**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 88**

**3 John 1:1-5**

The elder,

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Do I have more dear friends in the church or outside of the church? Why?

2. Who are my dear friends in the church? Why are they my dear friends?

3. If I were to limit my social media friends to my actual friends, how large will my network be? Why?

4. How often do I pray for the good health of other people? Why?

5. What would other Christians say about the kind of person I am? Why?

***Insight:***

John wrote to a Christian named Gaius. This was a common name at that time and there are several men named Gaius mentioned in the New Testament. There was Gaius from Macedonia (Acts 19:29) and Gaius from Derbe (Acts 20:4) both described as having traveled with Paul. He also mentioned a Gaius whose hospitality Paul and the church enjoyed (Romans 16:23). There was also the Gaius whom Paul baptized (1 Corinthians 1:14). So it's possible that John was writing to any of them or to another individual named Gaius. That we are not sure about this does not matter as the message is not affected by us not knowing which Gaius John was referring to. That God has not chosen to provide further details means that this was not important in order for the letter to serve its purpose.

John calls Gaius his "dear friend". The word appears many times in the New Testament and is often used to describe fellow Christians. How many of our brothers and sisters in the church would we consider as dear friends and how many are just acquaintances to us?

Because of social media, the concept of "friend" may be watered down. In social media, a friend may simply be someone you choose to include in your network even if you have not talked to them personally or that you barely know them. We even add as "friends" people who we really don't know personally, but whom we only know about or know about us. We even add people whose values we don't or should not approve of. But while we accept that this is how social media treats friendship, as Christians we should hold to a deeper standard.

We should develop and maintain deep friendships in the church. We fool ourselves into thinking that we have a lot of friends simply because we have a large network in social media. What is important is how many dear friends we actually have. In our world where technology allows us to connect to many people superficially, we need to make the effort to know people deeply. Let us make use of the technology available to us now to have meaningful sharing of hearts and not just have shallow conversations. In the digital age we find ourselves in, it is easier to share information but harder to express our hearts. We need to understand that even though we live in the age of instant messaging, deep friendships take time. Let's share our emotions not just our emojis. Let's share things meaningful to us and not just memes.

John's prayer is that his dear friend would enjoy good health. Our health is important. Taking care of our bodies is a spiritual issue as we should treat our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. We are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. We are supposed to honor God with our bodies. So, taking care of our bodies is an obligation to God. When we lack sleep because we stay up late watching videos, playing games, working, or any such activity, we are not honoring God. When we don't eat healthy food or get enough exercise daily, we are not treating our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies belong to God. Would he be pleased with how we are using our bodies?

During the pandemic it has become even more crucial that we keep our bodies healthy. But being at home may make it harder to be healthy because of our sedentary lifestyle and our tendency to oversleep and overeat. It may be best to look at our extended time at home not as a vacation or a time to indulge ourselves but as a training camp. Let's look at this situation as a time to strengthen ourselves spiritually and physically. Given this mindset what should our schedules look like?

As we take care of our health we should also pray for each other's good health. We need to be concerned about each other's physical condition. Both our body and spirit must be pleasing to God.

Christians testified about Gaius' faithfulness to the truth. Will other Christian's testify about our faithfulness as well? Perhaps Gaius was going through some trials and his faithfulness to the truth was being tested. Perhaps his faithfulness was seen in how he took take of brothers and sisters even though they were strangers to him. How are we doing in helping Christians we do not know personally?

Let us have more dear friends by taking care of each other's spiritual and physical health.