

11.05.2023

Personify Truth (v.12)

3 John 1:12: “Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.”

Well, we come to the smallest book of the Bible, 3 John; but what a great message it has. It is written by John to Gaius, who seems to be somebody he led to the Lord. If you look in chapter 1, he refers to him as more a son than anything else. If you look in verse 3,

“I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.”

(3 John 1:4) I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

Somewhere along the line, he was able to bring Gaius to the Lord. Certainly, when you lead somebody to the Lord, you almost share a sense of responsibility for them. It's like he's your child. So, how is it that you continue to nurture this person? Well, unfortunately, you can't always be with them, but you can introduce them to a brother. So, as we've been looking at this particular epistle, it's about brotherhoods and helping Gaius identify his true brothers. Who is your true brother? Obviously, one that is walking in truth. We're going to be talking about that in more detail.

“Walking in truth” really is revealing that which is genuine and sincere; that which is of the truth i.e., Jesus Christ. So, as we come to this, we have a letter of encouragement. It's also clear that there is somebody in the church that is clearly not walking in the truth. Now, what's very interesting to me in verse 9 is when he begins to talk about the one who is not walking in the truth, Diotrephes, it says, “Who loves to be first among them.” The point of the matter is that here's somebody longing for a position; therefore, he's on top of that, tearing down everybody else that seems to be a threat to him. If you look in the passage, it says, “For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.” (3 John 1:10) Now, it's extremely interesting to me that there's nothing in this text that seems to convey that he's teaching false doctrine, but it's telling us that he's living false doctrine. That's really the key to this particular book because there are many that are proclaiming to be followers of Christ. They can even say it in words. In fact, they know the words to say, but how is it that you identify? If in fact you're going to recommend somebody that you're drawn to, then you need to recommend somebody that is actually living it; not just talking about it.

So, John is making a distinction. We know that John has been doing this all along, as he begins to be the one that proclaims Jesus in the flesh. Of all the Gospels, he's the one that focuses on that in the Gospel of John. In fact, his statement is "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) It's a very key point especially at this particular juncture, as we're about pretty close to 90 A.D. when this is written; in which Gnosticism will come in and deny the physical reality of Jesus. They said that He was just an apparition or a ghost. You say, "Why was that such a heresy?" The reason it's such a heresy is that it takes Christianity into a realm of spiritism rather than into the realm of actually changing a life. You see, our faith is about if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. It actually causes us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God so that there is actual change in our lives when we receive Christ.

This is a key point. Let me give you some of the passages that he deals with this:

In 1 John 4:2, it says, "...every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;"

That's a pretty clear definition, isn't it? Now, when he's talking about confessing, he's not just talking about somebody that says it. He's talking about somebody who has agreed and aligned their lifestyle with it. So, that confession is you agreeing with or becoming a part of that statement. You live what you say. His statement is that we live that Jesus has come in the flesh. The point of the matter is that we actually believe that Christ in us changes us in very real, tangible ways. Like James would say, we don't just walk up to a brother that has a need and say, "be warm, be filled, be clothed." According to 1 John 3, we are helping him in word and in deed as well. So, it is in that deed and in truth that he's talking about in the phrase "the word became flesh".

There's another passage that deals with this in 2 John 1:7.

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh..."

Don't you think that's interesting? That's really the crux of the deception; not that people wouldn't talk about Jesus.

We know according to Galatians 2:4 that there are going to be false brethren. We know that in 2 Timothy 2:18 that there are going to be some that go astray. We know that according to 2 Thessalonians 3 there are going to be some that are unruly. Hebrews 3:12, some that are hardened. Then, according to James 4, some that are literally speaking against the other brethren. The fact of the matter is that oftentimes these people know Scripture very well.

Let me give you an example of this. In Matthew 23, the indictment that Jesus has against the Pharisees is not as much against the fact that they knew what the law was. The indictment was that they were not doing it.

(Matthew 23:1) "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,

(Matthew 23:2) saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;

(Matthew 23:3) therefore all that they tell you, do and observe...”

What is He saying within the passage? They’re reading Scripture. They have no problem reading Scripture.

“... but do not do according to their deeds...”

Why was it that He was so upset about the Pharisees? It goes on and says in verse 15, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

That’s not a glowing recommendation. He’s saying that yeah, they know what the truth is, but it doesn’t mean that they’re doing it. So, would you recommend to somebody, “Ok, this is a person that you want to come alongside of because this person really knows the Word”? No, you don’t want to put somebody that just knows it. You want to put somebody alongside somebody that actually does it. This is why John is going to be talking about truth; because a lot of people know about stuff. He’ll say the same thing once again in Romans 2; just to give you a couple of examples.

