

# 3 John Commentary

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## STUDY GUIDE

### 3 JOHN

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H questions.

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))*

That said, below are the 5W/H questions for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge)...

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### 3 John 1:1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

KJV 3 John 1:1 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

BGT 3 John 1:1 πρεσβυτερος Γαλιου γαπητη, νγαπητην ληθε.

NET 3 John 1:1 From the elder, to Gaius my dear brother, whom I love in truth.

CSB 3 John 1:1 The Elder: To my dear friend Gaius: I love you in the truth.

ESV 3 John 1:1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

NIV 3 John 1:1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

NLT 3 John 1:1 This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth.

NRS 3 John 1:1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

NJB 3 John 1:1 From the Elder: greetings to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in truth.

NAB 3 John 1:1 The Presbyter to the beloved Gaius whom I love in truth.

YLT 3 John 1:1 The Elder to Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth!

MIT 3 John 1:1 The senior [surviving apostle] to our loved one, Gaius, whom I love truly.

GWN 3 John 1:1 From the church leader. To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love because we share the truth.

- **elder:** 2Jn 1:1 1Pe 5:1 3Jn 1:1
- **the beloved:** Ac 19:29 20:4 Ro 16:23 1Co 1:14
- **whom I love in truth:** 2Jn 1:1 2Jn 1:2,3 1Pe 1:22,23 1Jn 3:18 3Jn 1:1

#### Related Passages:

1 Peter 1:22-23 Since you have in **obedience to the truth** purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

3 John 1:1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in **truth**.

John 8:31-32 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know **the truth**, and **the truth** will make you free." (Where do we find truth? One source, the only sure source, is God's Word of Truth - 2Ti 2:15b, Jas 1:18).

Colossians 1:5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the **word of truth**, the gospel

Galatians 2:5; But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the **truth of the gospel** would remain with you.

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the **truth of the gospel**, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Galatians 5:7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying **the truth**?

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith

in **the truth**.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of **the truth**.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of **the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

1 John 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of **the truth**.

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

## **GREETING TO GAIUS**

[John MacArthur](#) outlines this short epistle:

- I. The Commendation Regarding Christian Hospitality (1–8)
- II. The Condemnation Regarding Violating Christian Hospitality (9–11)
- III. The Conclusion Regarding Christian Hospitality (12–14)

[Guzik](#) entitles Third John "Following Good Examples."

The purposes of John's two short epistles are virtual opposites for Second John was written to warn not to show hospitality to false teachers, while Third John was written to encourage hospitality to teachers of the Gospel. The immediate situation in 3 John is that there was a man named Diotrephes who was anything but hospitable to itinerant ministers and John "calls him out" as we might say today!

[Irving Jensen](#) summarizes the key words in this short letter - Truth, Walk, Receive, Good, Evil, Works, Witness. Jensen adds "The local church is prominent in the lines of 3 John. As you study the letter, keep before your mind the church of the twentieth (21st) century. Observe what the epistle teaches, interpret the meanings, and apply these to the contemporary scene. Of course, because of its brevity, the epistle cannot speak about many of the aspects of church life. But it does single out important items, thereby fulfilling its intended purpose....Make a list of ten practical lessons for today taught by this epistle.

I like how [Charles Swindoll](#) summarizes the tone and emphasis in each section - (3Jn 1:1-8) = Confirming > "Keep it up!" (3Jn 1:9-11) = Denunciating > "Stop it!" (3Jn 1:12) = Endorsing > "Good for you!"

[Brian Bell](#) subtitles 3 John "**3 Men and A Church** - John confronts a church problem encouraging Gaius & Demetrius, discussing the problems caused by Diotrephes. 3 men all professing Christians. 1. What a great glimpse we get into a 1st century church & into the lives of 3 of its members. 2. Churches run into problems, & will, as long as saved sinners inhabit them

**Warren Wiersbe** - One of the key words in this letter is witness (3 John 3, "testified"; 3 John 6, 12, "report, bear record, record"). It means not only the words that we say but the lives that we live. Each Christian is a witness, either a good one or a bad one. We are either helping the truth (3 John 8) or hindering it. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**The elder** ([presbuteros](#)) **to the beloved** ([agapetos](#)) **Gaius, whom I love** ([agapao](#) - [present tense](#)) **in truth** ([aletheia](#)) - **The elder** uses the definite article (*ho presbuteros*) indicating he was well known or familiar, not to mention that he was the only surviving apostle which would add gravitas to his designation as "the" elder. He was likely the most revered individual in the early church at this time which makes Diotrephes reaction in 3Jn 1:9-10 even more egregious! The word [presbuteros](#) is used originally of seniority in age as in Luke 15:25. Afterward it was used as a term of rank or office. The "I" is emphatic.

**Gaius** is the recipient of 3 John - He has quite a spiritual resume' - beloved (John uses this FOUR TIMES! Gaius was "prized", "valued" - 3Jn 1:1, 2, 5, 11), hospitable (3Jn 1:5, 6, 8), faithful (obedient) (3Jn 1:5), known for his love (3Jn 1:6), a man who continually walked in the truth (3Jn 1:3) and was supportive (3Jn 1:5-6). The name **Gaius** means "happy" or "one who rejoices," and this man seems to have known the joy that comes from serving the Lord. In the Greek order Gaius comes first so literally "Gaius the beloved."

**Beloved** is a term of endearment and is someone that you love, and someone you are deeply devoted to.

**MacArthur** on **beloved** - The rich term [agapetos](#) (beloved) can include not only the thought that this Gaius was loved by the Christian community (cf. its use in Acts 15:25; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 2 Peter 3:15), but also by the Lord (cf. Rom. 1:7; Eph. 5:1). (See

**Strauss on beloved** - This form of address is used only among believers, "the elect of God, holy and *beloved*" (Colossians 3:12). While God loves all men unconditionally (John 3:16), He loves His own children in a special sense. On numerous occasions He referred to Christ as "My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17; 12:18; 17:5). Thus to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father extends that same measure of love. When Christ spoke to the Father concerning those who loved Him, He said, "That the world may know that Thou hast... loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:23). Earlier in one of His famous discourses He said, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father" (John 14:21) and "If a man love Me... My Father will love him" (John 14:23), and again, "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me" (John 16:27). Since we are "accepted in the beloved [Christ]" (Ephesians 1:6), we too are God's beloved ones. Peter, Paul, and John used this term frequently in their writings. It is the Holy Spirit's designation of the children of God. (See 2 Peter 3:1, 8, 14, 15, 17 and 1 John 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11.) Gaius was a beloved one in Christ. ([Epistles of John](#))

**I love (agapao - present tense) in truth (aletheia)** - This emphasizes that genuine biblical love is found in the sphere ("atmosphere") of biblical truth.

**MacArthur** - the love John spoke of here is the unique love that believers have for those who are in Christ and faithful to the truth (John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 12:10; 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5). (See [MacArthur Commentary](#))

**Vine on in truth** - The absence of the article here indicates the meaning "in the sphere of truth," ([locative of sphere](#)) that is, in all sincerity, in contrast to a profession of love that was actually hypocritical.

*The Truth makes true love possible*

-- B F Wescott

**NET NOTE on in truth** - The prepositional phrase  $\epsilon\nu\ \lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  (en alētheia) in 3 John 1 is similar to 2 John 1, although it is not qualified here as it is there (see 2 John 1). This is not merely the equivalent of an adverb ("truly"), but is a theological statement affirming the orthodoxy of Gaius, to whom the letter is addressed. "Truth" is the author's way of alluding to theological orthodoxy in the face of the challenge by the opponents (see 1 John 3:19).

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**Elder (4245) presbuteros** the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) referred to men who were older or more senior with no negative connotations but rather a sense of venerability. **Presbuteros** is transliterated into English as "presbyter" (a leader in one of the Jewish communities--especially a member of the [Sanhedrin](#)--or of the early Christian churches) and from which the word "priest" (from Late Latin presbyter) was derived.

**Beloved (27) agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22+) means beloved, dear, very much loved "prized", "valued." **Agapetos** describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). Agapetos is used only of Christians as united (by covenant, the New Covenant) with God and/or with each other in love. (Matt. 3:17; Acts 15:25; Rom. 1:7; Phil. 2:12; Jas. 1:16; 1 Pet. 2:11).

**Agapetos** describes "one who is in a very special relationship with another" (BDAG) and in secular Greek is used mostly of a child, especially an only child to whom all the love of his parents is given (cf use by the Father describing His only Son and Abraham describing his "only son" in Ge 22:2). BDAG adds that **agapetos** "pertains to one who is dearly loved, dear, beloved, prized, valued (papyri, LXX; pseudepigrapha) indicating a close relationship, especially that between parent and child."

In the context of the New Testament agape love speaks of God's divine and infinite love, a love that seeks the ultimate spiritual welfare of the one loved. **Agapetos** could be translated "divinely loved ones."

**John's uses of agapetos** in his epistles (no uses in his Gospel or the Revelation) - 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:2; 3 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:11

**Love (verb) (25) agapao** Note that **agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice (Spirit initiated). Love not from affection but based on a decision of the will. Not an impulse from the feelings. Does not run with the natural inclinations thus needs supernatural energy to carry out. Loves the unlovely and unlovable. A love that is lacking in much of the body of Christ. Sacrificial love exemplified by Jesus Who loved us enough to leave heaven, come to earth, take on a human form, be spit on and mocked, crowned with a crown of thorns, nailed to a cross, abused, and have a spear thrust into His side. He loved the church enough to die. That's sacrificial love.

To unconditionally, sacrificially love. The love God Himself is. Not sentimental or emotional but obedient as act of will desiring another's highest good. Unconditional so still given if it's not received/returned! Agape gives & is not withheld. This quality of love is

not activated by any virtue in the person loved.

Agapao is primarily matter of will rather than emotions & the fact we are commanded to love indicates that it is something we can choose to do. If it were an uncontrollable emotion that swept over us at unexpected moments, we could scarcely be held accountable. This does not deny, however, that the emotions can be involved. Agapao is impossible for unconverted to manifest this divine love & in fact it is impossible even for a believer to demonstrate it in his own strength. It can only be exhibited by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Love's perfect expression on earth in the Lord Jesus Christ & not surprisingly Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive meaning in NT

**Wuest** writes that "Agapao speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved.

**Truth** (225) **aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is (this idea is discussed more below). The basic understanding of aletheia is that it is the manifestation of a hidden reality (eg, click discussion of Jesus as "the Truth"). For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?" Therefore when you speak the truth, you are manifesting a "hidden reality". Does that make sense? An parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = Mk 5:24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30, 31-32), but when she became "aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth " (Mk 5:33) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods.

**Truth** then is the correspondence between a **reality** and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the **reality**. To say it another way, **words spoken or written** are **true** when they correspond with **objective reality**. Persons and things are **true** when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get". Hence a truth is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth. Since God is Himself the great reality, that which correctly sets forth His nature is pre-eminently the Truth of Creation ([Natural Revelation](#)) and the Truth of Scripture ([Special Revelation](#)). Thus it is not surprising that rebellious, sinful men actively hold down or suppress the Truth of Creation (and the glorious Creator) (Ro 1:18+) and even exchange the truth, the clearly manifested (and objective) reality (Creation) for the lie (Ro 1:25+).

**Aletheia - 111x in 98v - certainly\*(2), most(1), rightly\*(1), truly\*(2), truth(104).** (NOTE FREQUENT USE OF "TRUTH" IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - EMPHASIZED IN BOLD FONT) - Matt. 22:16; Mk. 5:33; Mk. 12:14; Mk. 12:32; Lk. 4:25; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 22:59; **Jn. 1:14; Jn. 1:17; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:24; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 8:32; Jn. 8:40; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:7; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:19; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 18:38;** Acts 4:27; Acts 10:34; Acts 26:25; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 1:25; Rom. 2:2; Rom. 2:8; Rom. 2:20; Rom. 3:7; Rom. 9:1; Rom. 15:8; 1 Co. 5:8; 1 Co. 13:6; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 12:6; 2 Co. 13:8; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:14; Gal. 5:7; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:21; Eph. 4:24; Eph. 4:25; Eph. 5:9; Eph. 6:14; Phil. 1:18; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:6; 2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Tim. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 3:8; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:1; Tit. 1:14; Heb. 10:26; Jas. 1:18; Jas. 3:14; Jas. 5:19; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 2:2; **1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:6; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:8; 3 Jn. 1:12**

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**NET NOTE on Gaius** - Little reliable information is available concerning the identity of the person to whom 3 John is addressed. Because the name **Gaius** was very common in the Roman Empire, it is highly unlikely that the person named here is to be identified with any of the others of the same name associated with Paul (1 Cor 1:14, Rom 16:23 [these two references are probably to the same person]; Acts 19:29, Acts 20:4). A 4th century tradition recorded in the *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.46.9 (ca. a.d. 370) states that John the Apostle ordained Gaius as bishop of Pergamum, but this is questionable because of the relatively late date. The only certain information about this individual must be obtained from 3 John itself, and there is not a great deal there. It is obvious that this person is well known to the author, but it is not so certain whether they had met personally or not because the report of Gaius' conduct toward the brothers is received secondhand by the author (v. 3). Nor can it be determined with certainty whether Gaius belonged to the same local church as Diotrephes (v. 9), or was himself the leader of another local congregation. It is clear that the author regarded him as orthodox (v. 3) and a valuable ally in the controversy with the secessionist opponents and their false Christology discussed at length in 1 John.

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## QUESTION - [Who was Gaius in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Several men in the New Testament share the name Gaius, a common name in the first century. All of these men were involved in the ministry of the apostles in one way or another.

**Gaius of Corinth.** Paul baptized a man named Gaius in Corinth—one of only two he baptized there (1 Corinthians 1:14). Later, toward the end of his [third missionary journey](#), when Paul wrote his [Epistle to the Romans](#), he was staying in Gaius's home, and Gaius included his greetings to the church in Rome (Romans 16:23).

**Gaius of Macedonia.** One of Paul's traveling companions during his third missionary journey was named Gaius. Luke identifies him as a Macedonian in Acts 19:29—Macedonia being a region in modern-day Greece. When a riot broke out in Ephesus, Gaius was one of the men seized by Demetrius and the other silversmiths. The mob dragged Gaius to the Ephesian theater and would likely have done him violence, but for the intervention of the city clerk (Acts 19:35–41).

**Gaius of Derbe.** Another of Paul's traveling companions on his third missionary journey was also named Gaius. Luke calls him "Gaius of Derbe" in Acts 20:4—Derbe being a city in Galatia in Asia Minor—to distinguish him from the Gaius mentioned in Acts 19. It seems this Gaius joined Paul's group in Greece and stayed with him through his incursion into Asia (modern-day Turkey), sailing ahead of Paul, Silas, and Luke and waiting for them in Troas (Acts 20:5).

**Gaius, John's friend.** The Epistle of 3 John is addressed to a man named Gaius who was a member of an unnamed church that John had the oversight of (3 John 1:1). John calls this man a "dear friend" (3Jn 1:1, 2, 11). Gaius is commended for his hospitality to traveling preachers of the gospel (3Jn 1:5, 6, 8); for his faithfulness (3Jn 1:5); for his love (3Jn 1:6); and for his walking in the truth (Jn 1:3). According to tradition this Gaius may be the one whom John appointed as bishop of Pergamum.

Two of the Gaiuses mentioned in the Bible were known for their hospitality, and that is probably why John Bunyan, needing a name for his innkeeper in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, chose the name "Gaius." Gaius's name means "happy" or "one who rejoices," and the men who bore that name in Scripture seem to have known the joy that comes from serving the Lord. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## To My Dear Friend

Read: 3 John

The elder, to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 3 John 1

What the apostle John did for his friend Gaius in the first century is a dying art in the twenty-first century. John wrote him a letter.

One writer for the New York Times, Catherine Field, said, "Letter-writing is among our most ancient of arts. Think of letters and the mind falls on Paul of Tarsus," for example. And we can add the apostle John.

In his letter to Gaius, John included hopes for good health of body and soul, an encouraging word about Gaius's faithfulness, and a note about his love for the church. John also spoke of a problem in the church, which he promised to address individually later. And he wrote of the value of doing good things for God's glory. All in all, it was an encouraging and challenging letter to his friend.

Digital communication may mean letter-writing on paper is fading away, but this shouldn't stop us from encouraging others. Paul wrote letters of encouragement on parchment; we can encourage others in a variety of ways. The key is not the way we encourage others, but that we take a moment to let others know we care for them in Jesus's name!

Think of the encouragement Gaius experienced when he opened John's letter. Could we similarly shine God's love on our friends with a thoughtful note or an uplifting call?

Lord, help us know how to encourage others who need a spiritual boost from us.

Encouraging words bring hope to the human spirit.

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - 3 John

This is another sample of the Apostle John's private correspondence. This letter was written to a generous and warm-hearted friend called Gaius, noted for loving hospitality, urging him to continue entertaining the travelling preachers, in spite of the bitter opposition of an autocratic and blustering Church official called Diotrephes.

## INTERESTING QUESTIONS 3 JOHN 1:2, 4, 5, 11

1. Was Gaius ill? (3Jn 1:2).
2. Was Gaius one of Paul's converts? Note: "My children" (3Jn 1:4).
3. Did Paul love Gaius very ardently? The word "Beloved" is repeated in this short letter, indicating ardent affection (3Jn 1:1, 2, 5, 11).
4. Was Gaius prospering spiritually in the things of God? (3Jn 1:2).

## **VARIOUS ASPECTS OF TRUTH 3 JOHN 1:1, 3, 4, 8**

As in his previous writings, John has much to say about Truth. Note the various aspects of Truth.

- I. An Indwelling. Truth is first regarded as being in the man. "The truth that is in thee" (3Jn 1:3).
- II. A Road. Truth is then viewed as a road on which, and within whose limits, the man walks. "Even as thou walkest in the truth" (3Jn 1:3).
- III. An Atmosphere. Truth is now considered as an atmosphere in which the man moves. "Walk in truth" (3Jn 1:4).
- IV. A Soil, in which love is rooted (3Jn 1:1). "I love in the truth."
- V. A Weapon (8). "Fellow-workers with truth" (R.V.). Suggesting truth as their powerful weapon in Christian Service.
- VI. A Companion. "Fellow-helpers to the truth" (3Jn 1:8), suggesting that in our pilgrimage we should make truth our companion.
- VII. Referee. Giving testimony in favour of these who walk in truth. "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself."

## **Well-Liked or Off-Key?**

SCRIPTURE: 3 John

**INTRODUCTION:** If we didn't have problems in our relationships, half the publishing industry would go out of business and three-fourths of the talk shows would go off the air. The tiny book of 3 John is about relationships among Christians, and we are introduced to three men.

1. Gaius—A Joy. His name meant "Rejoiced!" and he brought John joy by walking in the truth. Do you lift the spirits of others or depress them?
2. Diotrephes—A Jerk. John wasn't letting himself get tied in knots over Diotrephes, but he was nonetheless honest about the problem.
3. Demetrius—A Jewel. Perhaps the bearer of this letter, Demetrius was well-liked by everyone.

**CONCLUSION:** Charlie Cello grated on everyone's nerves. He was a constant irritation, off-key, striking a disharmonious cord. That is, until the Master Musician came, turned his strings, and made him a joyful addition to the orchestra. Does your personality need tuning up by the Master? Come, Thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart. . .

## **CHRISTIAN SUPPORT - 3 John 1-14 - Croft Pentz**

### **I. THE PLEASURE—3Jn 1:1-3**

1. Person—3Jn 1:1. Gaius a layman, who gave himself and money unto God.
2. Prospering—3Jn 1:2. God wants us to be healthy. (1) A healthy mind, (2) A healthy body, (3) A healthy soul. Compare with Exodus 15:26.
3. Proof—3Jn 1:3. Rejoicing because the people are still serving God in their daily lives.
4. Pleasure—3Jn 1:4. John rejoices as all Pastors do when they see Christians being faithful.

### **II. THE PARTNERS—3Jn 1:5-8**

1. Affection—3Jn 1:5. Love shown to the visiting Pastors, teachers and missionaries.
2. Action—3Jn 1:6. Showing kindness to God's servants by taking care of them while they work for God among the people.
3. Affect—3Jn 1:7. They did not accept money from sinners. They accepted money only from the Christians who were helped by them.
4. Attitude—3Jn 1:8. Felt it a duty to help in sharing the expenses of God's work. By doing so, they were partners in God's work.

### **III. THE PROBLEM—3Jn 1:9-12**

1. The man—3Jn 1:9. Diotrephes was a proud person, not willing to take orders from John. John had authority over him, but he



refused to accept it. Disobedience is the root of many sins.

2. The manners—3Jn 1:10. Diotrephes not only opposed John and other workers, he also encouraged others to follow his wicked ways. John would tell them about him when he came.

3. The message—3Jn 1:11–12. “Do not let Diotrephes hurt or influence you in any way toward God’s work.

### 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

KJV 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

BGT 3 John 1:2 γαπητ , περ π ντων ε χομα σε ε οδο σθαι κα για νειν, καθ ρ ε οδο τα σου ψυχ .

NET 3 John 1:2 Dear friend, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

CSB 3 John 1:2 Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health physically just as you are spiritually.

ESV 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul.

NIV 3 John 1:2 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.

NLT 3 John 1:2 Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.

NRS 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.

NJB 3 John 1:2 My dear friend, I hope everything is going happily with you and that you are as well physically as you are spiritually.

NAB 3 John 1:2 Beloved, I hope you are prospering in every respect and are in good health, just as your soul is prospering.

YLT 3 John 1:2 beloved, concerning all things I desire thee to prosper, and to be in health, even as thy soul doth prosper,

MIT 3 John 1:2 Cherished one, I pray that in all respects you are making good progress and that you are in good health, comparable to your spiritual prosperity.

GWN 3 John 1:2 Dear friend, I know that you are spiritually well. I pray that you're doing well in every other way and that you're healthy.

