gospel. Many of these men refused to accept money from the Gentiles in order to avoid being accused of preaching for the money. Because of this choice, many of them had no source of income except for the Jewish churches and believers. Gaius was instrumental in supporting many of these missionaries and encouraging them to continue to share the Gospel. John wanted to let Gaius know that the missionaries he supported are brothers in Christ and fellow soldiers in the army of Christ. Though Gaius wasn't present at many of their meetings, his financial support and help made him a partner in their ministries (vs 7-8).

John had written some type of letter to the church explaining how important it was to support those who have given up their jobs to share the Gospel. One of the church leaders named Diotrophes didn't like this

idea because he desired to be first among the leaders. Apparently he said many harsh things about the traveling missionaries which discouraged the church from supporting their efforts. He either wanted all the money or wanted all the praise for his ministry and didn't want to share it with anyone else. He did this by lying about John and his fellow minister and by refusing to allow traveling preachers to come in and share how God was using them. He spoke out against them which turned the attitude of the people away from the missionaries and cut off their financial support. John wanted to personally pay a visit to the church and let them know what the truth was and also remove Diotrophes from his leadership position (vs 9-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you a giver or a taker? Do you give faithfully to your local church and to missionary endeavors? Do you give abundantly or do you want to make sure that all of your desires are taken care of first? When you give to your local church and to those involved in missions, you are not just giving them money, you are partaking in the work of the kingdom of God. You are sharing the Gospel with them through your financial support. The one who travels around the world to preach is no more important than the one who heavily supports the missionary cause. As believers, we are not individuals trying to do things our way, but we are a body which works together for the cause of Christ. Ask God to show you if you are more of a Diotrophes which who concerned about himself or a Gaius who was concerned about furthering the cause of Christ.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for sending others to tell you about Jesus.
- * Ask God to show you how you can support the cause of Christ.

Thought for the day

Who was John talking about in verse 7?

What did these men choose not to do (vs 7)?

Why did they choose not to do this (vs 7)?

Why do you think they made this choice?

What did John say about supporting others (vs 8)?

What do you think John meant when he said they are "fellow workers" (vs 8)?

Why is it important to view missionaries and others who sacrifice for the Gospel as fellow workers?

****Missionaries and pastors are not more important than any other Christian, they have just been called to a different role in the body of Christ. This role of the pastor and missionary is often one that is not very financially lucrative. This is why it is important for those whom God has blessed financially to help those who are in roles that need financial support, realizing that we are all important as fellow workers for the kingdom.*

What did John say he had done (vs 9)?

What did Diotrophes do (vs 9)?

How can you see this personality in some churches today?

What did John say he was going to do if he was able to visit (vs 10)?

What did he say Diotrophes was doing (vs 10)?

Why do you think the actions of Diotrophes were so dangerous (vs 10)?

What was the difference between Gaius and Diotrophes?

“The Right Example”

Study: III John 1:11-14

Reading: I Corinthians 10:1-11:1

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

As I look back on what sports my children played in school and continue to play as young adults, what stands out to me is that they are the same sports that I was involved in. For instance, my oldest daughter played softball in High School right after we moved from Wisconsin where she had been in a little league where I was the president. My other three children all played soccer in high school where I was also the soccer coach. They also played in various hockey leagues, similar to leagues that I played in. I never forced my kids to play in any sport or told them there were sports they couldn't play in. They naturally followed the example that I had set for them and were involved in many of the things I was involved in.

Today, we are going to see the importance of picking the right role models to pattern our lives after.

What Does the Bible Say?

Yesterday, we read about a loving, caring person named Gaius and a selfish, prideful person named Diotrophes. Today, we are introduced to a man who had set a godly example for Gaius and the church to follow. Little is known of Demetrius outside this passage, but what is known about him is a wonderful testimony of His love for God. All who met and knew Demetrius knew that he loved God and his lifestyle proved it. Not only did people say that Demetrius was a godly man, but the truth of his actions revealed his godliness. He wasn't a hypocrite who did one thing in public and another in private, but all who knew him testified about his godliness (vs 12).

The life of Demetrius is why John told his readers to imitate what is good. His readers were to avoid the pitfalls and problems that Diotrophes had fallen into, and were to observe the example that Demetrius had set before them. From the beginning of our lives, we as humans are constantly looking at others and copying them. We learn how to speak

from our parents and others involved in our lives, developing the same accents and tendencies they have. The way we live, eat and act come from what we have observed other people do. Much of who we are is because of behavior that we have learned. Learned behavior is a wonderful thing if we learn it from the right example, but if we learn it from the wrong examples, it can destroy our lives (vs 11).