In Romans 2, you’ll see Paul dealing with the fact that many of the people actually knew what the law was. In fact, they were so confident in the law that they boasted about how much they knew about the law. More specifically, there are people that can quote verses and they can quote them backwards and forwards. You go, “Wow, that’s really impressive.” But you look at their life, and you go, “It doesn’t match.”

So, his statement in Romans 2:17 is “But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

(Romans 2:18) and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

(Romans 2:19) and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

(Romans 2:20) a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

(Romans 2:21) you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

(Romans 2:22) You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

(Rom 2:23) You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

(Rom 2:24) For 'THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,' just as it is written."

Once again, it would be better if you didn't say anything. It would be better if you didn't identify with them. The crux of this is that there are going to be people that say that they know. In this particular case, there is somebody that is in a leadership position in the church that is not doing the right thing. Now, his point will be you can't go along with somebody just because they know something; you have to look at their lifestyle. So, what he's doing for Gaius is he's giving him this discernment. Quite frankly, there are going to be people like Apollos that are probably great orators, but you don't necessarily want to pattern yourself after someone that's just a great orator. They could be saying things that are actually true, but you still don't want them to be the pattern of your life. When we see John writing this individual that he perceives to be as a son, he goes, "Son, we need to get you together with like-minded people that are actually walking and living the truth."

One of the great benefits that we have in our discipleship is that we are able to be with people and encourage them in the Lord; equip them to then teach others. I have tremendous confidence in the pastors that we have. If you were to ever ask me, "Who can I talk to?", I would just point to them and have no problem because I know that they would point you to the Lord; but more than that, I know that they are living what they're telling you and that they're not saying something and living a different way. Their lives are lived in such a way that it's demonstrating that their glorifying God by the things that they do. This is of the problems that I often have with putting people in office just because they have an education from seminary. The point is that one of the things that we should be desiring to do is live the life. We should be gearing up to in the church and pointing to is somebody that is actually living this. So, you're really only blessed if you do them.

The point that John is going to be dealing with this in 1 John. He sort of set the stage in 1 John, and we went to 2 John, and now into 3 John. He set the stage in 1 John by saying that it's about Christ coming in the flesh and the reality of Christ in you. That's why 1 John starts off with what we have seen and what we have handled with our hands. We've actually seen reality. We've seen truth. We've seen the love of God. We've touched the love of God. He has touched us. He has ministered to us. Once again, you go back to Romans 12, we present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

The argument that he has throughout 1 John is that people were saying things, but the reality wasn't there. So, he writes that particular epistle, and he says in 1 John 1:6, "If we say we have fellowship with Him;" if we say, "I'm close to God." I've been in ministry long enough; of course, now myself, over 40 years. Then, my dad was in ministry for over 60 years. So, I've been in and out of churches. I've seen a lot of, for lack of a better word, I'm just going to call it Histrionics; we'll call them thespians or actors. Where people are very much stage oriented. I've seen people get up and say things. Then, people walk away (the audience), and they say, "They're such wonderful people." I'm saying to myself, "You don't know this guy. I've seen him outside

of the church.” Sometimes you wonder how they get there. It’s no wonder how people can be so disoriented when they come into church. Somewhere along the line, they actually see the reality of that person, and they go, “Wow, I didn’t know that. It’s so out of character with what he says.”

The point that John is making in 1 John 1:6 is “If we say...”

Which is just talking, right?

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;”

Did you see those two words? One was “walk” and the other was “practice.” There’s a lot of things that people say.

1 John 2:4 reads this way, “The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”

The theme of this book is “I’m so glad that you’re walking in the truth, and many bear witness.” In fact, it says there in 3 John 1:3, “I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth...” Which means that he is actually practicing the things that he knows are right. He’s not just talking about those things.

When you read in 1 John 3:23, you have to ask yourself, “Ok, I keep his commandments. What are the commandments of God?” I remember thinking when I was younger, “Wow, there are just so many commandments. How could I ever keep them all?” In this verse, it’s almost like Jesus sits you down, and says, “Ok, can you remember two things?” and I go, “I think I can do that.”