- above: Jas 5:12 1Pe 4:8
- that: Ps 20:1-5 Php 2:4,27
- **just as your soul prospers.:** 3Jn 1:3-6 Col 1:4-6 1Th 1:3-10 2:13,14,19,20 3:6-9 2Th 1:3 2:13 Phm 1:5-7 2Pe 1:3-9 3:18 Rev 2:9

## A PRAYER FOR REAL PROSPERITY

**Beloved** ([agapetos](#)), **I pray** ([euchomai](#)) **that in all respects you may prosper** ([euodoo](#)) **and be in good health** ([hugiaino](#)), **just as your soul** ([psuche](#)) **prosper** ([euodoo](#) - present tense is continually prospering) - While the verb [euchomai](#) can mean to wish something for someone, it seems fair to say that John is praying for Gaius. As a leader himself, he knows leaders stand in special need of prayer! **Pray** ([euchomai](#)) is in the present tense indicating John continually prays for him. Gaius body may have been suffering from bad health, but more important was that he had a healthy spiritual life! **You may prosper** ([euodoo](#)) is literally "have a prosperous journey." **Good health** ([hugiaino](#)) gives us our English word hygiene and hygienic.

**THOUGHT** - What a great prayer to pray for our brethren asking God that enabled by His Spirit and His Word we each might "have a prosperous journey," as we travel toward our eternal home with the Father and the



Son.

God is far more interested in the health of our souls  
than in the health of our bodies (although He provides for both).

John prays for Gaius to be blessed in all respects both physically and spiritually, **just as your soul prospers** emphasizing that (like the hymn says) it is "well with his (Gaius') soul!" In other words, John acknowledges that Gaius is doing well spiritually, and is praying that his physical health would match his excellent spiritual condition.

**Guzik** - comments on prosper and be in good health ""Both verbs [for prosper and be in health] belonged to the everyday language of letter writing" (Stott). This phrase is so common that sometimes it was condensed into only initials, and everyone knew what the writer meant just from the initials.. The abbreviation used in Latin was SVBEEV, meaning Si vales, bene est; ego valeo – "If you are well, it is good; I am well."

**Brian Bell** - May you have as much bodily strength as you have spiritual power! (not vice-versa). Whatever the condition of the outer man, the inner man was prospering. But note...the apostle was concerned for the temporal well-being of Gaius, & not only for his spiritual welfare. He must surely have learned this from Jesus whose concern for people's physical troubles is attested in all 4 Gospels. Certainly this is a biblical warrant for Christians today to pray for the temporal needs of others (**ED: I HEARTILY AGREE BUT MY EXPERIENCE IS THAT MANY IF NOT MOST PRAYERS TEND TOWARD THE TEMPORAL RATHER THAN THE ETERNAL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE. YES, PRAY FOR HEALTH, ETC, BUT PLEASE ADD THE PAULINE PRAYERS WHICH ARE ALMOST ALWAYS FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF THE RECIPIENTS -- I CHALLENGE YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION TO DAILY PRAY [NOT MEANINGLESS REPETITION BUT MEANINGFUL REPETITION!] Colossians 1:9-14 FOR ONE ANOTHER OVER THE NEXT YEAR AND WATCH WHAT GOD WILL DO IN THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF ALL! JUST A THOUGHT TO CONSIDER**).

**NET NOTE** adds that "It is the spiritual health which is to be the standard by which one's physical health is measured, not the other way round."

**just as your soul prospers.** *Just as it is well with your soul.* The equivalent contemporary idiom would be to speak of "spiritual" health as opposed to physical health. The author affirms that Gaius is indeed well off spiritually, and he prays that Gaius' physical health would match his spiritual health, i.e., that Gaius would be as well off physically as he is spiritually. It is the spiritual health which is to be the standard by which one's physical health is measured, not the other way round.

**W E Vine** - The spiritual life is to be uppermost, but the material affairs are not ignored. If the material dominates the spiritual the consequences are disastrous and the way is prepared for backsliding. The soul, the immaterial part of man's being is that which lives the higher life, and in the case of the spiritually minded believer is, together with the body, energized by the Spirit of God. See Hebrews 6:19; 10:39; 13:17; 1 Peter 2:11; 4:19.

**NET NOTE** on **soul** - The noun ψυχή (psuchē) is used 10 times in the Gospel of John and 2 times in 1 John; of these 6 of the uses in John and both in 1 John refer to a person's "life" (as something that can be laid down). In John 10:24 and John 12:27 the ψυχή is that part of a person where emotions are experienced; one's ψυχή is held in suspense or deeply troubled. This is, in other words, the immaterial part of a person as opposed to his physical existence. A close parallel is found in Philo, *Heir* 58 (285): "nourished with peace, he will depart, having gained a calm, unclouded life...welfare in the body, welfare in the soul (ψυχή)...health and strength...delight in virtues."

**Lehman Strauss** - The spiritual health of Gaius was robust. In his inner heart-life Gaius had been traveling a good road. Life for him had been a spiritually prosperous journey up to the time John had written to him, and there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that Gaius ever departed from the straight and narrow way. The Church of Christ needs more like him for she is plagued with sick saints. Many Christians are diet-conscious as regards the body but they give little or no attention to the soul. Today we see so much which is the very opposite from Gaius' condition. There is more bodily vigor than spiritual health. We may deduce from this verse that sound physical health does not always accompany sound spiritual health. The Church is beset with many and varied dangers from without, but none are so damaging right now as the spiritually sick saints within. God help us! ([Epistles of John](#))

*We go to crossfit to train our bodies,  
but too often we fail  
to go the old rugged Cross to train our **souls**!*

**William MacDonald** - Would we want our physical condition to correspond to our spiritual? Is it not sadly true that we take better care of our bodies than of our souls? That is why F. B. Meyer wryly remarked: "*It would not be desirable to express the wish of verse 2 to all our friends, because if their bodies were to correspond to the condition of their souls, they would suddenly fall into ill-health.*" Verse 2 flatly contradicts what is taught by many so-called "faith-healers." They contend that all sickness is a result of sin in

the life, and that if a person isn't healed, it's because of a lack of faith. This certainly wasn't true in Gaius' case. His spiritual condition was good, but his physical condition was not so good. This shows that one's spiritual state cannot be argued from the bodily one. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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**Pray** (wish) (2172) [euchomai](#) **euche** = a vow in Acts 18:18, a prayer in Jas 5:15) literally meant to speak out or utter aloud and came to mean as used by to express a wish. The idea can be to desire something, with the implication of a pious wish. To vow (this sense is primarily found in the Septuagint uses but is found in Acts 26:29). To pray, but in the NT the derivative [proseuchomai](#) is the more common verb for pray. **Euchomai** and **proseuchomai** are more general terms for prayer, while [deomai](#) conveys the sense of seeking to have a need met.

**Prosper** (succeed) (2137) [euodoo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **hodos** = journey) is literally to have a good journey, to lead along on a good path, guide well, have things turn out well. **Vine** "to help on one's way." **Euodoo** is found far more often in the Septuagint here it takes on the sense "to bring to a good conclusion," "to succeed." (e.g., Nehemiah's prayer in Neh 1:11) In some 40 instances God is the one to whom success is ascribed either directly or indirectly, and is in the passive voice (divine passive).

**Gilbrant** - The verb literally means "be led along a good road" or "have a good journey" (eu [2074], "good"; hodos [3461], "way"). Each of its uses in the New Testament (Romans 1:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 3 John 2) is clearly metaphoric. Euodoō describes prospering and succeeding in the normal courses of life, both materially and spiritually. It is important to note that the passive voice of this verb indicates or implies that God is the true source of our prosperity and success. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Depending on the context, [euodoo](#) means (a) of removal of difficulties in the way and being successful in accomplishing some activity or event (as in Ro 1:10 = success in going to Rome) (b) of material prosperity in daily avocation (c) of physical health (d) of spiritual health. KJV translates it as a "prosperous journey". In 1 Cor 16:2 - saving up whatever is possible, as much as one can.

**Euodoo** - 4 times in the NT (twice in 3Jn 1:2) - Ro 1:10 ("I may succeed"); 1Co 16:2 ("put aside and save as he may prosper"); 3Jn 1:2

**Good health** (5198) [hugiaino](#) from noun [hugies](#) = whole, healthy; English = hygiene, hygienic = making sick folk whole; figuratively right or accurate) means to be in good health, to be healthy and wholesome, referring to literal, physical health as in (Luke 7:10) Most of the NT uses of **hugiaino** are figurative, describing that which is free from admixture of error and generally referring to Christian teaching or doctrine which is to accurately or correctly reflect the Bible and God's will and way. True, incorrupt and unadulterated doctrine. Paul uses it of soundness in faith or doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 2:2) but here of Gaius' bodily health, as is shown by soul in the next clause.

In a secular use Plutarch records that "these are **sound** views about the gods and true" [Hugiaino](#) is used 12x in NT. The first three NT uses **hugiaino**, all by Dr Luke, refer to the literal meaning, **to be sound in health**, Jesus answering the criticism of the Pharisees and Scribes saying to them that

"It is not those who are **well** (**hugiaino** - KJV has "whole" - [present tense](#)) who need a physician, but those who are sick." (Lk 5:31)

**Soul** (life)(5590) [psuche](#) or **psyche** from **psucho** = to breathe, blow, English = psychology, "study of the soul") is the breath, then that which breathes, the individual, animated creature. However the discerning reader must understand that psuche is one of those Greek words that can have several meanings, the exact nuance being determined by the context. It follows that one cannot simply select of the three main meanings of psuche and insert it in a given passage for it may not be appropriate to the given context. The meaning of **psuche** is also contingent upon whether one is a dichotomist or trichotomist. Click an excellent article on [Soul](#) in the Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology; see also ISBE article on [Soul](#). [Click here for an in depth 10 PAGE discussion of PSUCHE/PSYCHE in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

**Wuest** on **psuche** - The soul (ψυχή) is the principle of individuality, the seat of personal impressions. It has a side in contact with both the material and the spiritual element of humanity, and is thus the mediating organ between body and spirit. Its meaning, therefore, constantly rises above life or the living individual, and takes color from its relation to either the emotional or the spiritual side of life, from the fact of its being the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions, and the bearer and manifester of the divine life-principle (πνεῦμα). Consequently Ψυχή is often used in our sense of heart (Luke 1:46; 2:35; John 10:24; Acts 14:2); and the meanings of ψυχή soul, and πνεῦμα spirit, occasionally approach each other very closely. Compare John 12:27, and 9:33; Matt. 11:29, and 1 Cor. 16:18. Also both words in Luke 1:47. In this passage ψυχή soul, expresses the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life. See Heb. 6:19; 10:39; 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:11; 4:19. John commonly uses the word to denote the principle of the natural life. See John 10:11, 15; 13:37; 15:13; 1 John 3:16; Apoc. 8:9; 12:11; 16:3. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

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## QUESTION - [Does 3 John 1:2 endorse the prosperity gospel?](#)

**ANSWER** - The apostle John addresses his [third letter](#) to Gaius, adding that John is praying that in all respects Gaius would prosper and be in good health (3 John 1:2). It is clear that John is referring not just to spiritual prosperity, as John adds “just as your soul prospers.” Isolating this verse from the context and from John’s other writings, one might suspect that John endorses the [prosperity gospel](#). After all, John tells Gaius, “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you.”

In the context John quickly shows that 3 John 1:2 does not endorse the prosperity gospel. In 3 John 1:3 he adds that he is glad that Gaius is walking in the truth, and in verse 4 John expresses his greatest joy is that his children walk in the truth—not that they prosper and be in good health. John commends Gaius and the church for their hospitality to the brethren, explaining that this kind of hospitality is appropriate (3 John 1:5–9). Just as it is important for believers to show hospitality and help meet the temporal needs of others, John expresses a genuine desire that Gaius prosper and be in good health—perhaps in part because Gaius is doing good with the resources he has. John has personal care for Gaius and simply wants him to be doing well.

As a friend, John has care and concern for Gaius, wishing for him to prosper and be in good health, but John does not endorse the prosperity gospel. In an earlier letter, John had written that full joy comes from fellowship with God and with other believers (1 John 1:4)—not from physical prospering and good health. In fact, John reminds his readers that prosperity in this present world does not last, as this world and the desires one might have in this world are all passing away (1 John 2:15–18). Further, brothers should be willing to lay down their own lives for each other (1 John 3:16). John is not putting a high value on prosperity and health—in fact, he is more focused on the soundness of his readers’ doctrine and their love for one another.

John’s Gospel is consistent with what he wrote in his letters. John presents unmistakably that true meaning in life is found in knowing God (John 17:3) through belief in Jesus (John 20:30–31). John recorded Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus told her that the one who comes to Jesus would never thirst (John 4:13–14) but would be filled to eternal life. The woman thought at first that Jesus was talking about actual water (John 4:14), but she soon recognized that He was talking about Himself as the one who could satisfy human need (John 4:29). She had learned an important lesson—prosperity and health are blessings, but that is not what Jesus was offering. He was offering her life by belief in Him.

John recorded a similar instance when Jesus fed five thousand people and then told them that He was the bread of life (John 10:35) and that those coming to Him would no longer hunger. He urged His listeners not to focus on food that perishes but to pursue the gift that Jesus was offering them, eternal life (John 10:27).

John understood that the gospel is not about prosperity and health—John was not endorsing the prosperity gospel; instead, he was proclaiming the gospel of Jesus that offers eternal life, which is of infinitely greater value than physical prosperity and health. Certainly, John prayed that Gaius would prosper and be in good health. It was natural for him to do so. But John understood those temporal blessings are not guaranteed, nor are they to be priorities in the Christian’s life.

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## [John Butler - Sermon Starters](#) - WISH 3 John 1:2

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 1:2).

This text is often misunderstood because it is not well translated, and, as a result, it is used by healers to propagate their false emphasis.

### FIRST—THE PERSON IN THE REQUEST

“Beloved” The request was made for Gaius who was a real dedicated Christian. Throughout the epistle things are said of Gaius that indicates his great dedication to the cause of the Lord. As an example. He walked according to the “truth” (3 John 1:3) which said he walked according to the Word of God. Furthermore the term “faithfully” (1 John 1:5) is used of him and it describes his Christian conduct and charity. No wonder John called him “Beloved.” John was not in the habit of showering people with complimentary terms unless they deserved it. And Gaius certainly deserved it, for his Christian walk was so exemplary.

### SECOND—THE PARTICULARS IN THE REQUEST

“Beloved, I wish above all things that though mayest prosper and be in good health.” The request/wish was twofold.

- Walk. “That thou mayest prosper.” “Prosper” does not have to do with money but with the excellence of his Christian walk. The term does not mean to be wealthy. Rather, it means to have a good walk in life. John wants Gaius to do well in the Christian faith. He wants him to continue to do well as he has been doing. We

can understand John's desire as Gaius had been doing very well in spiritual matters as we noted above.

- Well-being. "Be in good health." Gaius appears to have had some health problems and John the Apostle is wishing good health physically for him. This wish of John does not justify the health and wealth Gospel of which carnality is so fond. Believers need good health like anyone else, but our text does not make it the high priority that the healers would like to make it. We note this more thoroughly in our next point.

### THIRD—THE PRIORITY IN THE REQUEST

"As thy soul prospereth." The priority in this verse is upon the condition of the soul. The word translated "above" has given rise to much justification for the charlatan healers' emphasis. But the word should be translated "about" or "that" rather than "above." John is wishing that Gaius might experience a good life just as his soul prospered. Thus the important thing here is the prosperity of the soul. If most of us were to have our physical and secular life as good as our soul condition we would be in very bad shape indeed. If our looks were to correspond to our spiritual condition we would be very ugly. If our health was to correspond to our spiritual condition, we would be very sick. Let us keep our spiritual condition so well that it will be an aid to rest of our life.

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### David Jeremiah -AS YOUR SOUL PROSPERS

3 JOHN 1:2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Verse 2 contains a revealing concept: prospering in all things as your soul prospers. As I was studying this verse, I began to wonder what it would be like if one Sunday everyone arrived at church in the same physical condition that their souls were in. That is, our outward manifestation of "prosperity" would be in direct correlation to the prosperity of our souls. It might be a very interesting sight!

How would you arrive if that happened? In a wheelchair? On crutches? Would you need assistance getting in the door? Or would you arrive in fine shape, physically fit, because your soul was in such fine condition? John knew that Gaius was a godly man, so he did not hesitate to pray that he prospered in all things in the same way his soul prospered.

If the church is going to accomplish all it is supposed to, we need many more vigorous workers than we have now. We need people who are willing, like Gaius, to play a supporting role, empowering others in their spiritual walk. The Bible promises spiritual blessings for those willing to work in such a way. (BORROW [Sanctuary](#))

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### ILLUSTRATION - TRUE PROSPERITY -

The story is told of a Texas millionaire who wanted to be buried in his Cadillac. So when he died, the undertakers dug an enormous grave and placed the Cadillac on a huge lowering device. They dressed the corpse in his sportiest clothes, put a cigar in his mouth, seated him behind the steering wheel, and set the speedometer at 80 miles per hour.

The mourners gathered around the grave. As the unusual coffin slowly sank into the ground to the appropriate words of committal, a millionaire friend of the deceased brushed a tear from his eye and sighed, "Man, that's living!"

But, of course, it's not living—it's death! **True prosperity** is not to live as a millionaire and be buried in your Cadillac. **True prosperity** is to be rich toward God (Luke 12:21). **True prosperity** is to have a prosperous soul. The way to that eternal prosperity is to walk in the truth and in love, to submit to apostolic authority as revealed in the New Testament, and to imitate godly examples. Then it may be said of you, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers." And your pastors will have great joy to hear that you are walking in the truth.

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### [The Answers](#)

Beloved, now we are children of God. — 1 John 3:2

Today's Scripture : 1 John 3:1-9

The story is told that the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was sauntering through Berlin's famous Tiergarten one day, mentally probing the questions of origin and destiny that had been constantly perplexing him: Who am I? Where am I going?

A park-keeper, closely observing the shabbily dressed philosopher as he walked slowly with head bowed, suspected that Schopenhauer was a tramp. So he walked up to the philosopher and demanded, "Who are you? Where are you going?" With a pained expression, Schopenhauer replied, "I don't know. I wish somebody could tell me."

Are you ever perplexed by those same questions? Who am I? Where am I going? What a comfort it is to have God's authoritative answers in the Bible. Who are we? In 1 John 3, John calls his readers "children of God" (v.2). We become His children by receiving Jesus as our Savior from sin (John 1:12). And where are we going? John 14:1-6 tells us that one day He will receive us into a home He is preparing in heaven.

Our Maker is not only the Author of science and history, but He writes the story of every member of Adam's family—yours and mine. We can trust His answers. By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Open my ears, that I may hear  
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear,  
Everything false will disappear.  
—Scott

When you know Jesus, you know who you are and where you're going.

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**Norman Geisler** - 3 JOHN 2—Does this verse indicate that God desires us to be financially prosperous, as Word-Faith teachers argue?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Third John 2 says, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (NASB). Word-Faith teachers cite this verse in support of the prosperity gospel.

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The Greek word for "prosper" in this verse does not refer to financial prosperity but simply means "to go well with someone." In fact, the NIV translation correctly reflects this idea in its rendering of the verse: "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." In biblical times the wish for "things to go well," along with the wish for "good health," was a standard form of greeting. Financial prosperity is completely foreign to both this ancient greeting and 3 John 2. ([When Cultists Ask](#))

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### **Soul-health - C H Spurgeon Sermon Notes**

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3  
John 2

THE gospel made a marvelous change in John. Once he could call fire from heaven on opposers; now, having received the Holy Ghost, he is full of love and kind desires.

The gospel makes the morose cheerful, the gay serious, the revengeful loving. Coming to such a one as John, it made him the mirror of love. A man's private letters often let you into the secrets of his heart.

Instance Rutherford, Kirke White, Cowper, and John Newton.

In this letter, John gratefully wishes Gaius every blessing, and above all things better health.

Health is an invaluable mercy; it is never properly valued till lost.

But John puts soul-prosperity side by side with it. Man has two parts; the one corporeal and earthy, the other immaterial and spiritual. How foolish is the man who thinks of his body and forgets his soul, neglects the tenant and repairs the house, prizes the earthen vessel and yet despises the treasure!

### **I. WE WILL EXAMINE THE WORDS OF THE TEXT.**

1. "I wish"; more correctly, as in the margin, "I pray." Prayer is a wish sanctified. Turn your wishes into prayers.
2. "That thou mayest prosper." We may ask for prosperity for our friends, especially if, like Gaius, they serve God and his cause with their substance.
3. "And be in health." This is necessary to the enjoyment of prosperity. What would all else be without it?
4. "Even as thy soul prospereth." We are startled at this wish; the spiritual health of Gaius is made the standard of his outward prosperity! Dare we pray thus for many of our friends?

Dare we pray thus for ourselves? What would be the result if such a prayer were answered? Picture our bodies made like our souls.

Some would have fever, others paralysis, others ague, etc.

Let us bless God that the body is not the invariable index of the soul.

Few would care to have their spiritual condition expressed in their external condition.

## **II. WE WILL MENTION THE SYMPTOMS OF ILL-HEALTH.**

### **1. A low temperature.**

Lukewarmness is an ill sign. In business, such a man will make but little way; in religion, none at all.

This is terrible in the case of a minister.

This is dangerous in the case of a hearer.

### **2. A contracted heart.**

While some are latitudinarian, others are intolerant, and cut off all who do not utter their Shibboleth.

If we do not love the brethren, there is something wrong with us.

### **3. A failing appetite as to spiritual food.**

### **4. A difficulty in breathing.**

When prayer is an irksome duty, everything is wrong with us.

### **5. A general lethargy: unwillingness for holy service, want of heart, etc.**

**6. An ungovernable craving for unhealthy things.** Some poor creatures will eat dirt, ashes, etc. Some professors are ill in a like way, for they seek groveling amusements and pursuits.

## **III. WE WILL SUGGEST MEANS OF RECOVERY.**

We will not here dwell upon the means God uses, though he is the great Physician; but we will think of the regimen we must use for ourselves.