The book of III John was just a short letter because John planned to see Gaius very soon and would tell him much more when he met him face to face. John knew that the problems that Diotrophes had caused needed to be dealt with personally and he was willing to take a stand to do so (vs 13-14).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Who are your role models in life? What musicians do you listen to and respect? What athletes do you hold in high esteem? What leaders do you look to and respect the most? I don't believe we should put humans on a pedestal and worship them, but I do believe we need to have godly examples to pattern our lives after. This is why we need to choose our examples carefully. In our modern media you often have the choice of who you want to “follow.” Most social media has a platform that you click on the “follow” button and it will allow you to see everything that person says and does. You have to be careful that you don't follow others for the wrong reason. If we do, you are falling into the trap of allowing the blind to lead the blind (Luke 6:39). Examine who your role models are in life, and make sure they are ones who are imitators of Christ.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for the godly examples He has placed in your life.
- * Ask God to help you choose the right role models.
- * Praise God because Jesus Christ set the ultimate example.

Thought for the day

What are you told not to imitate (vs 11)?

What are you to imitate (vs 11)?

What are ways that you can put this verse into practice?

What did John say about those who do good (vs 11)?

What did John say about those who do evil (vs 11)?

Who did John mention in verse 12?

What did he say about this man (vs 12)?

Do you think the same could be said about you? Explain.

Why is it important to have a good testimony by the way that you live?

What did John say about his letter (vs 13)?

Why do you think John would rather talk face to face (vs 13)?

What did John hope to do (vs 13)?

****Relationships can be built on texts and letters, but it is no substitute for seeing a person face to face. In our society, where many things become more and more impersonal, it is vital that we make sure that we are meeting with other believers face to face.*

What did John want his Gaius to experience (vs 15)?

What did John say about greetings (vs 15)? What can you observe from this?

“Be On Guard”

Study: Jude 1:1-4

Reading: Galatians 2:1-10, Matthew 13:24-43

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

One of the key rules of hockey, especially when you play in a checking league, is to keep your head up. I knew this rule when I played check games, but had to learn a lot of lessons that taught me to obey it. I found out the hard way why it was a key rule in hockey. I would often get so focused on trying to play or pass the puck that I would forget to keep my head up. The other team would send me a reminder by checking me hard in the open ice, often knocking me down. The hard hits would be a quick reminder that I needed to play with my head up. Today, we are going to see that we need to be on guard for the attacks of Satan. He will hardly ever attack us when we are looking. His main goal is to attack you when you don't see him coming. We are going to see that the best defense against Satan is to offensively be spending time in the Word.

What Does the Bible Say?

(Judas) Jude was a common name in the days when the New Testament was written. Because of this, there are eight different people mentioned by the name of Judas in the New Testament. That is why there is some question as to who wrote the book of Jude. It is commonly thought that the book of Jude was written by Judas, the half-brother of Jesus. This conclusion comes from his introduction where he calls himself the brother of James, and Jesus did have brothers named Judas and James. Another reason is because he never claimed himself to be an “apostle” as the apostolic writers of the New Testament often did.

Jude acknowledged himself as a slave to Christ. He wasn't forced to be a slave, but chose to accept the fact that God bought him with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He was writing to fellow Christians and wanted them to understand that he wasn't above anyone he was writing to (vs 1-2).

Jude wanted to write a letter of love and care to his readers, but he

was compelled to write them a letter that encouraged them to take a stand for their faith. Apparently, some false teaching had crept into the church and his readers were falling away from the faith that they once had (vs 3). As Satan usually does, he deceptively sent false teachers into the church to tear apart their faith. This wasn't the first attempt that Satan had made to destroy the church. From the beginning of the church the apostles and church leaders had written churches, warning of false teachers.

Unlike many of the false teachers that were opposed in the New Testament for teaching works salvation, these false teachers carried the doctrine of grace to the extreme. Basically they told the people that once they were saved they could do whatever they wanted to and encouraged a worldly lifestyle. They told the people that God didn't really care about the things that they were doing (vs 4).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How do you view yourself before Christ? Do you view yourself as His servant or do you think that you can do whatever you want to do? Satan wants to do all that he can to trick believers into living for themselves. He knows that when a person's focus is on themselves it can't be on God. He often tries to work his way into our lives without us knowing what is happening. One of the greatest ways that Satan attacks us today is through the area of media (internet, movies, tv, etc). He deceives us into believing his philosophy of life in subtle ways. This is why Jude emphasized the importance of contending for the faith. Before you can stand up and do what is right, you have to know what is right. The best way to stand against Satan is by knowing and using the Word of God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you His Word.*
- * *Ask God to help you take a stand against Satan.*
- * *Praise God because He is your Lord*

Thought for the day

What are two ways Jude describes himself (vs 1)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think he described himself as a servant or slave (vs 1)?