(1 John 3:23) “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

Only two commandments. You put all of your trust in Him alone and you do what He tells you to do. Love those that do that too. The text reads, “just as He commanded.” So, how did He command? “Love them as I have loved you;” which means that according to Philippians 2, you hold them in higher esteem than yourself. If that’s true, then it would be impossible for you to sin against them. As Romans 13:10 puts it, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” Love does no wrong. So, if anyone keeps the word, then he is a doer of the word; he is what John would call “true”. He’s a true friend. He is a true brother. Once again, it’s an interesting letter in which it seems as if John is almost writing this book and letter as a friend that is guiding and directing his son into the right people; because as we come to verse 12, the contrast is now Demetrius as compared to Diotrephes. So, you have the one who is aggressively hostile towards some of the people in the church; then you have the other one who is demonstrating the reality of the love. Once again, if you have somebody being selective

in the people that they love, then it's not really the love of God. When we pick up in verse 12, he gives that example. You can see a father saying, "Son, you can trust this guy."

Now, interesting place in which we are. Once again, it's revealing to us that you can't always be in a place where you can help, but you can put your family in the hands of somebody you can trust. You want to look for someone that is actually living what they say; not just saying what they say.

So, he says in verse 12, "Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone..."

What a great phrase that is. Everyone in the body of Christ go, "That's the guy; because we know that he loves God, and he loves God's people. We've seen the reality of that in the way he has lived his life." That's kind of seen in Acts 6; if you remember when they needed to find some good men to help take care of the widows that were being neglected. How do you choose good men? How do you know who the good men are? Well, the wonderful thing about the church, and I would say a good church, is that a good church recognizes truth. You couldn't go out into the world or any audience, and say to them, "Ok, what I need you guys to do is tell me, in this room, who would be a good person to leave my son with?" You would hear a lot of crazy things for a lot of crazy different reasons, but the wonderful thing about a church is that they would all be in unity about who to leave them with. "Who would you entrust your mother with?" is basically the case here with the widows. Who would you entrust with her? Acts 6:2 says,

"So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

(Acts 6:3) Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation..."

If you look in the passage, does it say anything about a degree? I'm not against degrees. I'm just asking you; does it say anything about a degree?

"... full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."

You want somebody that cares for the people; that they don't just see it as a job to do, but they see it as people to love. So, they have to be full of the Spirit. Why? The Spirit is love, joy, and peace. So, there has to be that characteristic and nature in them in order for them to take care of people. There are a number of you that I would say, "Yeah, take care of my mom. I'll leave," because I feel great confidence that you love the one that you're caring for. So, we're going to choose these people, "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4)

Now, watch verse 5, "The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit..."

In a way, we're clarifying what a good church looks like. Where would you hope to place somebody to strengthen them? Place them in a body that recognizes what truth looks like. You

walk into a church, and you realize that some churches are just facades; there's nothing real there. Then you walk into others, and you realize these people actually know what truth looks like. If you were to ask the different ones "Who would you recommend for this?", most of them would be pointing to the same ones. "This guy is walking in this way", "this guy can teach you in this way", "This woman can encourage you in this way" or "This person can strengthen you in this way." You would know who to encourage because it's a church that is walking in truth. Therefore, truth is recognizable. So, in this particular setting, you actually see them being able to recognize truth. That's fundamentally what John is saying in 3 John 1:3, "I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth." How do we know that he's walking in truth? The family that he was in was a family of truth and they recognized what truth looked like. If in fact you're going to recommend a church, you need to find a church that actually is a place where godliness is discerned and can be affirmed. The passage is saying, "This is a godly person; we therefore affirm this person as a person that we would recommend."

Now, he not only states in 3 John 1:12 that he received a good testimony from everyone, but if you look at the second phrase here, "and from the truth itself." The wonderful thing about the message of truth is that it is truth itself. So, the church, as Paul will write in 1 Timothy 3:15, is "the pillar and support of the truth." So, you're dealing with a place where truth is proclaimed, and, the key point, lived out. I'll give you a couple of examples, and we'll keep it in the same book, Philippians. We've mentioned this before, but in Philippians 2, one of the things that Paul wants to do is clarify that here's a guy that you can be assured will bring you the truth; also, in deed will exemplify the truth. In Philippians 2:19, his point is "But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition."

(Philippians 2:20) For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

(Philippians 2:21) For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 2:22) But you know of his proven worth..."

We are talking about somebody that not only proclaims the word but lives it out. Of course, he goes on to talk about Epaphroditus.

When you go into Philippians 3, Paul gives himself as an example. The example that he gives is interesting; in which he reveals that there are some people that are boasting that they are "great and wonderful" and that "you should follow them because they're Jews of Jews and they have all these credentials behind them." Paul says that you don't want to put confidence in that. He said that you want to ask yourself, "What does following Christ look like?" In this particular case, it was necessary for Paul to be willing to surrender his Judaism and all the things that came with that; all the degrees and the pedigree that came with being a Jew of the Jews. He says, "I threw away all of the trophies because I didn't want you thinking that's what following Christ was about. Then, his statement in verse 7 is, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

(Philippians 3:8) More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

(Philippians 3:9) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ..."