1. Seek good food. Hear a gospel preacher. Study the Word.

2. Breathe freely. Do not restrain prayer.

3. Exercise yourself unto godliness. Labor for God.

4. Return to your native air; breathe the atmosphere of Calvary.

5. Live by the sea. Dwell near to God's all-sufficiency.

6. If these things fail, here is an old prescription: "Carnis et Sanguinis Christi." This taken several times a day, in a draught of the tears of repentance, is a sure cure. God help you to practice the rules of the heavenly Physician!

**IV. WE WILL CONCLUDE WITH AN EXHORTATION.** Brother Christian, is it a small matter to be weak and feeble? Thou needest all thy vigor. Go to Calvary, and recruit thyself.

Sinner, thou art dead, but life and health are in Christ!

## **Nota Medica**

An ancient Roman wished that he had a window in his breast that all might see his heart, but a sage suggested that in such a case he would have urgent need of shutters, and would keep them closed. We could not afford to wear the signs of our spiritual condition where all could see. We should then need all our blood for blushing. C. H. S.

Sin is called in Scripture by the names of diseases. It is called the plague of the heart: I Kings 8:38. There are as many diseases of the soul as there are of the body. Drunkenness is a spiritual dropsy; security is a spiritual lethargy; envy is a spiritual canker; lust is a spiritual fever (Hosea 7:4). Apostasy or backsliding is the spiritual falling sickness; hardness of heart is the spiritual stone; searedness of conscience is a spiritual apoplexy; unsettledness of judgment is a spiritual palsy; pride a spiritual tumor; vainglory a spiritual itch. There is not any sickness of the body but there is some distemper of the soul that might be paralleled with it, and bear the name of it. — Ralph Robinson

The fact of the Scriptures furnishing nutriment and upbuilding to the soul is the most real experience of which we have knowledge. None of us, "by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature:" But how many, by taking in God's great thoughts, feeding on them, and inwardly digesting them, have added vastly to their spiritual stature! — A. J. Gordon, D.D.

If a portrait were taken of a person in strong, vigorous health, and another was taken of the same man after a severe illness, or when he had been almost starved to death, or weakened by confinement, we should scarcely recognize them as the likeness of the same man, the dear old friend we loved! Still greater would be the change could we draw the spiritual portrait of many a once hearty, vigorous saint of God, whose soul has been starved for want of the proper spiritual nourishment, or by feeding upon "ashes" instead of bread. — G. S. Bowes

Oh, that our friends were well in soul! We are not sufficiently concerned about this best of health! When they are well in soul we are



grieved to see them ailing in body; and yet this is often the case. The soul is healed, and the body is still suffering! Well, it is by far the smaller evil of the two! If I must be sick, Lord, let the mischief light on my coarser nature, and not on my higher and diviner part! C.H.S.

### 3 John 1:3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.

KJV 3 John 1:3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

BGT 3 John 1:3 χ ρ η ν γ ρ λ α ν ρ χ ο μ ν ω ν δ ε λ φ ν κ α μ α ρ τ υ ρ ο ν τ ω ν σ ο υ τ λ η θ ε , κ α θ ς σ ν λ η θ ε π ε ρ ι π α τ ε ς .

NET 3 John 1:3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, just as you are living according to the truth.

CSB 3 John 1:3 For I was very glad when some brothers came and testified to your faithfulness to the truth--how you are walking in the truth.

ESV 3 John 1:3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.

NIV 3 John 1:3 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

NLT 3 John 1:3 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.

NRS 3 John 1:3 I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth.

NJB 3 John 1:3 It was a great joy to me when some brothers came and told of your faithfulness to the truth, and of your life in the truth.

NAB 3 John 1:3 I rejoiced greatly when some of the brothers came and testified to how truly you walk in the truth.

YLT 3 John 1:3 for I rejoiced exceedingly, brethren coming and testifying of the truth in thee, even as thou in truth dost walk;

MIT 3 John 1:3 For I rejoice very much in the coming of brothers who testified about you in regard to the truth, just as you conduct your life in truth.

GWN 3 John 1:3 I was very happy when some believers came and told us that you are living according to the truth.

- I: 3Jn 1:4 2Jn 1:4 Php 1:4 1Th 2:19,20
- **when brethren came** : Ro 1:8,9 2Co 7:6,7 Eph 1:15,16 Col 1:7,8 1Th 3:6-9
- **how you are walking in truth.**: 2Jn 1:2,4 Ps 119:11

### A GLORIOUS TESTIMONY: WALKING IN THE TRUTH

**For I was very** (lian) **glad** ([chairo](#)) **when brethren** ([adelphos](#) - "from same womb") **came and testified** ([martureo](#)) **to your truth** ([aletheia](#)) - John had received the report of Gaius' **truth**, in context most likely meaning his faithfulness to the **truth**, because in context he was **walking in truth**, which means he was obedient to the **truth**, and like the old hymn says "Trust and obey, for there's no better way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey." Note John's use of ([aletheia](#)) 3 times in these first 3 verses and two more times in this short letter (3Jn 1:4, 8, 12) for a total of 6x in 5 verses, one of the most concentrated uses of this word in the Bible after John 8 (7x in 5v in that chapter). God's **truth** is foundational to the Christian life.

**When brethren came** ([erchomai](#) in present tense) - The present tense indicates repetition and shows that several visits had been paid to the elder, possibly by different groups of Christians. The idea is *coming from time to time*, and not coming on a single occasion, which would require the aorist. The important point is that they always had a good word about Gaius! Lord, increase his



tribe in our day when so many in the church also have one foot in the world!

**That is, how you are walking ([peripateo](#)) in truth ([aletheia](#))** - Gaius did not just talk the truth, but also walked the truth and others saw the truth in his walk! The **truth** of the Gospel of Jesus was in Gaius and Gaius walked in that **truth**, living in light of and power of the Gospel and of the Spirit. Gaius walked in the **truth** because he knew the **truth**. When one is walking in truth, he or she is walking "in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col 1:10+) His head knowledge had been assimilated into heart knowledge (heart being the control center of our life) which provided the firm foundation for his Christ exalting walk (his [Spirit filled/controlled](#) life). **Walking ([peripateo](#))** is in the present tense indicating Gaius' Christian life was not like a yo-yo, up and down, but that he was continually guided by the truth, in the sphere of truth. **In truth** is a locative of sphere, which in plain language means Gaius ordered his steps **in** the atmosphere of **truth**, just as a fish swims in the "atmosphere" of water. A fish out of water is in trouble. Similarly a Christian not walking in the sphere of **truth** is potentially heading for trouble!

**THOUGHT** - Do others see your walk in truth and testify of the supernatural power of God clearly manifest in your life?

**Spurgeon** - "What is it to 'walk in truth'? It is not walking in the truth, or else some would suppose it meant that John was overjoyed because they were sound in doctrine, and cared little for anything else. His joyous survey did include their orthodoxy in creed, but it reached far beyond."

*We should not only hold the truth, but allow the truth to hold us*

**Warren Wiersbe** - Some of the brethren had made several visits to John, and they had joyfully reported that Gaius was a glowing example of what a Christian ought to be. In my own pastoral experience, I must confess that I have often been a bit "on edge" when people have said to me, "Is Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ a member of your church?" Or, even worse, "I know one of your members quite well!" John never had to fear when Gaius' name came up! What made Gaius such a good testimony? God's truth. The truth was "in him" and enabled him to walk in obedience to God's will. Gaius read the Word, meditated on it, delighted in it, and then practiced it in his daily life (see Ps. 1:1-3). What digestion is to the body, meditation is to the soul. It is not enough merely to hear the Word or read the Word. We must inwardly "digest it" and make it part of our inner persons (see 1 Thes. 2:13). It is clear that Gaius' entire life was wrapped up in the truth. True living comes from the living truth. Jesus Christ, the truth (John 14:6), is revealed in the Word, which is God's truth (John 17:17). The Holy Spirit is also truth (1 John 5:6), and He teaches us the truth. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to reveal the Son of God, and then to enable us to obey the will of God and "walk in truth." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** - It is good to have the truth in us but it is better to manifest the truth in our lives. We should not only hold the truth, but allow the truth to hold us. Men would rather **see** a sermon than **hear** one. Nothing counts more for God in an age of fact than a holy life. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

*"A holy life will make the deepest impression.  
Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine."  
-- D L Moody*

**Strauss** asks "What was the secret of his (Gaius') soul prosperity? The **truth** was in him and he walked in the **truth**. Gaius was a man of God's Word. He read and studied the Scriptures and then put what he learned into practice. I have met some Christians who make a boast of knowing the truth but who fail to manifest the truth in words and deeds. For these I could pray earnestly that they might prosper spiritually to the extent that they have prospered physically and materially. But in the case of Gaius the **truth** was dwelling richly in a frail body (Colossians 3:16), thus he could say, "It is well with my soul." When some saints sit in church and sing, "It is well with my soul," they are merely whistling in the dark, deceiving themselves. Gaius' life expressed the truth he loved. He adorned the doctrine he believed. Gaius and the truth had an inherent relationship. ([Epistles of John](#))

**Guzik** - To walk in truth means to walk consistent with the truth you believe. If you believe that you are fallen, then walk wary of your fallenness. If you believe you are a child of God, then walk like a child of heaven. If you believe you are forgiven, then walk like a forgiven person. . To walk in truth means to walk in a way that is real and genuine, without any phoniness or concealment.

**Brian Bell** gives **illustrations** of the contrast between truth held and truth practiced - **Illustration #1**: Hold bread in the hand - no nourishment to your body (like holding doctrine as a matter of creed) But when you digest the bread your body is able to assimilate it, resulting in the sustaining and building up of the body. (same, when doctrine is accepted into the heart!) **Illustration #2**: As a rule of nature, the inward affects the outward. Light shines from the center of the lantern, through the glass (when truth is kindled within, its brightness soon beams forth in the outward life and conversation) **Illustration #3**: The silkworm is really not a worm at all, but a caterpillar/moth. One cocoon is made of a thread of raw silk from 1000-3000' long. About 2,000 to 3,000 cocoons are required to make 1 pound of silk. Based on 1,100 yards per cocoon, 10 unraveled cocoons could theoretically extend vertically to the height of Mount Everest. At least 70 million pounds of raw silk are produced each year. A distance well over 300 round trips to the sun.

Amazing! It is the food of silk worms that color their silk thread. It eats mostly leaves from the Mulberry tree, but to get different colors some are fed different leaves. So, the spiritual food on which we feed, will tint every word that proceeds from our mouth, and color (or discolor) every step of our Christian walk!

**NET NOTE** on **walking in truth** - *Living according to the truth* (Grk “walking in [the] truth”). The use of the Greek verb περιπατέω (*peripateō*) to refer to conduct or lifestyle is common in the NT (see 1 John 1:6, 2 John 4, as well as numerous times in Paul). Here the phrase refers to conduct that results when a person has “truth” residing within, and possibly alludes to the indwelling Spirit of Truth (see 2 John 2). In the specific context of 3 John the phrase refers to true Christians who are holding fast to an apostolic Christology in the face of the secessionist opponents’ challenge to orthodoxy.

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## **Steven Cole on walking in the the truth -**

### **A. To walk in the truth implies knowing the truth.**

Gaius didn’t accidentally stumble onto the path called “truth” and just as accidentally stay on it. No one in this world under the dominion of the father of lies and deceit, walks in the truth accidentally. It requires deliberate purpose and effort, both to understand the truth and to walk in it.

The huge emphasis on truth in John’s writings teaches us that truth matters! How a person thinks about God, man, salvation, and life determines how that person lives. A person with false concepts in these areas will live differently than the person with a biblical view in these important matters. Since Jesus Himself is the truth and since God’s Word is truth, Satan works overtime to undermine the truth about the person and work of Christ and the truth of God’s inerrant Word.

But there is an inherent danger as we grow in our knowledge of the truth. Paul said (1 Cor. 8:1), “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (my translation). If Satan can’t prevent us from knowing the truth, then he tries to get us puffed up with pride over how much we know that others don’t know. We would be wrong to conclude that we should remain ignorant so that we can stay humble! But, we should always remember that anything we know of the truth is only because of God’s grace. If He had not been gracious, we would still be in spiritual darkness.

### **B. To walk in the truth implies growth in the truth.**

Twice (2Jn 1:3, 4) John mentions “walking in the truth.” He does not say that we should sit and rest in the truth, but rather that we should walk in it. Walking implies steady movement in a purposeful direction. It requires discipline and effort. Walking is not as quick as running, but if you keep at it, walking will get you where you’re going. After warning about the danger of being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, Peter commands us (2 Pet. 3:18), “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” You will not grow in the knowledge of Christ by accident! You must purpose to walk in the truth, studying to learn and then apply God’s truth to your daily life.

### **C. Growth in the truth should always result in love.**

As we’ve seen, truth and love are not opposed to one another. John affirms (v. 1) that he loves Gaius in truth, which means, in the sphere of the truth about Jesus Christ. In verse 6 he affirms that Gaius, who is walking in the truth (v. 4), is also known for his love. So often, people who are big on the truth use it as a club to wail on those who don’t agree with them. Or, those who emphasize love are soft on the truth; they end up being nice when they need to stand up for the truth. But since God is the God of truth and love, godly people will be characterized by both truth and love.

Sometimes, love requires confronting a person who is in theological or moral error. Presumably, Diotrephes did not teach the errors of the heretics, or John would have said something about that. But, Diotrephes was a self-serving, unloving man, and John hits him very hard for these sins. We must assume that the apostle of love was acting in love towards this sinning man. Of course, love not only confronts sin. Also...

### **D. Love manifests itself in practical good deeds.**

A delegation that returned from visiting Gaius had testified of his love. Gaius had welcomed them into his home, even though they had been strangers to him before their visit. He had treated them “in a manner worthy of God.” When they left, he loaded them with supplies for their journey and with money for their mission work. His love was not just talk. It showed itself in treating others as he himself would wish to be treated. Being hospitable is one qualification for being an elder (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). But all believers are commanded to “pursue hospitality” (Rom. 12:13). We are to be a people “zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14). Biblical love isn’t just feeling the warm fuzzies; it is practical good deeds.

John writes of these missionaries (v. 7), “For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.” These

missionaries were not “peddling the word of God” (2 Cor. 2:17), receiving donations from the unbelievers that they were seeking to reach. John says (v. 8) that God’s people should support such workers, and in doing so, we become fellow workers with the truth of the gospel that they proclaim. One practical way for you to show Christ’s love by good deeds is to help support missionaries who go out for the sake of His name. The prosperous soul walks in the truth and in love. ([3 John - The Prosperous Soul](#))

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**Walking** (figuratively behaving, conducting) ([4043](#)) **peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk around (walk around in a complete circuit or full circle) as in Mt 4:18, to go here and there walking, to tread all around. The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21+). ([See Spurgeon's comments on what it means to walk](#)) Figuratively as in John’s usage, peripateo means to live or pass one’s life (by far most common NT use - Ro 6:4, 1Jn 1:6) walking about in the sphere of the truth (the alternative being to walk in darkness, the sphere of EVERY unbeliever!) In other words peripateo refers to an habitual way or bent of life, to a life-style. Luke describes Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, as being “righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord” (Lu1:6). Paul counseled the Ephesian believers to “walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind” (Ep 4:17). John declares that, “if we walk in the light as [God] Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1Jn 1:7).

**Ray Stedman** commenting on [Col 3:1-17] writes the following on “walk”: “That (referring to Col 3:1-4) is the true basis for living a Christian life. Scripture calls it “walking with the Lord.” I like that figure because a walk, of course, merely consists of two simple steps, repeated over and over again. It is not a complicated thing. In the same way, the Christian life is a matter of taking two steps, one step after another. Then you are beginning to walk. Those two steps follow in this passage. Paul describes them as, “Put off the old man,” and “put on the new.” Then repeat them. That is all. Keep walking through every day like that. That is how Scripture exhorts us to live.”

**Testified** (witnessed) ([3140](#)) **martureo** from **mártus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting.

**Wayne Detzler** notes that “In ancient Greek literature the bearing of witness was related to the confirmation of an event. One bore witness to support the truth of an event. The term was connected to the verb *merimnao* (that which requires the agreement of many minds). As many minds were brought to bear on a subject, the truth was established. Later on a witness was seen as presenting valid legal evidence. Plato insisted that such evidence must be given freely, without coercion. In the writings of the Stoics, this word came to mean evidence for certain beliefs and convictions. Thus the root of religious testimony was planted.” (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

**Lawrence Richards** makes the point that... The emphasis in Greek culture and in the Bible on one’s personal experience of objective reality as a basis for one’s **witness** or **testimony**, makes an important statement about Christian faith. Our **faith** is based on historic events. The resurrection of Jesus was not some subjective experience but an objective event that took place in the real world. (BORROW [Expository Dictionary of Bible Words](#))

This word group (**martus**, **martureo**, **marturia**) gives us our English word **martyr** which in the Christian context is defined as one who witnesses or bears testimony especially by his or her death because of their faith in Christ. In other words, when commanded to recant (withdraw or repudiate a belief formally and publicly) Christ or die, they choose to die, giving the **ultimate testimony** that Jesus is Who He said He was (is)! A man named Saul was a firsthand witness to the ultimate testimony of Stephen, a martyrdom (see Acts 7:57, 58, 59, 60 and compare Acts 8:1) which undoubtedly impacted Saul, who in turn became the greatest witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ ultimately laying down His life as a martyr (2Ti 4:6+). Beloved follower of Christ, you may not literally become a **martyr**, but you can rest assured that when you stand for Christ, the world will stand against your **testimony** and will vilify you. However you can also be assured that your **witness** for Jesus will have the effect God intended (cp 2Cor 2:14, 15, 16). Let your life be nothing but a visible representation (and fragrance) of Christ! In light of that truth don’t compromise your witness but remain continually “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” (1Cor 15:58+).

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**Illustration of a life that was “above reproach”** - The Christian walk of Will Houghton, a preacher who became the president of Moody Bible Institute during the 1940s, played a large role in the conversion of an agnostic who was contemplating suicide. The skeptic was desperate, but he decided that if he could find a minister who lived his faith he would listen to him. So he hired a private detective to watch Houghton. When the investigator’s report came back, it revealed that this preacher’s life was **above reproach**; he was for real. The agnostic went to Houghton’s church, accepted Christ, and later sent his daughter to Moody Bible Institute.

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**LASTING IMPACT OF A LIFE ABOVE REPROACH -- Adoniram Judson's: Another man who exuded a "Sweet Aroma of Christ"** = "The sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him (Jesus) in every place." (2Cor 2:14) Many years ago when the great missionary Adoniram Judson was home on furlough, he passed through the city of Stonington, Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival was struck by the man's appearance. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher [Henry Clay Trumbull](#) (Read [The life story of Henry Clay Trumbull, missionary, army chaplain, editor, author - 1905](#)) (See also his fascinating book [The Blood Covenant](#)). In a book of memoirs he penned a chapter entitled: "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson." (As Trumbull listened to his pastor interview Judson he wrote "All the while his [Adoniram's] face glowed with the light of his theme. The sight of that countenance was an inspiration and a blessing to me. I have never forgotten it. I never can forget it.") That lighted countenance had changed his life. Even as flowers thrive when they bend to the light, so shining, radiant faces come to those who constantly turn toward Christ! ([Read the original story in context of H C Trumbull's life story](#))

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### 3 John 3 The Vital Importance of Truth

"For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth." (C H Spurgeon)

The truth was in Gaius, and Gaius walked in the truth. If the first had not been the case, the second could never have occurred; and if the second could not be said of him the first would have been a mere pretence. Truth must enter into the soul, penetrate and saturate it, or else it is of no value. Doctrines held as a matter of creed are like bread in the hand, which ministers no nourishment to the frame; but doctrine accepted by the heart, is as food digested, which, by assimilation, sustains and builds up the body. In us truth must be a living force, an active energy, an indwelling reality, a part of the woof and warp of our being. If it be in us, we cannot henceforth part with it. A man may lose his garments or his limbs, but his inward parts are vital, and cannot be torn away without absolute loss of life. A Christian can die, but he cannot deny the truth. Now it is a rule of nature that the inward affects the outward, as light shines from the centre of the lantern through the glass: when, therefore, the truth is kindled within, its brightness soon beams forth in the outward life and conversation. It is said that the food of certain worms colours the cocoons of silk which they spin: and just so the nutriment upon which a man's inward nature lives gives a tinge to every word and deed proceeding from him. To walk in the truth, imports a life of integrity, holiness, faithfulness, and simplicity—the natural product of those principles of truth which the gospel teaches, and which the Spirit of God enables us to receive. We may judge of the secrets of the soul by their manifestation in the man's conversation. Be it ours to-day, O gracious Spirit, to be ruled and governed by thy divine authority, so that nothing false or sinful may reign in our hearts, lest it extend its malignant influence to our daily walk among men. (**Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and Evening**)

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**D L Moody** - THERE is more than one kind of joy; there is the joy of one's own salvation. I thought, when I first tasted that, it was the most delicious joy I had ever known, and that I could never get beyond it. But I found, afterward, there was something more joyful than that, the joy of the salvation of others. Oh, the privilege, the blessed privilege, to be used of God to win a soul to Christ, and to see a man or woman being led out of bondage by some act of ours. To think that God should condescend to allow us to be co-workers with Him! It is the highest honor we can have. It surpasses the joy of our own salvation, this joy of seeing others saved, and walking in the truth.

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### David Jeremiah - III John 3–7

In the days before Motel 6, Gaius would not only house itinerant preachers, apostles, and prophets, but would provide for them financially so that, as they journeyed, they wouldn't have to take anything from the Gentiles. So too, for us to walk in truth and love means we assist people on their journey towards heaven by reminding them of God's faithfulness and heaven's nearness.

It is our privilege and our responsibility to say to people, 'God will do what He promised. He will never leave you. He will see you through here on earth.' And it is also our privilege and responsibility to direct their eyes to heaven. It was by immediately directing their hearts to heaven that Jesus could calm the disciples' troubled hearts on earth (John 14:1–2). If one takes heaven out of the equation, he's left with desperate, disturbed, depressed people. Heaven in the equation changes everything. (A Day's Journey)

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

BGT 3 John 1:4 μείζοντα των οκχωχων, να κοωτμτκνα ντληθε περιπατονα.

