



June 28, 2026

## The Heart of Hospitality

3 John 5-12

1. **The Question:** What does the Bible say about real hospitality?
2. **Sermon Outline:**
  - a. Hospitality Is Modeled, Praised, and Commanded in the Bible
    - i. Hospitality defined
    - ii. Real hospitality is modeled throughout the Bible
    - iii. Hospitality is commanded for Christians
  - b. Biblical Hospitality Focuses On the Guests, Not the Host
    - i. Hospitality is NOT entertaining guests
    - ii. Biblical hospitality is about serving others
  - c. Love Jesus and People Through Active Hospitality
    - i. Fear keeps many from practicing biblical hospitality
    - ii. Overcome any fear with love by being hospitable
3. **Sunday** – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:
  - a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
  - b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
  - c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
  - d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
  - e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?
4. **Monday:**
  - a. Although the focal passage for this week is verses 5-12 of 3 John, begin the week by reading the entire book (only 13 verses).
    - i. As you read 3 John, how applicable does it seem to be to our modern Christian culture?
    - ii. As the shortest book in the New Testament (in the original Greek), what else do you find unique about the book?
      1. How many times is “Jesus” or “Christ” mentioned?
      2. How does John refer to our Savior instead of referring to His name or title (see verse 7)?

- iii. How does John address Gaius (four times) in this letter? What does that suggest about the relationship between the two? What additional insight about their relationship is suggested by verse 4's use of "my children"?
    - 1. Gaius was a common name at the time. See Romans 16:23 and Acts 19:29 & 20:4 for two other men with the same name. What is at least one thing these three have in common (besides their name)?
    - 2. Why is this probably a different Gaius?
  - iv. What do verses 1-4 tell us about Gaius' spiritual state?
    - 1. What was the condition of his soul?
    - 2. Instead of praying for Gaius' spiritual condition, what did John say he was praying about? What practical lessons can we take from this and apply to our prayers?
  - v. What is "the truth" that John refers to in verses 1, 3, and 4 (compare John 1:14 & 17; 3:21; 8:32; 14:6; 17:17; 1 John 1:6 & 8; 2:20; 3:18-19; 2 John 1-2)?
- b. Looking back at 3 John 1-8, in what four areas of life does John commend Gaius (consider verses 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8)?

#### 5. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read the focal passage, 3 John 5-12, meditating on verses 5-8 (compare these four verses in several different translations, if available).
- b. In your own words, how would you describe Gaius' faithfulness?
  - i. What makes the "faithful thing you do" particularly outstanding according to verse 5?
  - ii. What does the word "brothers" ("brothers and sisters" in the NIV) tell us about those to whom Gaius is showing hospitality?
  - iii. What do the facts that they were "strangers", that Gaius is to "send them on their journey", and that "they have gone out" suggest about the nature of those to whom Gaius is showing hospitality?
    - 1. Does it seem that they were members of his local congregation?
    - 2. Why would hospitality to strangers who were traveling to minister (we might call them missionaries) have been particularly important in John's day?
  - iv. What is the result of his hospitality according to verse 6a? Why was/is such testimony especially important (see John 13:35)?
- c. What reason does John give Gaius, and us, in verse 6, for practicing such hospitality?
  - i. The ESV says "we ought to support people like that". What form does "support" generally take in our society?

1. Using that understanding of “support,” what does John say we become when we provide for the financial needs of a missionary or other Christian worker?
2. Do you think John would have accepted the notion that we don’t need to show the hospitality he is writing about just because we are giving financially?

6. *Wednesday:*

- a. Read the focal passage, 3 John 5-12, meditating on verses 9-10 (compare these two verses in several different translations, if available).
- b. How does the subject John writes about shift in these two verses? What title, or summary, would you give them?
  - i. What might John have been talking about when he says he had “written something to the church”? [Note: While some scholars believe he is referring to 2 John, most believe it is a lost letter, possibly destroyed by Diotrephes.]
  - ii. What was John’s response when his earlier letter was apparently ignored? In this age of email and texts, what lesson can we learn from John for dealing with situations where our concerns are ignored?
- c. Based on verses 9 & 10, how would you describe Diotrephes as a leader in his church?
  - i. What five things does John tell us that Diotrephes was doing wrong (two in verse 9 and three in verse 10)?
  - ii. Which of these continue to be problems in churches today? If John could write such a letter to churches today, without naming individuals, what percentage of church leaders do you think would see themselves in John’s description?

7. *Thursday:*

- a. Read the focal passage, 3 John 5-12, meditating on verses 11-12.
- b. What is the implication of the command that John gives Gaius in verse 11a?
  - i. What does Jesus’ statement in Luke 18:19 tell us about how John’s command should be applied?
  - ii. How did Paul expand who we can imitate in 1 Corinthians 11:1?
  - iii. How is it further expanded in 1 Thessalonians 2:14 (remember, churches are people, not buildings)?
  - iv. While John knew we should be imitators of Christ as our supreme example who will never fail, how did he demonstrate that we also need living men and women to serve as role models?
  - v. Making this practical, how does the emphasis our society places on sport and Hollywood figures relate to us as Christians, especially to whom we allow (encourage) our children to look up to?
- c. Who do you think Demetrius was? Might this have been one reason for John writing the letter?

**8. Friday:**

- a. The focal passage presents God’s view about hospitality from John’s perspective, but the Bible contains many passages by different authors that expand our understanding of the subject. Read and discuss (or meditate if studying alone) what these passages teach about how we should be hospitable: Deuteronomy 10:17–19; Romans 12:9-13; Hebrews 13:1-3; and 1 Peter 4:8-10.
- b. What fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is associated with hospitality in each of these passages? What could we say about the validity of someone’s hospitality if it is not done because of love?
- c. What do 1 Timothy 3:1-3 and Titus 1:7-8 say about the importance of hospitality in church leaders?

**9. Saturday:**

- a. Read 3 John again, this time looking for specific applications to your life as a Christian.
- b. End the week by reading Matthew 25:31-46. What importance does Jesus assign to hospitality?

**10. Application:**

- a. John commended Gaius for his unselfish willingness to welcome itinerant missionaries (and perhaps total strangers!) into his home. The words translated as “hospitality” convey the idea of getting under something and lifting it up. We should welcome people into our homes with the intent of lifting them up both physically and spiritually. To do so, we become their servants (as Christ commanded). Hospitality doesn’t require us to be fancy; it simply requires us to welcome and support those in need willingly.
- b. It is the responsibility of churches and Christian individuals to support those whom God calls to full-time ministry. By supporting them, we “work together” (become partners with them) in reaching lost people with the Gospel. While God does not call all of us to “go,” He has commanded that we give and pray – we can all pray for, and most of us can give financially to help our missionaries. Practicing this form of hospitality makes each of us a partner in their Gospel outreach.

**11. Pray:** India, the most populous country in the world, also has the most unreached people groups. This week, pray for these two:

- a. **Lingayat:** The Lingayat people are known for wearing a linga, an object representing a god; in this case, the Hindu god Shiva. Over 3.6 million Lingayats live primarily in Karnataka State in southwest India. They are known to be a progressive people with many working in government service, but also engaged in many other occupations, including artisans, farmers, and priests. Only 0.01% identify as Christian, and there are no known Evangelicals.
- b. **Lodha:** The Lodha, who live in central India, are primarily farmers. Moderately educated, many still practice the tradition of tattooing girls' chins and foreheads to identify them as community members. Nearly all of the Lodha practice some form of Hinduism, and there are only about 2,000 Christians among the over 7 million Lodha.