Now, there's got to be some genuineness if you're throwing out stuff that at one time was really valuable to you.

He says this in verse 10, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;"

In other words, "I count it a privilege to suffer for His name." Now, it's one thing for somebody to proclaim how wonderful it is, "tis so sweet to follow Jesus and to love Him," but it's another thing to go out and suffer for the sake of Christ and call it a privilege. It's hard to be fake in that realm.

He goes on and says, "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

(Philippians 3:12) Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 3:13) Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

(Philippians 3:14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 3:15) Let us therefore, as many as are perfect..."

Now, he's talking about somebody that is mature.

"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

(Philippians 3:16) however, let us keep living..."

It's bizarre; he doesn't say, "let us keep teaching how this is about," but he says, "we have to keep living this in order to be an example to you."

"However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

(Philippians 3:17) Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us."

Watch the pattern. Watch what they do.

Now, at this juncture, you're probably asking yourself, "Yeah, but what's the pattern?" Well, the pattern is very simple; "love one another as I have loved you." Proclaim the name of Christ and that it's all Him. It's not me. Always elevate Christ above all; but when you love Him, you love the brethren just like Christ loved. The passage doesn't seem to be conveying that it's an option. More specifically, it seems to be conveying that it's that which literally defines truth if in fact you're actually doing this.

Once again, if I could have you turn back a few pages, into 1 John 3. His statement is that the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. Now, Paul talks about there being those that have a form of godliness. In fact, there are those that are going to actually look like light. He says, "for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14) How do they do that? Well, they do something "good" or "nice"; they give a lot of money to something. There's a lot of things that you can do that looks really "nice" but the question isn't "Are they nice?" The question is "Are they godly?" and "Is it the kind of love that is shown by Christ?" That's the question that you really want to ask yourself; because he will go on to say that there are even those that will call themselves "apostles of Christ." So, just because they're saying it doesn't mean they are.

So, as you look at 1 John 3:14, he says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." He couldn't get clearer than that.

(1 John 3:15) "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

We'll put it another way, no person hating has the love and the life of Christ.

(1 John 3:16) "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

(1 John 3:17) But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

(1 John 3:18) Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

That's the word becoming flesh; because up to the point, we're just talking about it, but now the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. Now, you begin to see that person actually does live that and this person actually does care. It is that which begins to strengthen us.

So, what are you looking for? Well, you're looking for a place where godliness is assured and affirmed clearly; you're looking for a place where truth is proclaimed and actually lived out. If you look here in 3 John, he ends with, "and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true." That's an interesting phrase: "you know that what we're saying is true." You go, "Well, that's not much of an argument." Actually, it is.

If you look with me in John 19, John uses the same phrase. It's very interesting in the way that he uses it. In John 19, he talks about what he saw on the cross; clearly, how marvelous it was that Christ declared "It is finished" on the cross. He saw truth. Jesus said, "I love you." Then, you see Him on the cross dying and taking your sins, and you go, "Now, that's truth. He did love me." You can't deny that.

He says in John 19:34, "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." This is an interesting picture of the blood being sacrificed; which is selfless love. Then, the water coming out is the cleansing power of that selfless love.

He says in John 19:35, "And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth..."

Now, John is saying, "I know I'm telling the truth." Then you say, "But John, do they know that you're telling the truth?"

Then, he states in John 21:24, "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true."

Did you see the phrase? It kind of changed, "I know I'm telling the truth;" then, it turns and says, "Now, we know he's telling the truth." You go, "How do we know?" Here's the point, you need to be in a place where the Spirit of God is so strong that the Spirit of God is affirming "Now, that's truth." John talks about that specifically. He says that you have no need for anybody to teach you anything; the Spirit bears witness in your spirit that it's true. When you're in a place where truth rings true, you know you're in the right place. If you're a Christian, you have the Spirit of truth within you. That's why John can say, "You know this is true." You say, "How do I know this is true?" It rings true, right? You know I'm telling the truth because you know my life; you know the church; but you know in your heart what truth looks like. The Spirit moves in your heart and goes, "That's the truth." I can see the sincerity of the person as they even talk to me sometimes, and the love of Christ as they lighten up when they begin to share those things. It's no longer an academic exercise; it really is a very personal relationship with Christ, and you want to be in a church that does that. It causes that sense of "I know this." I mean, you ask me how I know. Well, I know He's in my heart. He's conveying that truth within my heart. The wonderful thing about this is that he's establishing this young man in this setting.