NET 3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are living according to the truth.

CSB 3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

ESV 3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

NIV 3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

NLT 3 John 1:4 I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.

NRS 3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

NJB 3 John 1:4 It is always my greatest joy to hear that my children are living according to the truth.

NAB 3 John 1:4 Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

YLT 3 John 1:4 greater than these things I have no joy, that I may hear of my children in truth walking.

MIT 3 John 1:4 For I have no greater joy than hearing that my children are living in the truth, as these reports indicate.

GWN 3 John 1:4 Nothing makes me happier than to hear that my children are living according to the truth.

- **I have no greater joy than this:** Pr 23:24
- **to hear of my children:** Isa 8:18 1Co 4:15 Ga 4:19 Phm 1:10
- **walking in the truth:** 1Ki 2:4, 3:6; 2Ki 20:3 Ps 26:1-3 Isa 38:3 Joh 12:35,36 Ga 2:14

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 2:4; so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to **walk before Me in truth** with all their heart and with all their soul (THIS IS THE WAY TO WALK IN TRUTH!), you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

1 Kings 3:6 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he **walked before You in truth** and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

Proverbs 23:24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who sires a wise son will be glad in him.

### THE GREATEST JOY TO A DISCIPLE MAKER

**I have no greater joy** ([chara](#)) **than this, to hear** ([akouo](#)) **of my children** ([teknon](#) - literally "mine own children") **walking** ([peripateo](#) - present tense - continuing to walk habitually) **in the** (definite article - te = "the" specific) **truth** ([aletheia](#)) - While John would have rejoiced to personally see their walking in the truth, it is a beautiful blessing to have others come and give testimony to how your spiritual (and physical) children are walking spiritually speaking.

**THOUGHT** - One of the young men I disciplined now pastors a Bible church and for his ordination sermon which I was privileged to give, this was one of my key verses (along with 2Ti 4:1-2+). Obviously, as a Christian parent, this is the greatest desire of our heart for our children, far outweighing temporal worldly success. Let me suggest that you turn this into a prayer for all you disciple.

**John MacArthur** writes that "The great grief of ministry is people who are indifferent or rebellious toward the Word of God. With Gaius there was no dichotomy between creed and conduct, between profession and practice. " (See [1-3 John Commentary](#))

**Lehman Strauss** asks "Was Gaius one of John's converts or was he merely a member of an assembly under John's care? The use of the word **"my"** would seem to indicate that Gaius was a convert of John, and the apostle says that his heart reaches its highest point of **joy** when he sees those whom he has led to Christ living consistently and sincerely for Christ's glory. Paul expressed somewhat the same idea when he called his converts at Philippi "my joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1), and then exhorted them to "stand fast in the Lord." (See also 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.) It is a heart-breaking experience for pastors, evangelists, and missionaries to see those who have made a profession of faith in Christ fall by the way. Any man who has sufficient compassion to



pray for the lost and witness to them will most certainly be jealous (ED: IN A GODLY WAY) for the spiritual growth of those whom he leads to make a profession of faith in Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you" (1 Corinthians 4:14). There was sternness in the apostle's dealings with the Corinthians but there was tenderness also. His purpose was not to embarrass them, but as a loving father would rebuke his own children in the spirit of love, so Paul would lead his converts into a closer fellowship with the Lord. He was jealous over them with godly jealousy (2 Corinthians 11:2). We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in truth. ([Epistles of John](#))

**William MacDonald** - Perhaps most of us think of soul-winning as the greatest joy of the Christian life, and it is wonderful indeed to see men and women translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. But who can measure the heartache to see those who professed to be saved, returning to their former life; like a sow returning to her wallowing in the mire and a dog to its vomit. **On the other hand, what a thrill it is to see one's spiritual children going on for the Lord, from grace to grace.** Again this emphasizes the importance of follow-up work in all our evangelistic endeavors (SEE MY SERIES BELOW - "MAKE DISCIPLES"). (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2](#) - [Begins study of Five Most Important Passages for Believers](#)
- [Make Disciples 3](#) - [Chart comparing Filled with the Spirit and the Word](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)
- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

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**Joy** (5479) [chara](#) (and rejoice) is a feeling of great pleasure, of inner gladness, or of delight. **Joy** is an emotion evoked by a sense of well-being. It is a deep feeling of happiness and contentment. **Joy** in the NT is virtually always used to signify a feeling of "happiness" that is based on spiritual realities (independent of what "happens"). **Joy** is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior. **Joy** is not necessarily an experience that comes from favorable circumstances, but is God's gift from His Spirit to believers. **Joy** is a part of God's very essence and as discussed below His Spirit manifests this supernatural joy in His children (Galatians 5:22+, Acts 13:52+, 1 Th 1:6+ = true joy is energized by the Spirit). In sum, **Joy** is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who is filled with the Spirit and knows all is well between himself and the Lord. There is a chorus from an old spiritual song that is apropos...Happiness happens but joy abides

**Children** (5043) [teknon](#) from [tikto](#) = bring forth, bear children, be born) is strictly a child produced. **Teknon** naturally includes learning from disciplers – which is very positive as it exalts depending on the Lord Himself. (See 1 Ti 1:18; 2 Ti 1:2; Philemon 1:10). The greater our dependence on the Lord, the greater we develop in knowing Him. Jesus Himself set the model for us when saying, "I do nothing unless I see My Father doing it first" (Jn 5:19). **Teknon** is thus a child as viewed in relation to his or her parents or family. **Teknon** is "a child living in willing dependence" which illustrates how believers should live in utter dependence upon the Spirit of the Lord moment-by-moment. They draw guidance (care, nurture) from their heavenly Father as Christ speaks His *rhēma*-word within to impart faith (cf. Ro 8:16,17 with Ro 10:17, Gk text). Ironically we only grow up, by growing in dependence on our heavenly Father! Doing this always brings inner transformation, i.e. increasing conformity to Christ as we are transformed from "glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18+). **Teknon** emphasizes the childlike (not childish) attitude of heart that willingly (gladly) submits to the Father and to His Word. While the Lord is Creator of all people, He is only the Father of His born-again children. Salvation means a believer is spiritually begotten of God (re-born, adopted by the Lord). This brings the new status of being in Christ, i.e. belonging to the Lord as His true child (**téknon**).

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### 3 John South Pole

IT'S one of the few places on earth where the air is as fresh and clean as it must have been millennia ago. Constant winds keep out pollution and germs, and the climate discourages the growth of native viruses. It sounds like the healthiest place on earth. So why doesn't anyone want to live there? Because it's also the coldest place on earth. With temperatures that drop to minus 100 degrees Fahrenheit, the South Pole is too frigid even for germs.

Some churches bear a striking resemblance to that sterile atmosphere. The truth of God is preached, Scriptures are meticulously quoted, and error has no chance to survive. But neither does life. The spiritual temperature is subzero, as evidenced by the cold shoulder given to the poor and needy (James 2:2-6). Those weak in the faith engage in icy arguments (Romans 14:1). Those who

threaten to invade their comfortable cliques are left out in the cold (3 John 5-10). Unloved and unwelcomed, many people leave.

The church is to function as the body of Christ. As such, it should be warm, compassionate, and inviting. Our goal is not to keep out germs; it's to create an atmosphere where the spiritually sick can find healing. —M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**3 John 4 - Spurgeon** - I hope no parent will allow their children to grow up and leave their roof without knowing the doctrines of the gospel, the life of Christ, and the great precepts of Scripture—without having as clear an understanding as possible of the great principles and plan of salvation. It should be the holy ambition of every parent that his entire family should be renewed by the Holy Spirit. Happy as a marriage day is that day when a parent sees his child surrendered to the people of God, having first given his heart to Christ. The joy of the text is that the children “walk in the truth”—the actual demonstration of the power of the gospel in their lives. This proves that the teaching was well received, the feeling was not mere excitement, and the profession was not a falsehood but was done in truth.

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**Spurgeon** - (For full sermon click [The Parent's and Pastor's Joy](#)) JOHN speaks of himself as though he were a father, and, therefore, we concede to parents the right to use the language of the text. Sure am I that many of you here present, both mothers and fathers, can truly say, “We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in truth.” But John was not after the flesh the father of those of whom he was writing; he was their spiritual father, it was through his ministry that they had been brought into the new life; his relationship to them was that he had been the instrument of their conversion, and had afterwards displayed a father's care in supplying them with heavenly food and gracious teaching. Therefore, this morning, after we have used the words as the expression of parents, we must take them back again, and use them as the truthful utterance of all real pastors, “We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in truth.”

I. First, then, one of THE PARENT's highest joys is his children's walking in truth; he has no greater joy. And here we must begin with the remark that it is a joy peculiar to Christian fathers and mothers. No parents can say from their hearts, “We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in truth,” unless they are themselves walking in truth. No wolf prays for its offspring to become a sheep. The ungodly man sets small store by the godliness of his children, since he thinks nothing of it for himself. He who does not value his own soul is not likely to value the souls of his descendants. He who rejects Christ on his own account is not likely to be enamoured of him on his children's behalf. Abraham prayed for Ishmael, but I never read that Ishmael prayed for his son Nebajoth. I fear that many, even among professors of religion, could not truthfully repeat my text; they look for other joy in their children, and care little whether they are walking in truth or no. They joy in them if they are healthy in body, but they are not saddened though the leprosy of sin remains upon them. They joy in their comely looks, and do not inquire whether they have found favour in the sight of the Lord. Put the girl's feet in silver slippers, and many heads of families would never raise the question as to whether she walked the broad or the narrow road.

It is very grievous to see how some professedly Christian parents are satisfied so long as their children display cleverness in learning, or sharpness in business, although they show no signs of a renewed nature. If they pass their examinations with credit, and promise to be well fitted for the world's battle, their parents forget that there is a superior conflict, involving a higher crown, for which the child will need to be fitted by divine grace, and armed with the whole armour of God. Alas, if our children lose the crown of life, it will be but a small consolation that they have won the laurels of literature or art. Many who ought to know better think themselves superlatively blessed in their children if they become rich, if they marry well, if they strike out into profitable enterprises in trade, or if they attain eminence in the profession which they have espoused. Their parents will go to their beds rejoicing, and awake perfectly satisfied, though their boys are hastening down to hell, if they are also making money by the bushel. They have no greater joy than that their children are having their portion in this life, and laying up treasure where rust corrupts it. Though neither their sons nor daughters show any signs of the new birth, give no evidence of being rich towards God, manifest no traces of electing love or redeeming grace, or the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, yet there are parents who are content with their condition. Now, I can only say of such professing parents that they have need to question whether they be Christians at all, and if they will not question it themselves, they must give some of us leave to hold it in serious debate. When a man's heart is really right with God, and he himself has been saved from the wrath to come, and is living in the light of his heavenly Father's countenance, it is certain that he is anxious about his children's souls, prizes their immortal natures, and feels that nothing could give him greater joy than to hear that his children walk in truth. Judge yourselves, then, beloved, this morning, by the gentle but searching test of the text. If you are professing Christians, but cannot say that you have no greater joy than the conversion of your children, you have reason to question whether you ought to have made such a profession at all. (For full sermon click [The Parent's and Pastor's Joy](#))

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**[John Butler - Sermon Starters](#) - CHARACTER 3 John 1:4**

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 1:4).



Holy conduct can and will bring much genuine joy to many. The Apostle John rejoiced that many of his converts were walking a holy life and his rejoicing gives us some good lessons.

## FIRST—THE SOURCE OF JOY

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

Every parent who has sent a child to school knows what a delight it is to hear that his or her child is honest and well-behaved. When I was a boy many years ago, our school report cards were divided into two parts. The inside recorded our grades, the back recorded our deportment. Deportment included such things as honesty, promptness, courtesy, industry, and respect for authority (which said how you behaved). I soon learned that my parents were more interested in the back of the report card than the middle. They duly encouraged and exhorted me to get good grades but the back remained their main interest. They viewed the grades as talent, the back as character and they were more interested in character than talent. If character did not stack up acceptably to them there was bloodshed in the woodshed. Of course, I was in the woodshed a lot. As a parent I realized a new and rather pungently our text. I was thrilled when my children behaved and the teacher said so. When they did not behave there was bloodshed in the woodshed (it was still permissible then). What was the source of true joy? It was truth. Truth means not just honesty but all the other aspects of character too. Happiness comes from holiness (Matthew 5:8). When our conduct is holy, it produces happiness for ourselves and many others around us. Sin would tell us that happiness comes from sinning not saintliness. But as every sinner soon learns, that is a lie from the pit of hell.

## SECOND—THE STIGMA OF TRUTH

“Walk in truth.” So if we want to be happy we walk in the truth. But walking in the truth can be very stressful.

- Walking in the truth can be very demoting. None of us likes to be demoted and forsaken but walking in the truth is not popular and will result in demotion. It is said that ‘A’ students walk the halls alone, but no one walks more lonelier than those who walk in the truth.
- Walking in the truth is very difficult. It is not easy to walk a holy life. No one will help you or encourage you. Sometimes even Christians are no help to walking in the truth. Most Christians I met in the Navy were head and shoulder above others in their conduct, but there were some who tried to live a double life. It was no encouragement to a good stand for Jesus Christ.
- Walk in the truth can be very dividing. If you would be upright, many of your friends will depart company with you. Holiness costs! It will cost you friends, positions, and possessions, but not real joy.

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### Letter To A Child

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

Today's Scripture : 3 John

Even at the end of his life, C. S. Lewis showed an interest in the spiritual nurture of younger believers. Although in ill health, he took time to respond to the letter of a child named Philip. Complimenting the boy's fine written expression, Lewis said he was delighted that Philip understood that in the Narnia Chronicles the lion Aslan represented Jesus Christ. The next day, Lewis died at his home in the Kilns, Oxford, England, one week before his 65th birthday.

The apostle John, in his later years, sent a letter to his spiritual children. In it we see the joy of a mature believer encouraging his spiritually younger disciples to keep walking in the truth and following Christ.

John wrote, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 1:4). Short by New Testament standards, John's letter demonstrates the joy that comes in nurturing and watching the next generation's spiritual growth.

Encouraging spiritual understanding in the next generation should be the pursuit of mature believers. Sending a note of appreciation, giving a word of encouragement, praying, or offering sound advice can all be ways of helping others on their spiritual journey with God. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To help another in Christ to grow  
You have to pay a price  
It takes the giving of yourself

And that means sacrifice.

—D. DeHaan

The journey is better with someone who knows the way.

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### 3 John 1:4 The "Pistol" And The Lord

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

When it's my turn to pack school lunches, I write my kids' names on the bags. But on two of the lunches, I've been instructed to write "Pistol Pete." That's because Julie and Steven have become enamored with the memory of Pete Maravich, one of the greatest basketball players of all time. And I'm responsible for this because I've told them about the Pistol since they were little. They've watched his instructional videos, read his biography, and viewed his life story. So they both are Pistol Pete "wannabes."

That's okay with me. Children need good role models and examples. And Maravich was a Christian. But I would be disappointed if my children didn't see Jesus Christ modeled in my life also and want to be like Him. That's why when Stevie tells me that Jesus is his best friend, I'm a happy dad.

As parents, we must tell our children about Jesus and be role models who live for Christ. That was the case with Paul, who counted Timothy as his son in the Spirit (1Ti 1:18), and with John, who rejoiced over those whom he called his children (3Jn. 4).

Like them, let's live, talk, and love in a way that points everyone--especially our children--to Jesus. --J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Whatever you write on the heart of a child  
Is written indelibly there;  
Each action and word makes an impact, you know,  
Like a kindness or beautiful prayer.  
--HGB

The greatest gift a parent can give is a worthy example.

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### 3 John 1:4 The value of God's truth

The truth of God is a wonderful asset to a Christian. Joni Tada likened the value of God's truth to an experience in her childhood. She wrote,

"At four, I was too young to have my own horse, and I'm not sure a horse fit for a four-year-old could have kept up with my father and sisters. So when we went horseback riding, I sat behind my father on his big horse. With my tiny hands, I'd hang on to the back of his belt and away we'd go. I'd bounce up and down in the saddle, sliding this way and that, but as long as I had a strong hold on that belt, I knew I was safe."

God's truth is like that belt. It's strong and reassuring, and we can hold on to it amid the turns and bumps of life. He is our all-loving, all-powerful God, and He does not change. He will give us all the help we need. —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

IF WE HOLD ON TO GOD'S TRUTH,  
WE WON'T BE TRAPPED BY SATAN'S LIES.

**3 John 1:5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;**

KJV 3 John 1:5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

BGT 3 John 1:5 γαπητ , πιστ ν ποιεις ν ργ σ ες το ς δελφο ς κα το το ξ νους,

NET 3 John 1:5 Dear friend, you demonstrate faithfulness by whatever you do for the brothers (even though they are strangers).

CSB 3 John 1:5 Dear friend, you are showing faithfulness by whatever you do for the brothers, especially

when they are strangers.

ESV 3 John 1:5 Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are,

NIV 3 John 1:5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.

NLT 3 John 1:5 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.

NRS 3 John 1:5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you;

NJB 3 John 1:5 My dear friend, you have done loyal work in helping these brothers, even though they were strangers to you.

NAB 3 John 1:5 Beloved, you are faithful in all you do for the brothers, especially for strangers;

YLT 3 John 1:5 Beloved, faithfully dost thou do whatever thou mayest work to the brethren and to the strangers,

MIT 3 John 1:5 Loved one, whatever your work, do it faithfully for the brothers and also for strangers.

- Mt 24:45 Lu 12:42 16:10-12 2Co 4:1-3 Col 3:17 1Pe 4:10,11

### Related Passages: Passages on Hospitality

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

1 Timothy 5:9 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man,

Romans 12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Luke 10:4-7 "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. 5 "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' 6 "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 **"Stay in that house,** eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Leviticus 19:34 You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Titus 1:8 But hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

Luke 14:12-14 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

1 Timothy 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 5:10 And having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

Acts 28:2 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.

Mark 9:41 For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Romans 16:2 That you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Matthew 10:40-42 Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Luke 10:38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

## THE IMPORTANT MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

**Beloved** ([agapetos](#)) is the third time John has used this term of endearment and personal warmth, in context still referring to Gaius.

**You** (singular) **are acting** ([poieo](#) - present tense - continually acting) **faithfully** ([pistos](#)) **in whatever you accomplish** ([ergazomai](#)) **for the brethren** ([adelphos](#) - "from same womb"), **and especially when they are strangers** ([xenos](#)) - The NLT paraphrases it "you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you." John is commending Gaius for his regular practice of demonstrating help to **the brethren** who were functioning as missionaries or itinerant ministers.

**Lehman Strauss** - What an encouragement Gaius must have been to those servants of Jesus Christ! Entertaining Christians in early times was of peculiar importance because they were poor and persecuted and would need the offered help (Matthew 10:23; Acts 8:1). Had Gaius been a member of some tight assembly of the saints, where barriers are raised up to keep out the stranger, he would have lost both the blessing of serving and the reward. Moreover this word of commendation could not have been written of him. Gaius was "distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13), a requirement for an oversight man in the assembly (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). And who knows whether or not he entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2)? It was so in the cases of Abraham (Genesis 18:1-3) and Lot (Genesis 19:1-3). "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10). Gaius met the major requirement for [stewardship](#) ([What is biblical stewardship?](#)); he was faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2). ([Epistles of John](#))

*Faithfulness in this temporal life*

*Will yield fruitfulness in our eternal life!*

Gaius faithfully accomplishing his work reminds me of Paul's exhortations in Colossians

Colossians 3:17 (DOING ALL FOR JESUS) Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:23-24 (A REWARD PROMISED) Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord **you will receive the reward** of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

[Guzik](#) on Gaius **acting faithfully** - This was a great compliment: you do **faithfully** whatever you do. Whatever God gives us to do, we should do it faithfully. Jesus said that when we see Him face to face some will hear the words, well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord (Matthew 25:21). Of the good servant, it is said he was faithful.

Solomon wrote "Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10) Note Sheol for OT believers was not a place of torment but once one arrived there, there would be no opportunity for service that will receive an eternal reward from God. The upshot is do your work faithfully for God now, always seeking for His glory (1Cor 10:31+).

[Brian Bell](#) writes "We have nothing to do with how much ability we've got, or how little, but with **what we do with what we have!** (ED: GAIUS WAS FAITHFUL!) The man with great talent is apt to be puffed up, and the man with little talent to belittle the little. God

gives it, much or little. Our part is to be **faithful**, doing the best with every bit and scrap....

**Charles Swindoll** asks "How do you show hospitality to other Christians, particularly those who serve you and others in your local church and at churches around the world? Showing hospitality to others—particularly strangers—requires a level of trust and acceptance that is not necessarily required of us in our everyday lives. It forces us to rely on a common bond in Jesus Christ, rather than a particular blood relationship or shared experience. It forces us out of our comfort zones and into a territory where we must place our trust in God."

**William Barclay** - In the ancient world hospitality was a sacred duty. Strangers were under the protection of Zeus Xenios, Zeus the god of strangers ([Xenos](#) is the Greek word for a stranger).... The ancient world had a system of guest-friendships whereby families in different parts of the country undertook to give each other's members hospitality when the occasion arose. This connection between families lasted throughout the generations and when it was claimed the claimant brought with him a sumbolon, or token, which identified him to his hosts. Some cities kept an official called the Proxenos in the larger cities to whom their citizens, when travelling, might appeal for shelter and for help. If the heathen world accepted the obligation of hospitality, it was only to be expected that the Christians would take it even more seriously.

