

God Uses Community to Grow Us As Christians

¹ This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth.

² Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit. ³ Some of the traveling teachers recently returned and made me very happy by telling me about your faithfulness and that you are living according to the truth. ⁴ I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.

⁵ Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶ They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God. ⁷ For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. ⁸ So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.

1. WE GROW BY _____ HOSPITALITY.

You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself... Leviticus 19:34 ESV

"Why, anyone by just giving you a cup of water in my name is on our side. Count on it that God will notice." Mark 9:41 MSG

Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it. Heb 13:2 CEB

"Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37-40 MSG

⁹ I wrote to the church about this, but Diotrefes, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us. ¹⁰ When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.

2. WE GROW WHEN WE HAVE _____ .

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 NIV

Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2 HCSB

Troublemakers can't be allowed to _____ .

¹¹ Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not know God.

3. WE GROW WHEN WE RECEIVE _____ .

... the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. Romans 15:4 NLT

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NRSV

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT

¹² Everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, as does the truth itself. We ourselves can say the same for him, and you know we speak the truth.

¹³ I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to write it with pen and ink.

¹⁴ For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face. ¹⁵ Peace be with you. Your friends here send you their greetings. Please give my personal greetings to each of our friends there.

4. WE GROW WHEN WE HAVE _____ .

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17 ESV

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Eccl. 4:9-12 ESV

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 NIV

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Romans 12:9-10 NLT

Do you _____ like John, or Diotrophes?

Can you _____ like Diotrophes, or John?