I hesitate to bring this up because I can't really give you clarity about how I feel towards this particular passage with Demetrius, but we're going to put it in the realm of "we don't know." The interesting thing to me is that the name Demetrius is only mentioned two places in the Bible. It's mentioned here and in Acts 19. The one in Acts 19 is talking about Demetrius being an idol builder in Ephesus, and he begins stirring up the crowds. Paul is in there preaching, and Demetrius says, "This man is causing everybody to forsake the goddess Artemis." So, the crowd begins shouting out and a mob starts forming. Then, all kinds of things begin to happen. When you come to the end of Paul's life, he talks about Alexander, who did him much harm. He was an idol maker so to speak. He doesn't mention Demetrius. Now, I don't know why Scripture

doesn't clarify, but there's usually a good reason. Oftentimes, the reason is that the Spirit might reveal to you what's being said. So, I'm going to tell you what the Spirit is telling me. The Spirit is telling me that John is saying, "Here's a man that was once known for this, but now, trust Me, he's changed." I think one of the reasons why his statement is "we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true," is it's one of those statements that maybe it's made that seems almost impossible to believe. How is it that somebody could change?

If you remember the book of Philemon when Paul was writing to Philemon. Philemon had a person that worked for him by the name of Onesimus and Onesimus had stolen from him. Paul had met him in prison, and he sent a letter to Philemon saying, "He's good now. He has received the Lord and he's good. You need to receive him back. Philemon is probably going, "I can't trust the guy. He stole from me; he took everything. I don't want to receive him back." Paul says, "Receive him back as a brother." You're thinking, "I don't know if I could do that."

It's interesting that in Colossians 4:7, Paul ends this letter saying, "As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information."

(Colossians 4:8) For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

(Colossians 4:9) and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number..."

"Oh, you mean the thief?" No longer the thief, but the one who has been changed.

The wonderful thing about our faith is that somebody may not be walking in truth, but they can change. They can be so new in Christ that like with Onesimus, you can actually recommend this person as a faithful brother. I think it's true with Demetrius; that he's the same guy. You can argue with me, that's fine. I don't have to be right on this, but the sense is that why the ambiguity? Why only have two places that this name is mentioned? It's very interesting. Let me just add this, the letter is addressed to the region of Ephesus. That's where Demetrius lived. So, we see this interesting picture. Sometimes I try to avoid dropping names, but I've oftentimes thought about Josh Lindsay when he first came. I know he first came into the body, and he was basically drug in. I remember him being upset about the fact that he even had to come to church or would come. I also remember him not liking me; being very vocal about that. I also remember the hurt and the pain that he had caused his family. I remember him being in jail, and Michele calling me, "What do I do?" and I said, "Leave him there." I remember the day that he started sharing with me how God was changing his life. I mean, talk about dropping drugs cold turkey. He just did it. It wasn't a long process. The Lord changed his heart. He received him as Lord and Savior, and he just stopped. From there on for a number of years after that, I started discipling him. I could see the fervor of this young man and his love for the Lord. There's no doubt in my mind that he has the Spirit of God within him, and that truth is reigning in him. When you tell him to do something, he doesn't sort of work on it; he did it. There's that zeal of

truth that is just undeniable. I have no problem to this day recommending, "You can go talk to him. He'll be a brother that you can trust."

Truth has a way of revealing itself, and it's true that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17) There are those that may have had bad pasts, but not today; not anymore. God can use this in such a great way. How wonderful it is that we can build up one another, and that we can recommend people. Look for a church like that.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we give You thanks for Your goodness and Your lovingkindness and Your building of this body. Lord, you have brought to us truth-seekers; it's by virtue of that, that these truth-seekers actually begin to recognize truth and affirm truth; they live it. They don't just talk about it; they actually live it. That truth just rings true in our hearts. We know that there are those that You have so transformed, that we have every confidence of recommending. How comforting that is to us as fathers, as ones that in the past have maybe been over somebody but might not be in the position where they could always be. To be able to place them in a place that is recommendable; in a body that actually loves them.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm just going to ask you to be that kind of person. For how wonderful it is when we can recommend you; knowing that you're going to proclaim Christ above all and that you're going to love the brethren just like Jesus did. No selfish ambition, just selflessness. If you do that, many will recommend you, and you're going to find something magnificent happening. God will start bringing people into your path that you can minister to. God will begin opening doors. I don't even know if Demetrius knew that he was being recommended by John. I don't know if he knew that or not, but he probably woke up one day and had people knocking on his door. God's going to give you many opportunities to serve. You just need to start walking in truth.