**Brian Bell** on **hospitality** - Benjamin Franklin said, "*Fish and visitors smell in three days*" Not the Christian perspective on Hospitality! Jewish Proverb, "*Hospitality is one form of worship.*" A Danish Proverb says, "*When there is room in the heart there is room in the house.*" At Christmas, why do we blame the Innkeeper for having a full Inn and putting the family out in the stable. Why not the other homes in Bethlehem at the time, which were not full of guests? Singer John Charles Thomas, at age 66 wrote to syndicated columnist Abigail Van Buren: "I am presently completing the second year of a 3-year survey on the hospitality or lack of it in churches. To date, of the 195 churches I have visited, I was spoken to in only one by someone other than an official greeter and that was to ask me to move my feet." Hospitality must be revived today!

#### Related Resource:

- BORROW J. Koenig, [New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission](#)

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**Accomplish** (Do, Perform, Produce) (2038) [ergazomai](#) from **ergon** = work) means to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. To work effectively, labor, do work. The NT uses **ergazomai** in a literal (to do manual labor) and figurative (especially spiritual - see below) sense. **Ergazomai** speaks of "an action as something that stands in contrast to inactivity or talk." (Richards) **Ergazomai** "emphasizes the process of an action, carrying with this the ideas of continuity and repetition. It means "to labor, to be active, to perform," with the idea of continued exertion being included." (Wuest) **Accomplish** - to bring about (a result) by effort. Accomplish stresses the successful completion of a process rather than the means of carrying it out. This is the sense of [ergazomai](#) in 2Cor 7:10 and James 1:20.

**Ergazomai** is often used to describe work in a spiritual sense, implying supernatural work, work that God does, work that God (His Spirit indwelling believers) energizes in and through His children, work that lasts for all eternity! (Jn 5:17, 6:27, 9:4) Of godly sorrow which "works out" or accomplishes repentance (2Cor 7:10). Other spiritual work (1Cor 16:10, Heb 11:33). **Ergazomai** refers to "spiritual work" by men in a vain attempt to merit favor with God (Ro 4:4-5).

**Strangers** (3581) [xenos](#) means a foreigner. **Xenos** describes that which is unfamiliar because it is unknown (strange doctrine, Heb 13:9, a strange deity Acts 17:18). **Xenos** can mean strange in the sense of unheard of or surprising (1Pe 4:12). **Xenos** refers to Gentiles who are unacquainted with God as strangers or estranged or without interest in God (Ep 3:12). The idea is "To reside abroad carried with it a certain stigma" (Moffatt) **Classical Greek** writers applied the term to persons who gave and received **hospitality**, i.e., host and guest. The major emphasis was often placed on a guest who could be any visitor, traveler, foreigner, alien, refugee, wanderer, or beggar. Foreigners generally were not treated well in primitive times. All of these are in contrast to the idea of belonging as a family member or citizen.

**Xenos- 14v** - host(1), strange(2), strange thing(1), stranger(4), strangers(6). Matt. 25:35; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:43; Matt. 25:44; Matt. 27:7; Acts 17:18; Acts 17:21; Rom. 16:23; Eph. 2:12; Eph. 2:19; Heb. 11:13; Heb. 13:9; 1 Pet. 4:12; 3 Jn. 1:5

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#### QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about hospitality?](#)

**ANSWER** - Hospitality can be defined as "the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way." In the New Testament, the Greek word translated "hospitality" literally means "love of strangers." Hospitality is a virtue that is both commanded and commended throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, it was specifically commanded by God: "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-

born. *Love him as yourself*, for you were aliens in Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34, emphasis added).

During His public ministry, Jesus and His disciples depended entirely on the hospitality of others as they ministered from town to town (Matthew 10:9-10). Likewise, the early Christians also depended on and received hospitality from others (Acts 2:44-45; 28:7). In fact, travelers in ancient times depended heavily on the hospitality of strangers as traveling could be dangerous and there were very few inns, and poor Christians could not afford to stay at them, anyway. This generous provision to strangers also included opening one’s home for church services. Hospitality was indeed a highly regarded virtue in ancient times, especially for Christian leaders (Titus 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:2).

The writer of Hebrews reminds us not to forget to “entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). Indeed, in the book of Genesis we read of Abraham’s humble and generous display of hospitality to three strangers. Wealthy and aged, Abraham could have called on one of his many servants to tend to the three unannounced visitors. Yet the hospitable and righteous Abraham generously gave them the best he had. And, as it turned out, he had entertained the Lord and two angels (Genesis 18:1-8).

Christians are “God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works” (Ephesians 2:10). As followers of Christ, we emulate His love and compassion when we show hospitality, not only to fellow Christians, but even more so to strangers and the less fortunate. In fact, we honor God when we are kind to the needy (Proverbs 14:31; 19:17). As Jesus said, “When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed” (Luke 14:13). Christ also taught us the second greatest commandment, to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39), and the Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that “neighbor” has nothing to do with geography, citizenship, or race. Wherever and whenever people need us, there we can be neighbors and, like Christ, show mercy. This is the essence of hospitality.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus discusses the hospitable behavior of those who will inherit the kingdom: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matthew 25:34-36). In these days we often don’t think much about entertaining strangers, but hospitality is still an important part of Christian ministry (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9). By serving others we serve Christ (Matthew 25:40) and we promote the spread of God’s truth (3 John 5-8). - [Gotquestions](#)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What does it mean that we should entertain strangers](#)
- [Dictionary Articles on Hospitality](#)

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### **3 John Climate Control**

It’s one of the few places on earth where the air is as fresh and clean as it must have been millennia ago. Constant winds keep out pollution and germs, and the climate discourages the growth of native viruses.

It sounds like the healthiest place on earth. So why doesn’t anyone want to live there? Because it’s just too cold. With temperatures that drop to -100° Fahrenheit, the South Pole is too frigid even for germs.

Some churches bear a striking resemblance to that sterile atmosphere. The truth of God is preached, Scriptures are meticulously quoted, and error has no chance to survive. But there is no corresponding obedience or love, and the spiritual temperature is sub-zero. The poor are given the cold shoulder (James 2:2-6). Those weak in the faith engage in icy arguments (Rom. 14:1). Brothers in Christ are left out in the cold because they pose a threat to comfortable cliques (3 John 5-10). Unloved and untouched, many people leave.

The church was formed by the redeeming love of Christ and is designed to be a warm and inviting fellowship! Our desire must not be merely to “keep out the germs,” but to let the Lord create a climate where brothers and sisters can open their hearts to His soul-healing love. --M R De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The house of God should be a place  
For praise and fervent prayer;  
How sad when folks let small things break  
Their sweet communion there!  
--H G Bosch

The church should always be a warm shelter in a cold world.

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## **Faithful Gaius**

Beloved [Gaius], you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers. — 3 John 1:5

Today's Scripture : 3 John

Third John presents a sharp contrast between the way two members of the church welcomed believers who visited them. The letter is addressed to “the beloved” Gaius, whom John loved “in truth” (v.1). The truth was in him as he walked with God (v.3). Whatever he did for his “brethren”—itinerant missionaries and teachers such as Paul—he did it faithfully and with love (vv.5-6).

Diotrephes was another story. He was proud and domineering (v.9), and he spoke against those who came in the name of Christ (v.10), probably even Paul. In addition, he drove out of the church anyone who wanted to accept them. No doubt he did this to protect his position and self-interests and to keep the focus on himself.

My wife, Shirley, and I, along with our granddaughter Bree, recently visited a country once closed to the gospel. The believers welcomed us with trust, openness, hospitality, and genuine love. Though they had little, their generosity was astounding. What an encouragement to us! They truly followed the example of faithful Gaius.

May God give us a loving and faithful spirit that enables us to treat our fellow believers in “a manner worthy of God” (v.6). By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

A time for fellowship that's sweet,  
A time for sacred song;  
But never is there time to treat  
A human being wrong.  
—Isenhour

Christlike hospitality is an open heart and an open home.

**3 John 1:6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.**

KJV 3 John 1:6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

BGT 3 John 1:6 ο μαρτυρησεν σου τὴν πίστιν κλησας, ος καλῶς ποιῆσεις προπαρασκευάζων ἕως τοῦ θεοῦ.

NET 3 John 1:6 They have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

CSB 3 John 1:6 They have testified to your love in front of the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God,

ESV 3 John 1:6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.

NIV 3 John 1:6 They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

NLT 3 John 1:6 They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God.

NRS 3 John 1:6 they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God;

NJB 3 John 1:6 They are a proof to the whole Church of your love and it would be a kindness if you could help them on their journey as God would approve.

NAB 3 John 1:6 they have testified to your love before the church. Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey.



YLT 3 John 1:6 who did testify of thy love before an assembly, whom thou wilt do well, having sent forward worthily of God,

MIT 3 John 1:6 With love, the brothers testified of you in the presence of the congregation. You would do well by them to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

GWN 3 John 1:6 These believers have told the congregation about your love. You will do well to support them on their trip in a way that proves you belong to God.

- **they have testified to your love before the church** 3Jn 1:12 Philemon 1:5-7
- **whom:** Ac 15:3 21:5 Ro 15:24 2Co 1:16 Tit 3:13
- **do well to send them on their way:** Ge 4:7 Jon 4:4 Mt 25:21-23 Ac 15:29 Php 4:14 1Pe 2:20
- **in a manner worthy of God,** 1Th 2:12

## OTHERS WITNESSED GAIUS LOVE IN ACTION

**And they have testified ([martureo](#)) to your** (singular = Gaius) **love ([love](#)) before ([enopion](#)) the church** - CSB = "They have testified to your love in front of the church." First, others testified to his truth (3Jn 1:3) and here to his love. What an aroma of Christ this man was to the brethren (cf 2Co 2:14-16+). What an example for all of us to seek to imitate (enabled by the power of the Spirit)! The **brethren** in verse 5 (presumably missionaries) gave John a glowing testimony regarding Gaius' unselfish love and practical assistance. Which church is not clear, but (and one cannot be dogmatic) this could be the church where John was currently located.

**Barclay** on **love** - Christian truth tells us the way in which we ought to love. [Agape](#) is the word for Christian **love**. [Agape](#) is not passion with its ebb and flow, its flicker and its flame; nor is it an easy-going and indulgent sentimentalism. And it is not an easy thing to acquire or a light thing to exercise (**ED: IN FACT SINCE IT IS LOVE LIKE GOD LOVES, RELIANCE ON THE SPIRIT IS THE ONLY WAY TO EXERCISE IT!**). [Agape](#) is undefeatable goodwill; it is the attitude towards others which, no matter what they do, will never feel bitterness and will always seek their highest good. There is a love which seeks to possess; there is a love which softens and enervates; there is a love which withdraws a man from the battle; there is a love which shuts its eyes to faults and to ways which end in ruin. But Christian love will always seek the highest good of others and will accept all the difficulties, all the problems and all the toil which that search involves. It is of significance that John writes in love to warn.

**You will do well ([kalos](#)) to send them on their way ([propempe](#)) in a manner worthy ([axios](#)) of God** - NLT - "Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God." **NAB** = "Please help them in a way worthy of God to continue their journey." For the phrase **do well**, see Acts 10:33; Philip. 4:14; Jas. 2:8, 19; 2 Pet. 1:19. Believers are to treat gospel workers in a manner befitting who they serve. **Westcott** says worthily of their dedication to the service of God.

On worthy compare

1Th 2:12 so that you would **walk in a manner worthy of the God** Who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Col 1:10 so that you will **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord** to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**Send them on their way ([propempe](#))** conveys the idea of to help one forward on his journey, including the furnishing those things necessary for one's travel (1Cor 16:11). The sending of missionaries on their way involved providing for their journey—supplying them with food and money to pay for their expenses, washing their clothes and generally helping them to travel as comfortably as possible. **John Polhill** adds that "[propempe](#) is used of accompanying or escorting people to their point of departure and often has the additional nuance of giving them food and provisions for their journey. ([NAC – Acts](#)) This would mean not just a pat on the back (and a "Go get 'em") but a penny (so to speak) in their pocket and prayer for their prosperity (spiritual). **Send them on their way** in a manner in which God would send them out. In this way the senders would be pleasing to the Lord.

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**Love (26) [agape](#)** Unconditional, sacrificial love which is the love that that God is and so describes a divine love, a love which is (1) commanded by God, (2) empowered by His Spirit, (3a) activated by personal choice of our will, (3b) not based on our feelings toward the object of our love and manifested by specific actions (e.g., 1 Co 13:4-8) (4) Seeks recipient's highest good

This is the love that God is in His very nature (1 John 4:8, 16), and it is the love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. (Compare Romans 5:5 with 2 Peter 1:4.) It leads the list of the ninefold fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Agape is unconquerable benevolence = nothing the other person can do will make us seek anything but their highest good. Though

he injure us and insult us, we will never feel anything but kindness towards him. That quite clearly means that this Christian love is not an emotional thing. Agape is not only not of the emotions, but it is of the will. It is the ability to retain unconquerable goodwill to the unlovely and the unlovable, towards those who do not love us, and even towards those whom we do not like. Agape is that quality of mind and heart which compels a Christian never to feel any bitterness, never to feel any desire for revenge, but always to seek the highest good of every man no matter what he may be. (Barclay)

This love is not sentimental or emotional but is obedient, being an manifestation of the act of one's will that desires another's highest good. It is unconditional so that if given and not returned then you don't stop giving it. Agape gives & gives & gives. Agape takes slaps in the face and still gives even as Jesus did saying Father forgive them. Agape is not withheld.

"LOVE" (agape) is the badge of discipleship, the landmark of heaven. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love (agape) one for another." John 13:35. Tertullian the early disciple wrote, "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Look!' they say, 'How they love one another!' Look how they are prepared to die for one another." People do not care how much we know until they know how much we care.

**Well** (2570) **kalos** describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable. In **classical Greek kalos** was originally used to describe that which outwardly beautiful. Other secular uses of **kalos** referred to the usefulness of something such as a **fair** haven, a **fair** wind or that which was auspicious such as sacrifices. **Kalos** referred to that which was "morally beautiful" or noble and hence virtue was called "the good" (to kalon). The New Testament uses of **kalos** are similar to the secular Greek

**Send on way** (Accompany, help on journey/way) (4311) **propempe** from **pró** = before, + **pémpe** = to send) literally means to send before. In the NT the idea is to send forward on one's journey, to bring someone on his way, especially to accompany for some distance in token of respect and honor.

**In a manner worthy** (516) (**axiós** from **adjective áxios** from **ágō** = to weigh) is the **adverb** form which means in a manner worthy of or fitting of, in a manner suitable to, in a manner proper of, worthily, suitably, properly. A good picture of **axios** is a set of scales that are perfectly balanced. How is that achieved? Obviously the same weight is on one side of the scale as on the other side of the scale. Thus **axios** strictly speaking means weighing as much as the other side and thus of like or equal value or worth as much. By extension, **axios** came to be applied to anything that was expected to correspond to something else. A person worthy of his pay was one whose day's work corresponded to his day's wages.

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### 3 John 6 Worthily of God

If in his second letter John dealt specially with the subject of those to whom no hospitality should be extended, in this he commends hospitality, and shows what its nature should be. There were those who "for the sake of the Name went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." These were to be received and welcomed, and "set forward on their journey worthily of God." Two interpretations have been given of this phrase. One is that these men were to be treated as the very messengers of God, and so worthily of that fact. The other is that those who tendered them hospitality were to do it as God would do it, "worthily of God." Most probably both views are correct, both ideas being involved. In harmony with the whole spirit of the letter the second is the more patent. What a pattern and test is here of hospitality! What kind of a host is God? How does He treat His guests? When we have answered those questions, we shall have discovered the nature of the hospitality we ought to extend to all those who go forth for the sake of the Name. To those who receive the hospitality of God, He gives of His best, He gives lavishly, He gives of pure delight. His concern is ever for the highest wellbeing of His guests. He opens His home to them; He spreads His table before them; He admits them to familiar converse with Himself; He places at their disposal all His knowledge, and all the riches of His grace. If we are to entertain "worthily of God" these are the lines upon which our hospitality must proceed. It is one of the things which constantly cheer and help those who go forth for the sake of the Name. (Morgan, G. Campbell)

### 3 John 1:7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

KJV 3 John 1:7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

BGT 3 John 1:7 π ρ γ ρ το ν ματος ξ λθον μηδ ν λαμβ νοντες π τ ν θνικ ν.

NET 3 John 1:7 For they have gone forth on behalf of "The Name," accepting nothing from the pagans.

CSB 3 John 1:7 since they set out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from pagans.

ESV 3 John 1:7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.

NIV 3 John 1:7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans.

NLT 3 John 1:7 For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers.

NRS 3 John 1:7 for they began their journey for the sake of Christ, accepting no support from non-believers.

NJB 3 John 1:7 It was entirely for the sake of the name that they set out, without depending on the non-believers for anything:

NAB 3 John 1:7 For they have set out for the sake of the Name and are accepting nothing from the pagans.

YLT 3 John 1:7 because for His name they went forth, nothing receiving from the nations;

MIT 3 John 1:7 For in behalf of the name, they went out, taking nothing from pagans.

GWN 3 John 1:7 After all, they went on their trip to serve the one named Christ, and they didn't accept any help from the people to whom they went.

- **For they went out for the sake of the Name** Ac 8:4 9:16 2Co 4:5 Col 1:24 Rev 2:3
- **accepting nothing from the Gentiles:** 2Ki 5:15,16,20-27 1Co 9:12-15,18 2Co 11:7-9 12:13

## THE MOTIVE OF THE MISSIONARIES

**For (gar)** is a term of explanation. What is John explaining in context? He is explaining why they were to support the traveling preachers and missionaries.

**They went out (exerchomai) for the sake of the Name (onoma), accepting (lambano** in present tense - continually accepting) **nothing from the Gentiles** - This description would support the premise alluded to earlier in the comments that these brethren were missionaries who **went out** because they desired to make **the Name** known. The **Name** speaks of everything that Christ is including all of His attributes, etc. They were on mission not for self but for Savior (**the Name**). They went out not to make a name for themselves but to exalt the **Name** of the only One worthy of praise and honor, the Lord Jesus Christ (**Name** stands for His Person).

Another reason these "goers" were to be supported is that they did not accept any support from the **Gentiles**. This support the premise that these Gentiles are non-believing Gentiles, because John would hardly have forbade missionaries from receiving aid from believing Gentiles.

**Cleon Rogers** on **accepting nothing** - It was their custom to carry out the spirit of the commission of the Twelve (Matt. 10:5 ff) and of the tradition established by Paul. They had, therefore, a special claim on hospitality and help of the churches in places through which they had to pass. That these missionaries were supported by fellow Christians stands in marked contrast both to the wandering philosophers of the day and to the beggar priests of the Syrian goddess, who went out on behalf of the goddess and returned triumphantly boasting that "each journey brought in seventy bags. (BORROW [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#))

One might ask why would missionaries (or itinerant ministers) have gone out? In light of the false teachers (**many deceivers**) described in 2 John 1:7, it is very reasonable to propose that the mission of these men was to combat the false teaching the antichrists were attempting to implant and cultivate.

**Utley** on **went out** - This very common VERB is used of (1) the false teachers leaving the church in 1 John 2:19, (2) false prophets going out into the world in 1 John 4:1, (3) many deceivers going out into the world in 2 John 1:7, (4) true Apostolic witnesses going out (into the world) in 3 John 1:7.

**For the sake of the Name** as noted is almost certainly the Lord Jesus Christ, an interpretation supported by Paul's use of a similar phrase in Ro 1:5. In 1 John 2:12 John wrote, "your sins have been forgiven you for His Name's (Christ's) sake."

**Utley** on **the Name** - This is an example of "the name" standing for the person and work of Jesus Christ. As believers believe in His name (cf. John 1:12; 3:18; Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:9-11), they are forgiven in His name (1 John 2:13), they also act for His name (cf. Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:12,17; John 15:21; 20:31; Acts 4:17; 5:41; 9:14; Rom. 1:5; 1 Pet. 4:14,16; Rev. 2:3).

**Utley** on **accepting nothing** - This phrase refers to these witnesses trusting God for His provision, much like Jesus' words to the Twelve in Matt. 10:5-15 and the Seventy in Luke 10:4-7.

**Warren Wiersbe on accepting nothing** - Abraham had this same policy (Gen. 14:21-24), though he did not force his associates to adopt his policy. Many pastors make it clear, when the offering is being received, that they are not asking anything from the unbelievers in the congregation. When God's people adequately support God's servants, it is a powerful testimony to the lost. But when ministers, churches, and other religious organizations go about soliciting from unsaved people and various businesses, it makes Christianity look cheap and commercial. This does not mean that God's servants should refuse a voluntary gift from an unconverted person, as long as the person understands that the gift will not purchase salvation. Even then, we must be very cautious. The king of Sodom's offer was voluntary, but Abraham rejected it! (Gen. 14:17-24) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

In light of the fact that there were many charlatans who were in it for the money, [The Didache](#), an early Christian writing, gave some criteria to help sort on the real from the counterfeit writing...

Welcome every apostle [teacher; evangelist] on arriving, as if he were the Lord. But he must not stay beyond one day. In case of necessity, however, the next day too. If he stays three days, he is a false prophet. On departing, an apostle must not accept anything save sufficient food to carry him till his next lodging. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. (BORROW [Early Christian Fathers](#))

**William MacDonald** - These men looked to the Lord alone for the supply of their needs. They would not accept support from the unconverted. To do so would imply that their Master was too poor to provide for them. It might also give the unsaved a false ground of self-righteousness on which to rest. What a rebuke this is to the money-raising methods of Christendom today! And how it should remind us of the special obligation we have toward those servants of the Lord who go out in faith in the living God and who make their needs known to no one but the Lord. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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### 3 John 7 - For the sake of the Name they went forth. (F B Meyer)

The beloved elder is anxious about some travelling evangelists, who had gone forth to visit the churches; and is commending them to the care of Gaius. He was to set them forward in a manner that should be worthy of God. This is a high standard for our entertainment of brethren and strangers withal. It would save us from niggardliness and stint, for God is never miserly or meager. It would equally save us from ostentation, since in God there is perfect simplicity. It would pervade our behaviour with the most perfect grace. But notice, in respect of these evangelists: —

**Their motive.** — “For the sake of the Name.” It is not needful to say whose Name. There is one Name above every name, in which whatever we do is to be done. To teach the meaning hidden in that Name; to unfold its sweetness and power; to exert its spell over souls that had never felt its magnetism; to glorify it and make it honored and beloved — this was their one thought and aim. Oh that we were animated by the same gracious motive!

