

“No Greater Joy”

by Wayne Goff

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” – 3 John 4.

The aged apostle John is overjoyed to hear that his beloved son in the faith, Gaius, continues to walk in the truth! He has been saddened to learn of Diotrephes (v. 9) and his evil ways, but his joy over Gaius surpasses even that sadness.

The apostle Paul once said *“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”* (1 Cor. 4:15). No doubt he was greatly disturbed to learn of the false teachers at Corinth who had turned many of his “children” away from him! Satan is ever seeking whom he may devour.

Paul spoke of losing converts when he said, *“If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss;...”* (1 Cor. 3:15). Only those who have taught and converted others know the **deep grief** that comes from hearing or seeing one of them fall away into sin! The gospel preacher **lives** to see others obey the gospel and remain faithful to the Lord. It **kills** his soul when one of his “children” turns away from God either deliberately or because of deception.

Though John undoubtedly is **not** referring to his own *physical* children, the application can certainly be made. Parents who have sacrificed their youth bringing up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4), not to mention caring for their temporal necessities (2 Cor. 12:14) have **no greater sorrow** than to see a child turn away from the Faith. It pierces the very depths of your heart, and challenges your own faith and determination to carry on. It forever eats at your soul and causes a sorrow and grief that only parents can know.

So when John writes to his beloved Gaius and says *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth”* – I understand and agree. May God grant some of my children the time necessary to turn back to God from their current unbelief! May God give me and my wife the courage and strength to carry on faithfully if they never do.

John wrote also to the “*elect lady*” and said, *“I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth,...”* (2 Jn. 4). Some things are *ever* on your mind, and *never* leave. May faithful parents of unfaithful children everywhere have opportunity to rejoice again some day.

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