Do you think this way about your life as a follower of Jesus Christ?

Explain why or why not.

Who was he writing to (vs 1)?

What do you think it means to be "kept for Jesus Christ" (ESV - vs 1)?

What three things did he want multiplied in the lives of his readers (vs 2)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are these three things central themes of the New Testament?

What did Jude want to write about (vs 3)?

What do you think he was going to tell them?

What did he choose to write about (vs 3)?

Why do you think he viewed this as important?

What did Jude say was happening in the church (vs 4)?

What two things did he say the false teachers were doing (vs 4)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why were these things so dangerous?

“The Judgement of God”

Study: Jude 1:5-7

Reading: Genesis 6:1-4, 19:1-25

Memory: Isaiah 40:1

People have struggled with addictions throughout time. Different drugs and alcohol have come and gone. People have been addicted to work, eating, sports, gambling, and numerous other things. One of the most powerful addictions a person could ever have is an addiction to sex. The reason for this is because sex is a God-given desire. No one naturally desires to gamble, do drugs, or drink, but almost everyone has a desire for sexual fulfillment. God has given us that desire to help a husband and wife create a special bond in their marriage.

Today, we are going to see how Satan wants to pervert our attitude about sex, and how he wants to destroy our walk with God.

What Does the Bible Say?

Yesterday, we saw that one of Jude’s purposes in writing to his readers was to combat the false teaching that was going on in the church. These teachers were teaching that it was okay to sin. Jude stood firm against that false teaching and reminded his readers about the judgement of God. He used three illustrations to prove that God hates and judges sin. The first had to do with the children of Israel. After they left Egypt some of them fell into sin and others didn’t believe God. As a result of their sin, the Israelites were forced to wander around in the wilderness for forty years. Numbers 25 described how over 23,000 Israelites died at one time because of their idolatry and immoral relationships (vs 5).

Jude then referred to the angels that are fallen from heaven. We know these today as demons. Jude and Peter mentioned a certain type of fallen angel that will remain chained up until God’s final judgement. There has been much debate over this passage in relation to Genesis 6:1-4 and II Peter 2:4. Many scholars think that some angels came down from heaven and had sexual relationships with women. They say that this was how the “giants” in Genesis 6 were produced. Other scholars disagree with that theory. Whatever the case might be, Jude’s point is still the same. He was pointing out the fact that God judges those who sin (vs 6).

The last illustration he used was the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah filled themselves with sexual and perverted thoughts. Their attitude about sex was so perverted that the men of the city desired to rape the angels that were visiting Lot. Lot unbelievably offered them his daughter instead, but they wanted the men. God sent fire down from heaven to destroy the cities because of their perverted attitude about God’s gift of sex.

Jude made his point extremely clear. The false teachers who were teaching that you should indulge yourself in the pleasures of this world were absolutely wrong. Just as God judged men in the past, he would judge the false teachers because of their sin (vs 7).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What is your view about sex? Have you bought into the world’s idea that sex outside of marriage is okay? Do you listen to people talk about sex in their music? Do you watch television shows, movies or videos that promote immoral sex? Satan wants us to buy into the world’s philosophy and say that it is okay to enjoy yourself however you please. Our society is becoming more and more like Sodom and Gomorrah because sex with the opposite sex hasn’t satisfied them. People have perverted God’s gift through homosexual acts and sexual parties. Jude made it absolutely clear that God will judge people for the way that they have perverted the wonderful gift He has given. The point he makes is very clear. Sex outside of marriage is sin and wrong. It should not be accepted as “ok” in the Christian community. This goes for homosexual and heterosexual sex outside of marriage.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you the gift of sex to enjoy in marriage.*
- * *Make a commitment to God that you will remain pure, in mind and in action, until you are married.*

Thought for the day

Why do you think Jude felt it necessary to remind them (vs 5)?

What did he want to remind them of (vs 5)?

What do you think he meant when he said that Jesus saved people out of Egypt (vs 5)?

Who was destroyed because they did not believe (vs 5)?

Why do you think he brought this point to their attention?

What did Jude mention in verse 6?

What did he say they did (vs 6)?

What was the punishment for these angels (vs 6)?

Why do you think Jude used this illustration?

What illustration of judgment did Jude use in verse 7?

What do you know about Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them (vs 7)?

What did they indulge in (vs 7)?

What did they pursue after (vs 7)?

What do you think this meant?

What did Jude say these were examples of?

How does this reveal the evil of the homosexual movement (vs 7)?

What does this also reveal about the heterosexual revolution (vs 7)?

Why do you think that sensual sins are so dangerous?

Does this mean that if a person commits these sins they will be damned?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.