**Their delicacy.** — They would take nothing of the Gentiles. It seemed to them incongruous to go for alms and maintenance to those who do not love their Lord. Besides, could not He maintain his own servants? They certainly would not have sanctioned the means that modern Christians adopt of getting money from the ungodly.

**Their welcome.** — We ought to welcome all such and in doing so we may be fellow-helpers with them and with the truth. It is a very beautiful act to link ourselves with God's honored servants by prayer and sympathy, that we may be counted their fellow-helpers and companions. (**Meyer, F B: Our Daily Homily**)

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### Norman Geisler - 3 JOHN 7—Should money be taken from unbelievers to do God's work?

**PROBLEM:** John claims here that the brethren took no support for their ministry from unbelievers. Yet when Solomon built the temple he accepted gifts from Gentiles (1 Kings 5:10; 2 Chron. 2:13–16). Is it always wrong to take money from unbelievers for God's work?

**SOLUTION:** As a rule, God's work should be supported by God's people. For those who benefit spiritually should share materially with their teachers (1 Cor. 9:1–14). On the other hand, it may offend an unbeliever to turn down his gift and place an obstacle in the way of his becoming a believer. Moses did not reject gifts from Egypt (Ex. 12:25–36). Nor did Solomon reject the gifts and help of the Gentile King Hiram (2 Chron. 2:13–16) or from the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:10). So, while money should not be sought from unbelievers, neither should it be rejected, unless of course there are strings attached. Under no conditions should spiritual or other favors be bought by anyone.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this passage in 3 John is not prescriptive, but descriptive. It does not say “Never take money from unbelievers.” It simply notes that these believers on this journey did not accept help from the heathen. No doubt they wanted to refrain from any appearance of selling the truth (cf. 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thes. 2:9). Rather, as it should have been, they depended on other believers to “send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God” (v. 6). We should not expect unbelievers to

### **Walter Kaiser - Receiving No Help from Pagans?**

Christianity, like first-century Judaism, is a missionary religion. In the first century, however, there were none of the organized societies and fundraising methods of our present age. The missionaries were assisted by voluntary giving from the people they met or else they were self-supporting, like Paul. But what does 3 John 7 mean in saying that the group of missionaries John is referring to received “no help from the pagans”? Is it that they did not accept any funds from non-Christians (the implication of the NIV translation), or is it that they did not accept any funds from Gentile Christians (one interpretation of the NASB and KJV translations)? And what implications does this practice have for our evangelistic methods today?

The Johannine letters mention two types of groups that “went out” from the Christian community. The first group is the heretics, who leave the church and go out into the world (2 John 7). The second group is the one mentioned here, which went out “for the sake of the Name.” The Name is Jesus (Acts 5:41; Rom 1:5; Jas 2:7). They were “going out” on his behalf, probably as evangelists since they were among “Gentiles” or “pagans.” The term “pagans” (more literally “nations” or “people-groups”) could indicate a Jewish-Christian mission not willing to accept funds from Gentile Christians (perhaps to keep from being rejected by the Jews) and thus be translated “Gentiles” (as it often is in other contexts in the New Testament), but there is no other indication that the Johannine community was Jewish-Christian. Therefore the term is probably being used in the sense in which it is in Matthew 5:47, which distinguishes “brothers” from “pagans/Gentiles.” In other words, it means “unbelievers.”

Missionaries (this English term includes those called evangelists and apostles in the New Testament) had no regular means of support in the New Testament period. Paul notes that his mission was supported by the work of his own hands (Acts 18:1–4; 1 Thess 2:9). In rare cases he received funds from already established churches (Phil 4:14–19, which indicates that the Philippian church was alone in supporting him). Other missionaries (and at times perhaps Paul himself) may have had private family funds to draw on. But they held to the principle Jesus taught, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Mt 10:8). There was no fundraising, nor were collections received for the support of the missionary. While hospitality might be accepted from those who received the gospel (see Lk 10:5–7), Paul at times refused even this support (1 Cor 9:3–18).

What are the reasons for this behavior? First, of course, is the principle that the gospel is free. Even to appear to be charging for the gospel or to be making one’s living by presenting it was viewed as contradicting this principle. Second, plenty of pagans were charging for their “gospels,” such as Cynic and Stoic traveling philosopher-beggars (some of whom grew rich), and the devotees and priests of various cults. For example, a monument set up in Kefr-Haunar in Syria by a self-styled “slave” of the Syrian goddess boasts that when he went begging on behalf of his goddess “each journey brought in seventy bags” of money. For this reason Jesus forbade the taking of a “bag” (Mt 10:10), for then his disciples would not be able to carry anything with them when they left a town, making it obvious that they were not profiting by their mission. It is important not only to be honest, but also to appear to others to be honest.

Given this information, it is not difficult to understand what is going on in 3 John. These missionaries have left the security of their Christian community, not because they were uncomfortable there, but for the sake of their Lord. They are traveling through the area in which Gaius is located. The missionaries will need food (for they are not carrying anything with them) and a place to stay, perhaps even a short rest. To stop to earn money would detract from their travel. It is natural that Christians, especially Christian leaders, should provide them the needed hospitality along the way. John knows from experience that one of the major house-church leaders, Diotrephes, will not receive them because he is rejecting John’s authority (which was spiritual authority, not “official” authority). Therefore John writes to Gaius, another house-church leader, requesting that he receive them, even though he may face rejection by Diotrephes because of it.

This has significant implications for Christian practice. This passage should not become an escape route for Christians who want an excuse not to support missions or their pastoral leadership. There is a clear principle that Christians should share material possessions with those giving them spiritual instruction (Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:11; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17–18). But, as we have seen, there is just as strong a principle that the gospel (including the healing and other ministries associated with it) should be free and that Christian workers, especially evangelistic ones, should not in any way appear to be profiting from those to whom they preach the gospel.

Given these facts and modern means of communication, it might be that the modern “Gaius” will wish to support evangelistic ministries even when they are at a distance from his home. It should at the least mean that the modern evangelist will want to do nothing that would make the unbeliever feel that the evangelist was trying to make his living from them. One would hope that an evangelist would rather pay his or her own way like Paul than give such an impression. Given the present scrutiny of the church and the feeling in the world that the church is out for money, other church workers as well should avoid even the hint that they are charging for ministry. Instead, church members should see to it that church workers are supported without their having to talk about



money. Following such principles would not only be the application of 3 John's teaching to the modern era, but would also go a long way in avoiding the scandals that have accompanied the gospel in our present age. (See [Hard Saying of the Bible](#))

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### **3 John 7 The key to the missionary devotion (Oswald Chambers)**

For His name's sake they went forth. 3 John 7.

Our Lord has told us how love to Him is to manifest itself. "Lovest thou Me?" "Feed My sheep"—identify yourself with My interests in other people, not, identify Me with your interests in other people. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 gives the character of this love, it is the love of God expressing itself. The test of my love for Jesus is the practical one, all the rest is sentimental jargon.

Loyalty to Jesus Christ is the supernatural work of Redemption wrought in me by the Holy Ghost Who sheds abroad the love of God in my heart, and that love works efficaciously through me in contact with everyone I meet. I remain loyal to His name although every commonsense fact gives the lie to Him, and declares that He has no more power than a morning mist.

The key to missionary devotion means being attached to nothing and no one saving Our Lord Himself, not being detached from things externally. Our Lord was amazingly in and out among ordinary things; His detachment was on the inside towards God. External detachment is often an indication of a secret vital attachment to the things we keep away from externally. The loyalty of a missionary is to keep his soul concentratedly open to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. The men and women Our Lord sends out on His enterprises are the ordinary human stuff, plus dominating devotion to Himself wrought by the Holy Ghost. (**Chambers, O. My Utmost for His Highest**)

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### **Walter Kaiser - Anyone Who Does Good Is from God?**

Aren't there good people who make no claim to be Christians? For example, aren't there some Hindu individuals who do good? Have not kindness and even self-sacrifice been observed among many nations and religions? Are these people therefore from God? And what about the professing Christian who does evil? Have not Christians, for example, been convicted of crimes? Are they therefore not from God?

This particular verse is part of a whole series of Johannine statements, including 1 John 2:29 ("If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him") and 1 John 4:7-8 ("Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love"). Each of these statements connects righteous living in some form (for example, love, doing good) to being a Christian (being born of God, being from God). Taken out of context any one of them would seem to imply that a person could deny Christ and yet qualify as being "from God." In fact, a guru who turned out to be genuinely caring and loving, but embraced Hindu theology, might on that basis find John endorsing his claim to be an incarnation of divinity! The key to this interpretive dilemma, however, is precisely the phrase "taken out of context," for within the context such a meaning is impossible.

In its proper context, the wider issue surrounding 3 John 7 is the behavior of Diotrephes. Diotrephes is a powerful church leader who may have the power to exclude Gaius and his house church from the wider Christian community if Gaius follows the elder's instructions and receives the traveling missionaries. The author is telling Gaius not to follow evil but good. The verse in question, then, suggests that Diotrephes is not from God or has not seen God, for he is doing evil, not good. This is an application of the principle that Jesus spoke concerning false prophets, "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Mt 7:16). If a person is truly a Christian, the proper lifestyle should be evident. If it is not, then, far from copying their behavior, one should doubt the reality of their new birth.

The same issue occurs in each of the other contexts. First John 2:29 begins a series of statements on righteousness (1 Jn 3:3, 6, 7, 9) that culminates in "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother" (1 Jn 3:10). The issue, then, is not whether those outside the church are or are not Christian (their status is known), but whether those within the church are truly born again. If people claim to believe orthodox theology and do not live righteously, John states, the regeneration of those people should be doubted, for their life shows that they are still a child of the devil.

The saying in 1 John 4:7-8 is in a similar context. This verse begins a series of sayings that culminates in 1 John 4:21, "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." The upshot of the discussion is that those claiming to love God and not loving their brothers are liars. They do not really love God. In other words, in each of these three cases the point of the saying is to distinguish genuine professing Christians from those who are not genuine. One way to do this is through looking at their behavior.

The author of the Johannine literature is quite clear. No one is born of God if that person is not committed to Jesus as Lord. That this commitment includes orthodox belief is clear in 2 John 9 and 1 John 2:22-23, 3:23, 4:3. But that the commitment includes living in obedience to Jesus is also clear. In fact, there are three tests of Christian faith in 1 John (and if 2 and 3 John are cover letters for 1

John, also implied in them). One is the experience of the Spirit. But how does one know it is the right Spirit a person is experiencing? The answer is, It must be the Spirit that leads one into commitment to Jesus as being the Christ and truly incarnate; in other words, right doctrine. But can one have right doctrine without being born again? Yes, one can. This is true. Therefore the third element comes in, which is a right character or a life that shows obedience to the Father and the Son. This fruit of the Spirit shows that the life of God is really within a person. To the extent to which any one of these three is missing, one should be uncertain about the reality of the new birth. Where all three are present, there should be no doubt but that one is truly a child of God. Therefore to isolate one of these elements and make it absolute (in this example, to isolate right character) is to violate the whole fabric of John's argument. It is not one element alone that proves that one is born of God, but three of them together.

Our verse, then, does not in any way argue that a non-Christian who shows the characteristics of Christian living is therefore born of God—such a person still lacks two of the three marks of a true child of God. What it does say is that those who claim to be Christians should be doubted, despite their orthodox theology, if they fail to live righteously.

See also comment on JOHN 5:28–29; 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9–10; HEBREWS 10:26; 2 PETER 1:10; 1 JOHN 3:9. (See [Hard Saying of the Bible](#))

### 3 John 1:8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

KJV 3 John 1:8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

BGT 3 John 1:8 με ς ο ν φε λομεν πο λαμ β νειν το ς το ιο του ς, να συ νεργ ο γιν μεθα τ λ ηθε .

NET 3 John 1:8 Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we become coworkers in cooperation with the truth.

CSB 3 John 1:8 Therefore, we ought to support such men so that we can be coworkers with the truth.

ESV 3 John 1:8 Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

NIV 3 John 1:8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

NLT 3 John 1:8 So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth.

NRS 3 John 1:8 Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth.

NJB 3 John 1:8 it is our duty to welcome people of this sort and contribute our share to their work for the truth.

NAB 3 John 1:8 Therefore, we ought to support such persons, so that we may be co-workers in the truth.

YLT 3 John 1:8 we, then, ought to receive such, that fellow-workers we may become to the truth.

MIT 3 John 1:8 We, therefore, ought to support such representatives in order that we might become colleagues in the truth.

GWN 3 John 1:8 We must support believers who go on trips like this so that we can work together with them in spreading the truth.

- **we ought to support such men:** 3Jn 1:10 Mt 10:14,40 Lu 11:7 2Co 7:2,3
- **fellow workers:** 1Co 3:5-9 16:10,11 2Co 6:1 8:23 Php 4:3 Col 4:11 1Th 3:2 Philemon 1:2,24

## MISSIONARY SUPPORT COMMENDED

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. Since the missionaries will accept nothing from unbelievers, the conclusion is that believers need to step up and provide aid.

**We ought to** ([opheilo](#) - present tense - continually indebted to) **support** ([hupolambano](#) - present tense) **such men** - Believers have a standing (continual) moral obligation to support the missionaries. Notice John uses the pronoun "**we**" thus including himself in the charge to support the missionaries. The "**we**" would clearly be a call to all genuine believers to participate in the support. The idea of **support** ([hupolambano](#)) is to take up under in order to raise up and in this context to **support**. The word is often used in the sense of receiving with hospitality and especially of supporting.



**Warren Wiersbe** - This ministry of hospitality and support is not only an opportunity, but also an obligation. Galatians 6:6-10 makes it clear that those who receive spiritual blessings from the minister of the Word ought to share with him in material blessings; 1 Corinthians 9:7-11 further explains this principle. As a deacon expressed it to me in the first church I pastored, "You pay your board where you get your food!" It is unbiblical for church members to send their tithes and offerings all over the world and neglect to support the ministry of their own local church. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**So that** ([hina](#)) is a "hinge word" that introduces a purpose or a result. Here John gives the purpose for supporting these men.

The **NET** renders it "so that we become coworkers in cooperation with the truth," and adds an interesting thought that "it seems likely that the **"truth"** at work through the missionaries here is ultimately the Holy Spirit, Who works through their efforts. The Christian who supports them thus becomes a coworker with the Spirit of God Himself."

**We may be fellow workers** ([sunergos](#)) **with the truth** ([aletheia](#)) - **NLT** = "we can be their partners as they teach the truth" **NJB** = "contribute our share to their work for the truth." Note that the Greek word **sunergos/synergos** gives us our English word [synergy](#) which describes the working together of two things (muscles for example) to produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects, a definition surely applicable to the missionary field, for not only are there natural workers but a supernatural Worker, the empowering Holy Spirit! As sharers in the truth themselves, John says we must prove to be **fellow workers** (joint workers) in practice, working together with the missionaries for the benefit of the truth.

**The truth** ([aletheia](#)) in this context as noted above could refer to the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Truth - Jn 14:17, 15:26, 16:13), but it is possible that also refers to the Word of Truth that saves souls (James 1:18+), the Gospel of Christ (cf Eph 1:13+, Gal 2:5, 14+).

**THOUGHT** - You may not be on the mission field in Kenya, but as you support your brethren there (or wherever they are working) with your prayers and your (God's) money, you can be confident that you are intimately working with them (that's the picture of the preposition ["sun"](#)). And throughout all eternity, forever and ever, you will share in their labors in the fields that are white unto harvest! Thank you Lord. Amen!

**Brian Bell** - Why did Gaius help the saints? [1] He loved them [2] He wanted to share in their ministries [3] He wanted to further the truth. 1. A man might not be a preacher himself but he can help others to preach. This is Missionary Care at its finest! 1. I don't know what to do at the church? Care for a missionary! a) Email, call them, stay in touch; find out their needs (not to meet all, but at least to pray for, or to share needs with others); go visit them; send care packages; be part of a missionary's Care Team; do their taxes; newsletters (edit, stuff, lick envelopes, send); help them on furloughs (see Judy Terry); pick them up at airport (to take to); talk to Larry Hansen for other ideas (oversees Missions Care). These are the believers that make the church healthy!

**Guzik** - The reward for these support people is the same as those who are out on the front lines. 1 Samuel 30:21-25 shows this principle, where the spoils are distributed equally among those who fought and those who supported. King David understood that the supply lines were just as vital as the soldiers, and God would reward both soldiers and supporters properly and generously. Jesus promised that even the help offered in a cup of cold water to one of His children would not be forgotten when God brings His reward (Matthew 10:42+). This also explains why John would pray for the prosperity of Gaius: he used his resources in a godly way, being a blessing to others. If God blessed him with more, others would be blessed more also.....Jesus said, He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward (Matthew 10:40-41+). This should make us consider how we receive and help those who preach the Gospel.

**Warren Wiersbe** - In my itinerant ministry, I have stayed in many homes and been encouraged in my work. The host and hostess may not have been especially gifted people, but their ministry of gracious hospitality enabled me to exercise my gifts in the church. **Whatever blessings came in the ministry will certainly be credited to their accounts!** (Phil. 4:17) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**William MacDonald** notes that how one responds to the missionaries has an impact on one's eternal rewards - Gaius' kindness was known to all the church. But more than that, his name is forever enshrined in God's Holy Word as one who had an open home and an open heart. And even more, Gaius will yet be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ, for "he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41). He will share in the reward of all those preachers he entertained. This is a good point to remember for those who cannot preach: You can receive a preacher's reward by showing hospitality to preachers in the name of the Lord. God will pay back all good deeds! His kindness will crown the kindness of men. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Do you desire a great reward at the Bema Seat of Christ ([see my video on the Bema](#))? You should! Jesus referred to it as bearing "much fruit" (Jn 15:5), adding that by so doing the Father is glorified (Jn 15:7). And in this section, we see that as we support those who preach and teach the Gospel and serve as

missionaries to the lost, we are not only fellow workers in this short life but are fellow sharers in the bountiful reward in the next life.

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**Ought** (3784) **opheilo** from **ophéillo** = heap up) means to owe something to someone. Literally it speaks of financial indebtedness and thus means to owe money, to be in debt, or to describe that which is due (Mt 18:28, Lk 7:41, 16:5, 7, Philemon 1:18). The verb **opheilo** was sometimes used to describe "the debt" itself. Figuratively, **opheilo** describes a sense of indebtedness to someone for something. For example, it was used to describe owing good will (1Co 7:3), love (Ro 13:8 = we can never love enough and will always "owe" this debt). **Opheilo** in most of the NT uses conveys the sense of necessity, duty or to be under obligation (obligation = moral requirement which conveys the binding force of civility, kindness or gratitude, when the performance of a duty cannot be enforced by law). The idea is that one is held or bound by duty, moral obligation or necessity to do something. The word expresses a special, personal obligation, and not as **dei**, must, an obligation in the nature of things. **Opheilo** speaks of a **moral obligation** as contrasted to a **necessity** in the nature of the case as is **dei**.

**Support** (5274) **hupolambano** from **hupo** = under + **lambano** = to take) means literally to take underneath in order to raise. Hence, to support, to take from someone, to take up and so to cause to ascend (Acts 1:9 "received Him out of their sight"). Figuratively **hupolambano** means to take up the discourse (to reply, to introduce a response to a question as here in Lk 10:30, Lxx of Job 2:4; 4:1; 6:1; Da 3:9), or to take up (an idea) in thought (to suppose, think as in Acts 2:15, Lk 7:43, Lxx - Job 25:3). Finally, it means to support or help someone, to receive them as a guest, to welcome with the provision of hospitality (3 John 1:8 in context including material help).

**Fellow workers** (4904) **sunergos** from **sun** = together with, speaks of an intimate relationship + **érgon** = work) means literally working together with and thus refers to a companion in work, a colleague, a co-laborer, a fellow laborer or fellow helper. In the NT, **sunergos** is used only of a co-worker or helper in the Christian work. In each instance **sunergos** conveys the idea of an affectionate partnership and not merely that of an impersonal, official relationship. Paul twice specifically includes godly women among his fellow workers (Prisca or Priscilla Ro 16:3) and Euodia and Syntyche, two godly but quarreling members of the church at Philippi who had shared Paul's "struggle in the cause of the gospel" (see note Philippians 4:3).

Thayer writes that **sunergos** "with a genitive of the person (refers to) one who labors with another in furthering the cause of Christ."

This word refers to someone who is a team player, who does not seek to run or control things on his own, nor serve for selfish or personal agendas.

**Sunergos - 13x in 13v** - Rom. 16:3; Rom. 16:9; Rom. 16:21; 1 Co. 3:9; 2 Co. 1:24; 2 Co. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; Phil. 4:3; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 3:2; Phlm. 1:1; Phlm. 1:24; 3 Jn. 1:8

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## **John Butler - Sermon Starters - CHURCH DISSIDENT 3 John 1:9**

"I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 1:9).

In my many years as a pastor I had in each of my four churches dissidents who would fit the description of Diotrephes. The devil did not have to get in our churches with Diotrephes present, for he caused enough trouble to make up for the devil.

### **FIRST—THE PERCEIVING OF THE PROBLEM**

"I wrote unto the church."

John wrote a letter to the church, but the letter evidently did not get to the church for Diotrephes intercepted it. Therefore, John wrote another letter, and sent it this time to Gaius who was a good person. In this letter to Gaius, John spoke of the problem of Diotrephes. A trouble-maker in church is not concealed but it often well known even by those outside the church. I remember when I resigned my first church and one of the members tried to manipulate himself into the pastorate, that one of the neighbors of the church said that one of our members was trying to get into the white house. The neighbor, though unregenerate saw the wicked enterprising of the dissident church member. Church problems are often perceived by a shocking number of people outside the church.

### **SECOND—THE PRIDE IN THE PROBLEM**

"But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them."

Diotrephes had a problem with pride. He wanted to be considered the top dog in the kennel. Spiritual pride is a real problem in the church. Many members who have this problem find it impossible to accept the Pastor's

authority and will oppose and criticize him whenever it serves their case. Of course, they will often do it subtly and craftily. They look down upon the pastor if he has not achieved in the world as they have. Also they do not consider the fact of his Divine calling. They have no respect of his spiritual commitment. To let him call the shots at church is more than their pride can accept.

### THIRD—THE PRACTICE IN THE PROBLEM

“Receiveth us not.”

Diotrephes did not want anyone in church who would be competition for him and anyone who might come to the church with more respect than he had. He wanted to be the man who had the authority and respect of the people. Diotrephes was not interested in the work of the church but was primarily interested in using the church to exalt himself. Therefore anyone who would be competition for his exalted self and anyone who honored someone more than he would be rejected and as later texts tell us, they would be excommunicated from the church. “Receiveth us not” was the trademark of Diotrephes. John was too much authority for Diotrephes. John must be rejected so Diotrephes would be the pre-eminent one. A.T. Robinson, a great Greek scholar wrote an article about Diotrephes for a religious magazine. 25 deacons stopped their subscriptions because they thought it was a personal attack. If the shoe fits, wear it!

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### No Greater Joy

Read: 3 John 1:1-8

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. 3 John 1:4

Bob and Evon Potter were a fun-loving couple with three young sons when their life took a wonderful new direction. In 1956 they attended a Billy Graham Crusade in Oklahoma City and gave their lives to Christ. Before long, they wanted to reach out to others to share their faith and the truth about Christ, so they opened their home every Saturday night to high school and college students who had a desire to study the Bible. A friend invited me and I became a regular at the Potters' house.

This was a serious Bible study that included lesson preparation and memorizing Scripture. Surrounded by an atmosphere of friendship, joy, and laughter, we challenged each other and the Lord changed our lives during those days.

Be a voice of encouragement to someone today.

I stayed in touch with the Potters over the years and received many cards and letters from Bob who always signed them with these words: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4). Like John writing to his “dear friend Gaius” (v. 1), Bob encouraged everyone who crossed his path to keep walking with the Lord.

A few years ago I attended Bob's memorial service. It was a joyful occasion filled with people still walking the road of faith—all because of a young couple who opened their home and their hearts to help others find the Lord.

Thank You, Lord, for the people who have encouraged me to keep walking in Your truth. May I honor them by helping someone along that road today.

Be a voice of encouragement to someone today.

By David C. McCasland

INSIGHT Today's reading is taken from the apostle John's final letter, written near the end of his life. John is the only one of the twelve apostles who was not martyred for his faith. However, according to tradition John was tortured and later exiled on the Island of Patmos. John kept in touch with those congregations he had nurtured earlier in his ministry. He wisely understood that health can be experienced in mind, body, and soul and so includes this in his prayer (v. 2). His word choice is kind and relational. He writes that his highest joy in ministry is to hear how those he has ministered to are moving on in their faith in Christ (v. 3). ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

**3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.**

KJV 3 John 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

BGT 3 John 1:9 γραψ τι τ κκλησ · λλ φιλοπρωτεων α τ ν Διοτρηφης ο κ πιδ χεται μ ς.

NET 3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not acknowledge us.

CSB 3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place among them, does not receive us.

ESV 3 John 1:9 I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

NIV 3 John 1:9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us.

NLT 3 John 1:9 I wrote to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us.

NRS 3 John 1:9 I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

NJB 3 John 1:9 I have written a note for the members of the church, but Diotrephes, who enjoys being in charge of it, refuses to accept us.

NAB 3 John 1:9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to dominate, does not acknowledge us.

YLT 3 John 1:9 I did write to the assembly, but he who is loving the first place among them -- Diotrephes -- doth not receive us;

MIT 3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church. But the one who loves to be dominant among them, Diotrephes, does not accept our authority.

GWN 3 John 1:9 I wrote a letter to the congregation. But Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge, won't accept us.

- **who loves:** Mt 20:20-28 23:4-8 Mk 9:34 10:35-45 Lu 22:24-27 Ro 12:10 Php 2:3-5 Tit 1:7-16
- **does not accept:** 3Jn 1:8 Mt 10:40-42 Mk 9:37 Lu 9:48

#### Related Passages:

1 Peter 5:3 nor yet as **lording it over those allotted to your charge**, but proving to be examples to the flock.

### THE MAN WITH THE CHURCH BOSS COMPLEX!

**I wrote something to the church** - Could refer to 1 John or 2 John. John had probably written to the church where Diotrephes was and requested support for the itinerant missionaries. Diotrephes rejects John and his request and receives a public rebuke (by name) as his reward!

**But Diotrephes, who loves to be first** ([philoproteuo](#) - present tense - continually desires preeminence) **among them** - Notice that self-loving, self-promoting Diotrephes is a member of the local church. Aren't they blessed to have his presence among them? (Rhetorical expecting a loud "NO!") He wanted preeminence **among men**. He had the "big I" problem, the middle letter of **p**ride! Diotrephes sought preeminence, a word that comes from two Greek words which mean, "to be fond of being first."

Diotrephes' attitude reminds me of Jesus' warning to **beware** ([present imperative](#) calls for continual vigilance because of our fallen egocentric flesh!) of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them." (Mt 6:1+)

Assuming **Diotrephes** was a genuine believer, one has to believe he will one day be like the man Paul described in First Corinthians writing "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss (AT THE BEMA SEAT OF CHRIST); but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." (1Cor 3:15+) I think **J Vernon McGee's** words are apropos to this man **Diotrephes** (assuming he was regenerate) for **McGee** once quipped "there are going to be some people in heaven who will be there because their foundation is Christ but who will smell as if they had been bought at a fire sale! Everything they ever did will have gone up in smoke. They will not receive a reward for their works."

**James Montgomery Boice** rightly points out that **loves to be first** is a very ancient sin - "This is the original and greatest of all sins. It is the sin of Satan, who was unwilling to be what God had created him to be and who desired rather to be 'like the Most High' (Isa. 14:14+). It is the opposite of the nature of Christ 'who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be

grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.' " (See Boice's full devotional thought entitled "Right Imitation" - 3 John 1:1-14 in [Come to the Waters](#))

**Diotrephes** must have not been well schooled (or just did not care) in the OT warnings regarding pride

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom (LIKE GAIUS).

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 21:24 "Proud," "Haughty," "Scoffer," are his names, who acts with insolent pride.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit (LIKE GAIUS) will obtain honor.

**J Vernon McGee** quipped that "Diotrephes is a man who puts on airs. He is pretentious. He is vainglorious. He struts around as a peacock. He has an overweening ambition. He is puffed up, inflated like a balloon. He is one whom you have to receive with a flourish of trumpets. He comes in in a blaze of glory."

**Warren Wiersbe** - Whenever a church has a resident dictator in its membership there are bound to be problems, because people who are spiritually minded will not tolerate that kind of leadership. The Holy Spirit is grieved when the members of the body are not permitted to exercise their gifts because one member must have his own way. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will discover how many hearts have been broken and churches destroyed because of the arrogant "ministries" of people like Diotrephes (**ED: WHO MAY NOT EVEN BE AT THE BEMA!**). Consider what this man was doing. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Lehman Strauss** - Someone has said, "Diotrephes is the father of a long line of sons who have not learned to distinguish between love for Christ and His Church and love for their own place in it." It is told of Dr. Lee Robertson that he wrote an article on Diotrephes for a denominational paper, and the editor told him that twenty-five officials in the church stopped the paper to show their resentment against being personally attacked. These are the offspring of Diotrephes who reject the authority of Christ and take it to themselves....The self centered Christian who loves to have the preeminence cannot stand the brother who towers above him in spiritual stature. He believes that through holding others down he can rise above them. Here is a man who so loved power that he was ready to cause others to suffer in order to attain it. He was concerned only about his own position and importance. Such action is a perversion of proper Christian behavior. ([Epistles of John](#))

**William MacDonald** on **Diotrephes** - He was a virtual dictator in the assembly. His sin was pride of place, an inflated ego, and a violent jealousy for what he regarded as his own rights—which he doubtless defended as the autonomy of the local church. Diotrephes had forgotten that Christ is the Head of the church—if he ever knew it! He had forgotten that the Holy Spirit is the Vicar or Representative of Christ in the church. No mere man has the right to take charge, to make decisions, to receive, or to refuse. Such conduct is popery, and God hates it. Doubtless Diotrephes excused his behavior on the ground that he was contending for the truth. But that was, of course, a lie! He was doing untold harm to the truth by refusing the apostle on the pretext of being faithful to God. And not only John, but other brethren as well....Such self-styled popes cannot stand being openly denounced from the word of God. Their continuance in power depends upon secret meetings and upon a reign of fear and intimidation. (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

We have no follow-up on the fate of Diotrephes, but unless he repented, it was not good.

The name Diotrephes was not overly common, but was a name for kings and those of noble birth and means "Zeus-nurtured," "Come from Zeus."

Note that while Diotrephes was clearly arrogant and a failure at showing hospitality (in contrast to Gaius), John does not call him a heretic. In short, he was rebuked not for heresy, but for hubris.

If you have been around church for long enough, you have undoubtedly met men like "Diotrephes," one of those members that your church would be have better off without! The real problem with Diotrephes is that only One Man was to have preeminence in the Church and that Man of course is Jesus Christ, Whom Paul declared was "the Head of the body, the church... so that He Himself will come to have first place ([protos](#) - root of proteuo in [philoproteuo](#)) in EVERYTHING!" (Col 1:18+). Obviously Diotrephes had not read John's words in the Gospel that "He must increase, but I must decrease." (Jn 3:30+). Diotrephes was the antithesis of John the Baptist, about whom Jesus Himself declared "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Mt 11:11+). Diotrephes missed the lecture on the secret of preeminence in the church, the lesson being that the way "up," is "down!" He did not realize that even God Himself is "opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (Jas 4:6+) Clearly, Diotrephes was not great in grace but had a "grace deficiency!"

**Does** (ouk - absolutely) **not accept** ([epidechomai](#)) **what we say** - **Accept** ([epidechomai](#)) means to receive gladly is in the present tense Diotrephes' continual attitude was of not receiving gladly but instead rejecting John's correction. Are we surprised he did **not**



**accept** John's authority and leadership? Of course not, because if he did accept them it would imply he himself were no longer the boss! Clearly he had a submission to authority problem! Most self-inflated men do!

**THOUGHT** - Often when a member of a church is like Diotrephes, seeking position and prestige, they are the ones who will launch an attack on the one in charge. Wiersbe says one of their tactics is to instigate a "whispering campaign" in an attempt to undermine the pastor's authority, character and ultimately his ministry. "Like Absalom in the OT, they "hint" that the present leadership is not efficient (2 Sam. 15:1-6), and that they could handle things better. Hebrews 13:7, 17 settle this matter once and for all." (BORROW [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

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**Loves to be first** (5383) **philoproteuo** from **philos** = friend or loving + **proteuo** = to be first [**protos**], preeminent.) describes one who strives to be first, one who is not satisfied with just prominence but seek also for preeminence! This verb was used in Secular Greek to describe one "loving the chief place" and "desiring to be first." This is only use in the Bible.

**Accept** (1926) (epidechomai) means to receive into one's presence in a friendly manner, to welcome. There are two meanings (1) To show hospitality, receive hospitably, to receive kindly, to receive someone as a guest, or welcome them as a companion, a usage that was found in the secular Greek writings. (2) The idea is to not reject something. It was used in secular writings referring to "accepting" the terms of a lease and of taxes. In 3Jn 1:9 the idea is to acknowledge someone's authority. To acknowledge receptively. The only 2 uses in the Bible are 3Jn 1:9, 10.

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#### **QUESTION - [Who was Diotrephes in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER - Diotrephes** is mentioned in one passage of the Bible, in the short letter of [3 John](#). In brief, Diotrephes was a self-seeking troublemaker in an unnamed local church in the first century. We know nothing of his background, other than he was probably a Gentile (his name means "nurtured by Jupiter").

John wrote 3 John to his friend Gaius. Here is the passage mentioning Diotrephes: "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church" (3 John 1:9–10).

In only two verses, we have the following statements made about Diotrephes: 1) he loves to be first; 2) he refuses to welcome the apostles into the church; 3) he maliciously spreads gossip about men of God; 4) he withholds hospitality from other believers; 5) he requires others to follow his poor example; and 6) he excommunicates anyone who crosses him.

From John's description, we can assume that Diotrephes was a leader, or at least an influential member, in the local church where Gaius was a member. Diotrephes was clearly abusing his position of authority. For some reason he was jealous of the apostles and refused to allow them in his church. Instead of following the command for a [pastor](#) to be hospitable and "not quarrelsome" (2 Timothy 3:2–3), Diotrephes was inhospitable and pugnacious. Instead of seeking to be the servant of all (Mark 9:35), Diotrephes loved to be in charge.

John says that he is planning a visit to Gaius's church, and that, when he comes, he will publicly rebuke Diotrephes for his actions (3 John 1:10). The slander, the sectarianism, and the self-seeking would be dealt with. The apostle would not sweep such things under the rug.

On the other hand, John commends Gaius for showing hospitality to the itinerant preachers of the gospel who passed through his city (3 John 1:5–8). In fact, Diotrephes, with his inhospitable, self-serving attitude, could be considered the "anti-Gaius." John's admonition to Gaius to "not imitate what is evil" (3 John 1:11) is probably another way of saying "don't be like Diotrephes."

Those who, like Gaius, minister to preachers of the gospel honor God (3 John 3:6). Those who, like Diotrephes, refuse to aid the spread of God's Word are deserving of rebuke (3 John 3:10). The pastorate is no place for power-hungry, jealous, slanderous men who reject the apostles' teaching. "Rather, [a pastor] must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught" (Titus 1:8–9). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**3 John 9 Unity and the Spirit of Diotrephes** (C H Spurgeon) Now that we know that there is a unity of the Spirit worthy to be kept, I want to point out that it needs to be kept. It is a very difficult thing to maintain, for several reasons. First of all, our sins would, very naturally, break it. If we were all angels, we would keep the unity of the Spirit and not even need the exhortation to do so. But, alas, we are proud, and pride is the mother of division. Diotrephes, who loves to have preeminence (3 John 1:9), is very sure to head a faction. How envy, too, has separated good friends! When I cannot be satisfied with anything that is not hammered on my



workbench, when another man's candle grieves me because it gives more light than mine, and when another man troubles me because he has more grace than I have—oh, there is no unity in this case. Anger—what a deadly foe that is to unity! When we cannot overlook the smallest disrespect, when the slightest thing turns our faces red, when we speak unadvisedly with our lips—surely then there is no unity. But, I do not need to read the long list of sins that spoil the unity of the Spirit, for it is lengthy. Oh, may God cast them out of us, for only then can we keep the unity of the Spirit. **(Power in the Blood)**

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### **3 John 9 Three D's** (Vance Havner)

In the New Testament family album three men whose names begin with the same letter stand out as typical of three kinds of Christians today. The Scripture account of them all is very brief, but a little window lets in much light and from the meager record we immediately recognize that their kind has not yet disappeared from the earth.

1. There was **Demas**, who forsook Paul, having loved this present world (2 Tim. 4:10). Doubtless he had started out in dead earnest, maybe with plenty of fire, but the pull of the old life and the charm of the world were too much for him.

2. Then, there was **Diotrephes**, who loved the preeminence (3 John 9)... His sort is still with us in the minister who bosses instead of shepherds his flock; in ecclesiastical overlords who reject all visiting brethren who do not measure up to their private yardstick; in any and all who want to rule instead of serve.

3. How refreshing it is to move from these two troublesome souls to **Demetrius**, who loved the truth (3 John 12). Whether or not he was the Ephesian silversmith, now converted, he had good report of all and of the truth and of John; and his sort is altogether too rare today. He was no celebrity, but we could profitably exchange some of our striking personalities for more of his kind. What would the church do today without his quiet, faithful, steady testimony?

God help us in such a time to choose the Demetrius way of good report and not the Diotrephes way of loud report! **(Vance Havner)**

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### **3 John 1:9-15**

The third epistle of John addresses the problem of overly ambitious and domineering church leaders. But this problem was certainly not limited to the first century. Bible scholar A. T. Robertson wrote a magazine article that rebuked leaders who follow in the footsteps of Diotrephes (3 John 9). After it was published, he got numerous letters from church leaders, demanding that their subscriptions be canceled. Although Robertson had never met any of them and had not used any names, they all felt that he had attacked them personally! ([Today in the Word](#))

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### **3 John 1:9 - Diotrephes**

Pastor H. A. Ironside had a man in his church who always tried to run the board meetings. If Ironside agreed with him, all went well. But when he disagreed, he would receive a harsh letter from the man, who sarcastically addressed him as "Dear Diotrephes." Actually, the board member deserved the title, not Ironside, who was known for his graciousness.

In John's third letter we read about Diotrephes, who wanted to be a boss in the early church. Overly ambitious and domineering, he opposed the apostle John and set himself up as a dictator over those in his spiritual care. Anyone who took exception to him was dismissed from the congregation.

The problem of bossy church leaders was not limited to the first century. A. T. Robertson wrote a magazine article in which he rebuked leaders who follow in the footsteps of Diotrephes. After it was published, he received letters from at least 25 different church leaders, demanding that their subscriptions to the magazine be canceled. Although Robertson had never met any of them, they all said in effect, "You have personally attacked me!"

A lust for power springs from pride and selfishness. In contrast, Jesus served in humility and obedience to His Father (Phil. 2:8). He must be our pattern.

**3 John 1:10 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.**

KJV 3 John 1:10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

BGT 3 John 1:10 δι το το, ν λθω, πομν σω ατο τ ργα ποιε λγοις πονηρο ς φλυαρ ν μ ς, κα μ ρκο μενο ς π το τοι ς ο τε α τ ς πιδ χεται το ς δελφο ς κα το ς βουλομ νου ς κωλ ει κα κ τ ς κκλη ς α ς κβ λλει.

NET 3 John 1:10 Therefore, if I come, I will call attention to the deeds he is doing— the bringing of unjustified charges against us with evil words! And not being content with that, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but hinders the people who want to do so and throws them out of the church!

CSB 3 John 1:10 This is why, if I come, I will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious words. And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

ESV 3 John 1:10 So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

NIV 3 John 1:10 So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

NLT 3 John 1:10 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.

NRS 3 John 1:10 So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends, and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

NJB 3 John 1:10 So if I come, I shall tell everyone how he has behaved, and about the wicked accusations he has been circulating against us. As if that were not enough, he not only refuses to welcome our brothers, but prevents from doing so other people who would have liked to, and expels them from the church.

NAB 3 John 1:10 Therefore, if I come, I will draw attention to what he is doing, spreading evil nonsense about us. And not content with that, he will not receive the brothers, hindering those who wish to do so and expelling them from the church.

YLT 3 John 1:10 because of this, if I may come, I will cause him to remember his works that he doth, with evil words prating against us; and not content with these, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and those intending he doth forbid, and out of the assembly he doth cast.

MIT 3 John 1:10 For this reason if I come, I will remind him of his deeds that are accompanied by despicable words in making accusations against us. As if these offenses were not enough, he does not welcome the (ministerial) brothers, forbids those wanting to do this, and expels them from the church.

GWN 3 John 1:10 For this reason, when I come I will bring up what he's doing. He's not satisfied with saying malicious things about us. He also refuses to accept the believers we send as guests. He even tries to stop others who want to accept them and attempts to throw those people out of the congregation.

- **I will:** 1Co 5:1-5 2Co 10:1-11 13:2
- **unjustly accusing us :** Pr 10:8,10
- **puts them out of the church. :** Isa 66:5 Lu 6:22 Joh 9:22,34,35

**For this reason** - This is a term of conclusion which should always cause a pause to ponder what is being concluded? Clearly John is going to respond to the haughty church member Diotrefes who refuses to acknowledge John's authoritative position.

**If I come, I will call attention** ([hupomimnesko](#)) **to his deeds** ([ergon](#)) **which he does** ([poieo](#) - present tense - is continuing to do), **unjustly accusing** ([phluareo](#) - present tense - continually slandering) **us with wicked** ([poneros](#)) **words** - KJV = "[prating](#) against us with malicious words" **YLT** = "I will cause him to remember his works that he doth"**CSB** = "I will remind him of the works he is doing." **If** introduces a third class conditional statement which indicates uncertainty about whether John will visit Diotrefes or not.

**James Montgomery Boice** on **unjustly accusing** (NIV = "gossiping maliciously") - "The Greek verb which is here translated 'gossiping' comes from a root which was used of the action of water in boiling up and throwing off bubbles. Since bubbles are empty and useless, the verb eventually came to mean indulgence in empty or useless talk. This was the nature of Diotrephes' slander, though, of course, the words were no less evil in that they were groundless." ([The Epistles of John](#))

**John Trapp** adds "The word signifieth . . . to talk big bubbles of words . . . it is a metaphor taken from over-seething pots, that send forth a foam; or . . . from overcharged stomachs, that must needs belch."

**John MacArthur** - Character assassination is an all too common ploy of those who seek to elevate themselves. They gain people's trust not positively by manifesting a godly character but negatively by destroying people's trust in other leaders. (See [1-3 John Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Christians must be careful not to believe everything that they read or hear about God's servants, particularly those servants who have a wide ministry and are well known. I have quit reading certain publications because all they print are undocumented accusations about people whose ministries God is blessing in a singular way. I mentioned a certain publication to a friend of mine one day, and he said, "Yes, I know the editor quite well. He's like a blotter: he takes everything in and gets it backward!" We would all do well to filter these reports through Philippians 4:8. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Strauss** - Here is an unholy practice which is too prevalent among Christians. The human tongue is a little member, but I fear we underestimate the possible extent of its destructive powers (James 3:3-8). There are some things we ought [or owe it] to do. We "ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). We "ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" (Romans 15:1). "We ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). We ought to be hospitable toward fellow believers (3 John 8). But there is one thing we ought [or owe it] not to do, and that is to speak wrongly, or unnecessarily of others (1 Timothy 5:13; Titus 1:11). "My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10). In his ambition to be preeminent, Diotrephes could not do what he ought to have done, and that is to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3). Instead, he spoke "malicious" [wicked, vicious] words against the servants of Jesus Christ, thereby doing that which he ought not to have done. I say again that his actions were a perversion of proper Christian behavior. ([Epistles of John](#))

Clearly the **deeds** Diotrephes is continuing to do are evil **deeds** "slandering us (John, et. al) with malicious words." (CSB) His deeds give clear testimony of his blemished character, for Jesus declared "**out of the heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. "These are the things which defile the man." (Mt 15:19-20).

**Wicked** ([poneros](#)) **words** denote words that are aggressive and fervently evil actively opposes what is good, in this case the apostle John. The idea of **wicked** ([poneros](#)) is not just bad in character (like [kakos](#)), but bad in effect (injurious)! It should not surprise us that this very word [poneros](#) is used to by John five times in 1 John to describe the Devil (1Jn 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18, 19) and once of Cain's evil deeds (1Jn 3:12). It is notable that the word devil is [diabolos](#) which refers to a slanderer, talebearer or false accuser. The Devil "throws false accusations between" parties with the intent being to divide!

Diotrephes was "[prating](#)" (trumping up false charges) against John and other traveling representatives of the Church.

**NET NOTE** - Because Diotrephes did not recognize the authority of the author, the author will expose his behavior for what it is (call attention to the deeds he is doing) if he comes for a visit. These are the charges the author will make against Diotrephes before the church: (1) Diotrephes is engaged in spreading unjustified charges against the author with evil words; (2) Diotrephes refuses to welcome the brothers (the traveling missionaries) himself; (3) Diotrephes hinders the others in the church who wish to help the missionaries; and (4) Diotrephes expels from the church (throws them out) people who aid the missionaries. (Diotrephes himself may not have had supreme authority in the local church to expel these people, but may have been responsible for instigating collective action against them.)

**And not satisfied** ([arkeo](#) - not content) **with this** - As if his **wicked words** were not enough to reveal the darkness of his heart!

**He himself** (absolutely) **does not receive** ([epidechomai](#)) **the brethren** ([adelphos](#) - "from same womb"), **either** - Diotrephes slams the door in the face of the itinerant preachers and missionaries!

**And he forbids** ([koluo](#) - present tense - is continuing forbids) **those who desire** ([boulomai](#) - present tense - continue to desire) **to do so and puts them out** ([ekballō](#)) **of the church** - This verse suggests Diotrephes is in a position of leadership in the church, possibly even the pastor. Now not only does he not **receive** these men who are in need of hospitality, he **forbids** others to do so even if they want to help. Diotrephes is a wicked man! One reason he probably did not receive the traveling preachers as he saw it as a threat to his power base.

The phrase **puts them out of** ([ekballō](#)) **the church** means he throws out, expels or excommunicates (see [excommunication in the Bible](#)) those who seek to help the itinerant preachers and missionaries! It is notable that [ekballō](#) is also used in John 9:34-35+ to

describe the blind man who Jesus healed being excommunicated from the Synagogue. Best of all [ekbállō](#) is used of Satan being cast out in John 12:31+.

**James Montgomery Boice** - "To begin with, a man named Diotrephes had assumed an unwarranted and pernicious authority in the church, so much so that by the time of the writing of this letter John's own authority had been challenged and those who had been sympathetic to John had been excommunicated from the local assembly. Moreover, due to this struggle, traveling missionaries had been rudely treated, including probably an official delegation from John." ([The Epistles of John](#))

**Simon Kistemaker** writes that "Not only are Diotrephes' words vicious; his deeds are equally reprehensible. He willfully breaks the rules of Christian hospitality by refusing to receive missionaries sent out to proclaim the gospel. By denying them shelter and food, he hinders the progress of the Word of God. In brief, Diotrephes is thwarting God's plans and purposes and consequently he faces divine wrath. ([3 John](#))

One has to strongly question whether Diotrephes is a genuine believer. In the following verse (2Jn 1:11) John makes a statement that certainly seems to be describing Diotrephes John writing that the one who **does** (present tense - habitually practices) **evil has not seen God**, which would be John's shorthand description of an unbeliever.

**Bob Utley** on **Diotrephes** - This man wants the attention and will not share the spotlight with anyone. He also removes anyone from the church who disagrees, or might disagree, with him.

**Brian Bell** - John indicted Diotrephes on 6 counts: **(1)** He loves the preeminence (his demand to occupy the leading place) **(2)** He does not receive us (his refusal to receive John himself) Imagine rejecting (and talking others into rejecting) a message from the apostle John? **(3)** He prated (talk nonsense) against us w/malicious words(his slander of the other apostles) **(4)** He does not receive the brethren (his unwillingness to entertain missionaries) **(5)** He tries to put them out (his attempt to excommunicate other believers) **(6)** He is evil (his utter wicked character) **A. T. Robertson** wrote a magazine article in which he rebuked leaders who follow in the footsteps of Diotrephes. After it was published, he received letters from at least 25 different church leaders, demanding that their subscriptions to the magazine be canceled. Although Robertson had never met any of them, they all said in effect, "You have personally attacked me!" :)

**John MacArthur** - Like most conflicts in the church, this one stemmed from pride. It was pride that caused Diotrephes to slander John, snub the missionaries, and eliminate those who defied him. His arrogance led to ambition, which resulted in false, slanderous accusations, defiance toward apostolic authority, and the crushing of any opposition to his power. Sadly, there have always been people like Diotrephes in churches. Even more tragically, many churches, either because they are fearful of them, or in the name of tolerance, refuse to deal with their own Diotrephes types. The apostle John, however, had no hesitation in confronting such a sinner for the good of the church and the honor of Christ. (See [1-3 John Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - It has been my experience that most of the distress and division in local churches, and between churches, has resulted from personalities more than anything else. If only we would return to the New Testament principle of making the person and work of Jesus Christ our test for fellowship, rather than associations and interpretations of nonessential doctrines. But people like Diotrephes will always have their enthusiastic followers because many sincere but immature and untaught believers prefer to follow such leaders. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

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**Call attention** ([5279](#)) [hupomimnesko](#) from **hupó** = under + **mimnesko** = to remind) means to put another in mind of something, to cause one to remember, bring to one's mind, **remind** (remind suggests a jogging of one's memory by an association or similarity). Classical authors used the word hupomimnēskō to mean "to remind of, put in mind, mention, suggest, provoke, remember," and "observe". In each of its seven New Testament occurrences, the word hupomimnēskō is related either to rightful or wrongful behavior.

**Unjustly accusing** ([5396](#))(**phluareo** from **phluaro** = talkative, in turn from **phluo** = to boil or bubble as with heat) is one who is a tattler, an idle and trifling talker, one who "boils over" with impertinent speech (cf phluaro in 1Ti 5:13). **BDAG** - to indulge in utterance that makes no sense, talk nonsense (about), disparage. **Phluareo** is found in similar contexts from Herodotus (ca. Fifth Century B.C.) to Philo and the papyri. *Moulton-Milligan* illustrates the more general meaning "talk nonsense": one person expressed the desire "that I may not by much writing prove myself an idle babbler." Only used in 3Jn 1:10 with no uses in the Septuagint. **Phluareo** was used in polemic debate to denounce the inane of an argument: "O Cleon, stop **spouting silliness**." The word in 3Jn 1:10 emphasizes the emptiness of the charges against John.

**Wicked** ([4190](#)) [poneros](#) from **poneo** = work or toil, Robertson says the idea is that labor is an annoyance, bad, evil; Noun [poneria](#) derived from **poneros**) means evil including evil, malignant character, pernicious, that which is morally or socially worthless, wicked, base, bad, degenerate. **Poneros** describes evil in active opposition to good. It means not only evil in its nature but viciously evil in its influence and actively harmful. **Poneros** used to describe Satan (ho poneros = "Evil one"), the god of this age,

who is corrupting man and dragging him to destruction. This denotes someone who is not content in being corrupt themselves. They seek to corrupt others and draw them into the same destruction!

**Forbids** (hinders, prevents) (2967) **koluo** from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. **Koluo** can describe the keeping back of something from someone (Acts 10:47 referring to the Holy Spirit). To hinder means to make slow or difficult the progress of something by interfering in some way with the activity or progress thereof. In short **koluo** means to make it difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen.

**3 John 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.**

KJV 3 John 1:11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

BGT 3 John 1:11 γαπητ, μίμο τ κακὴν ἀλλὰ τὴν γαθὴν. γαθοποιεῖ κτὸ θεοῦ· κακοποιεῖ οὐχ ὅραεν τὸ θεῖον.

NET 3 John 1:11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is bad but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does what is bad has not seen God.

CSB 3 John 1:11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

ESV 3 John 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

NIV 3 John 1:11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

NLT 3 John 1:11 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.

NRS 3 John 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

NJB 3 John 1:11 My dear friend, never follow a bad example, but keep following the good one; whoever does what is right is from God, but no one who does what is wrong has ever seen God.

NAB 3 John 1:11 Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does what is good is of God; whoever does what is evil has never seen God.

YLT 3 John 1:11 Beloved, be not thou following that which is evil, but that which is good; he who is doing good, of God he is, and he who is doing evil hath not seen God;

MIT 3 John 1:11 Loved one, do not follow evil as your model, but goodness. One who does good is from God. One who does evil has not seen God.

GWN 3 John 1:11 Dear friend, never imitate evil, but imitate good. The person who does good is from God. The person who does evil has never seen God.

- **Do not imitate** Ex 23:2 Ps 37:27 Pr 12:11 Isa 1:16-17 Joh 10:27 Jn 12:26 1Co 4:16 11:1 Eph 5:1 Php 3:17 1Th 1:6 2:14 2Ti 3:10 Heb 6:12 1Pe 3:13
- **does good:** 1Pe 3:11 1Jn 2:29 3:6-9
- **does evil:** John 3:20

#### Related Passages:

1 Thessalonians 5:21 But **examine** (present imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) everything carefully; **hold fast** (present imperative) to that which is good; 22 **abstain** (present imperative) from every form of evil

Exodus 23:2 "You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice;

Psalms 37:27 **Depart** from evil and **do** good, So you will abide forever. (NB: good deeds do not save, but they do show one is truly saved!)

Psalms 34:14 **Depart** from evil and **do** good; **Seek** peace and **pursue** it.

Isaiah 1:16-17 (**RED** = COMMANDS) "**Wash** yourselves, **make yourselves clean**; **Remove** the evil of your deeds from My sight. **Cease** to do evil, 17 **Learn** to do good; **Seek** justice, **Reprove** the ruthless, **Defend** the orphan, **Plead** for the widow.

John 10:27 (THE ONE WE SHOULD IMITATE) "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

1 Corinthians 11:1 **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (HOW DID PAUL IMITATE A PERFECT PATTERN? [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

John 5:29+ and will come forth; those who **did the good deeds** to a resurrection of life, those who **committed the evil deeds** to a resurrection of judgment. (**ED**: GOOD DEEDS DO NOT SAVE. ONLY FAITH IN JESUS SAVES. BUT GOOD DEEDS ARE EVIDENCE THAT WE HAVE THE GOOD SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN US WHO ENABLES THOSE GOOD DEEDS. THE COROLLARY IS IF THERE ARE NO GOOD DEEDS AND ONLY EVIL DEEDS, SUCH A PERSON IS VERY UNLIKELY TO BE BORN AGAIN.)

### **DON'T IMITATE DIOTREPES! DO IMITATE DEMETRIUS!**

**Beloved** ([agapetos](#) - masculine singular) refers to Gaius.

**Do not imitate** ([mimeomai](#) in [present imperative](#), singular, see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **what is evil** ([kakos](#)), **but what is good** ([agathos](#)) - John has just presented an example of an evil doer and now gives a command not to **imitate** his behavior. The command could signify either stop doing this (implying some were doing this) or do not begin doing this. It is worth noting that we all imitate others to one degree or another. We began as little children playing follow the leader (at least we used to play those kinds of games in the 1950's!) The upshot is that John's command is very practical.

*Lord, tattoo this verse on the hearts of Your children  
for the sake of Your Name. Amen*

Paul repeatedly spoke of followers of Christ as imitators. Imitation is not bad, unless you imitate the wrong example! Thus Paul wrote...

1 Thessalonians 1:6+ You also became **imitators** ([mimetes](#)) of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

1 Thessalonians 2:14+ For you, brethren, became **imitators** ([mimetes](#)) of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

2 Thessalonians 3:7+ For you yourselves know how you ought to [dei](#) - BETTER RENDERED "MUST" - present tense - you must continually) **follow our example** ([mimeomai](#)), because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,

2 Thessalonians 3:9+ not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would **follow our example** ([mimeomai](#)).

1 Corinthians 4:16+ Therefore I exhort you, **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** ([mimetes](#)) of me.

1 Corinthians 11:1+ **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators** ([mimetes](#)) of me, just as I also am of Christ.

**Compare...**

Hebrews 13:7+ **Remember** ([present imperative](#)) those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and



considering the result of their conduct, **imitate** ([mimeomai](#) in [present imperative](#)) their faith.

Hebrews 6:11-12+ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but **imitators** ([mimetes](#)) of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

**Strauss** comments "How frequently we fail to realize that by our words and actions we lead others! John's word here is a warning to all believers not to follow the Diotrephes type. We are to follow after love (1 Corinthians 14:1), that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:15), righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22), peace (Hebrews 12:14) and in the steps of our Lord (1 Peter 2:21), but never let us mimic or imitate a Diotrephes. Let us follow on to know the Lord (Hosea 6:3) and not afar off as did Peter (Luke 22:54)." ([Epistles of John](#))

**The one who does good** ([agathopoieo](#) in present tense - as one's lifestyle) **is of God** - John describes "Christian Do-Gooders" in a good sense. In this short description, John makes it clear that practicing **good** identifies one as a genuine believer (**of God**). While practice does not make perfect (that's called glorification), practice does demonstrate we have been justified by faith and are in the process called progressive sanctification.

This reiterates his words in 1 John 2:29+ "If you know that He is righteous, you know that **everyone also who practices** (present tense - speaks of *direction*, not *perfection*) **righteousness** (PARALLELS "DOES GOOD") is born of Him. (See same thought in 1 John 3:6-9+)

**The one who does** (present tense - as their lifestyle) **evil has** (ouk - absolutely) **not seen God** - John makes a clear distinction between genuine believers and those who profess to believe but are not regenerate. Faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone, but is shown to be saving faith by one's works (Jas 2:14-26+). The idea of **not seen** refers to seeing with one's heart, like the pure in heart are blessed because they shall see God (Mt 5:8+). Sadly these unregenerate individuals will have a rude wake up call someday when they die, for they will all see **God** at the [Great White Throne judgment](#) (reserved ONLY for unbelievers, those who have "not seen God" in life but will see Him in death and be eternally separated from Him at the second death, the Lake of fire!).

As an aside, given that John's command follows his description of Diotrephes, one might propose that the description in this verse would be a good summary of the godly character of Gaius and the wicked character of Diotrephes. This adds some weight to the thought that Diotrephes was not a genuine believer, but I don't think we can be dogmatic.

In his Gospel John wrote that "everyone who does (present tense - habitually does) evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." (Jn 3:20+). Diotrephes refused to let the "light bearers" into the church which is not all that different from those John describes as not coming to the light for fear that their evil deeds would be brought out into the open.

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**Imitate** (follow...example) ([3401](#)) [mimeomai](#) from **mimos** = imitator, "mimic") means to imitate, to use a model, to [emulate](#), to follow (someone's actions or way of life), especially to follow an example (good example - 2Th 3:7, 9, Hebrews 13:7) and not to follow a bad example (3 Jn 1:11). The kindred word [mimetes](#), imitator, rendered imitators occurs 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1 and gives us our word mimic and pantomime.

**Good** ([18](#)) [agathos](#) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). **Agathos** is one whose goodness and works of goodness are transferred to others. Good and doing good is the idea. **Agathos** describes that which is beneficial in addition to being good. **Agathos** is that which is good in its character, beneficial in its effects and/or useful in its action. **Agathos** is used in the New Testament primarily of spiritual and moral excellence. **Agathos** describes the believer's deeds that remain withstand being tested by fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1Cor 3:12-13+) The words of saints are to be **agathos** (good for edification) (Eph 4:29+) **Agathos** describes that which is perfect, producing pleasure, satisfaction, and a sense of well-being, for example describing a **good conscience** in (1Ti 1:5).

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## Imitate The Good

Read: 3 John

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. —3 John 1:11

Most people would agree that life is a painful mixture of good and bad. It's true in marriage, friendship, family, work, and church. Yet we are surprised and disappointed when self-centeredness takes the stage within a fellowship of those who seek to worship and serve Christ together.

When the apostle John wrote to his friend Gaius, he commended the truthful living and generous hospitality of those in his church (3 John 1:3-8). In the same fellowship, however, Diotrephes, “who wants to be head of everything” (v.9 Phillips), had created an atmosphere of hostility.

John promised to deal personally with Diotrephes on his next visit to the church. In the meantime, he urged the congregation: “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God” (v.11). John’s words echo the instruction of Paul to the Christians in Rome: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21).

In a heated conflict, we may be tempted to “fight fire with fire.” Yet John urges us to turn away from what is bad and follow what is good. This is the pathway that honors our Savior.

For Further Study

Be patient and humble in conflicts (Rom. 12:12-21; Gal. 6:1).

Follow the guidelines in Matthew 18:15-18

with the desire to restore erring fellow Christians.

As light overcomes darkness, goodness can overcome evil.

By David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **Bob Gass - BORROW [A Fresh Word for Today](#) - Jerry’s Legacy**

The truth ... speaks highly of Demetrius. (3 John 12)

Bishop Jerry Kaufman died this morning. He pastored Love Gospel Assembly in the Bronx, New York. He had a passion for “the inner city.” Like a character out of *The Cross and the Switchblade*, he ran with gangs in some of New York’s worst neighborhoods. The night he was saved he was instantly delivered from heroin, and three days later was in Bible college studying the Word of God. When he graduated, he came back to his old neighborhood and started preaching. With an incredible heart of love he built a church in “one of America’s ten worst neighborhoods” (according to Newsweek Magazine).

Many a Friday night I preached for him in the old synagogue that became home to the 1,500 people from every conceivable lifestyle whom he had won to Christ. He used to say with a smile, “Bob, we recycle them!” The services often went to midnight because Friday was their “night out.” In the old days they never thought about time, so now they came to celebrate and to stay “until the job gets done!” I have stood with tears of joy, watching those faces. They didn’t need to be coaxed; they’d been lifted from hell, and every breath was a song of praise. When I looked at what he’d built in the “devil’s backyard” and the price he paid to do it, I felt, “Lord, I’ve done so little!”

TODAY JERRY’S ENJOYING A WELL-EARNED REST, AND THE TRUTH SPEAKS HIGHLY OF HIM. WHAT WILL IT SAY ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU GO?

**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.**

KJV 3 John 1:12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

BGT 3 John 1:12 Δημητρ μεμαρτρ ρηται π π ντων κα π α τ ς τ ς ληθε ας· κα με ς δ μαρτυρο μεν, κα ο δ ας π μαρτυρ α μ ν ληθ ς σιν.

NET 3 John 1:12 Demetrius has been testified to by all, even by the truth itself. We also testify to him, and you know that our testimony is true.

CSB 3 John 1:12 Demetrius has a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. And we also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.

ESV 3 John 1:12 Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

NIV 3 John 1:12 Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone--and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of

him, and you know that our testimony is true.

NLT 3 John 1:12 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.

NRS 3 John 1:12 Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.

NJB 3 John 1:12 Demetrius has been approved by everyone, and indeed by Truth itself. We too will vouch for him and you know that our testimony is true.

NAB 3 John 1:12 Demetrius receives a good report from all, even from the truth itself. We give our testimonial as well, and you know our testimony is true.

YLT 3 John 1:12 to Demetrius testimony hath been given by all, and by the truth itself, and we also -- we do testify, and ye have known that our testimony is true.

MIT 3 John 1:12 Demetrius has been certified by all and by the truth itself. We also affirm him, and you know our declaration is true.

GWN 3 John 1:12 Everyone, including the truth itself, says good things about Demetrius. We also say good things about him, and you know that what we say is true.

- **a good testimony:** Ac 10:22 22:12 1Th 4:12 1Ti 3:7
- **and we add our testimony:** Joh 19:35 21:24

## JOHN ENDS ON A GOOD NOTE

**Demetrius has received a good testimony** ([martureo](#)) **from everyone, and from the truth** ([aletheia](#)) **itself; and we add our testimony** ([martureo](#)), **and you know that our testimony** ([martureo](#)) **is true** ([alethes](#)) - NIV = "Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone--and even by the truth itself." **Received a good testimony** is in the perfect tense indicating past completed action with ongoing effect or result. In other words, the testimony to Demetrius had been given over a period of time and was still effective. **From everyone** indicates that Demetrius manifest a godly character not only to believers but also to unbelievers. What a powerful testimony to seek to emulate!

In declaring **from the truth itself**, it is as if John calls **truth** to "assay" or assess **Demetrius** and the verdict is good. In the OT, one only needed 2 witnesses to verify a fact but John goes beyond that providing 3 witnesses that testify about the character of Demetrius.

**F. B. Hole** says "it is not that he bore witness to the truth, but that the truth bore witness to him. Demetrius was not the standard by which truth was tested. The truth was the standard by which he was tested; and having been so tested, he stood approved."

**Warren Wiersbe** - According to the dictionary, an exemplar is "an ideal, a model, an example worthy to be imitated." Demetrius was that kind of a Christian. John warned his readers not to imitate Diotrephes. "If you want to imitate an example, then follow Demetrius!" "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example" (Phil. 3:17)....You and I cannot see God, but we can see God at work in the lives of His children. The godly life and dedicated service of another believer is always an encouragement and a stimulus to me. By our good example, we can "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:24)....While it is a dangerous thing when "all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6:26), it is a wonderful thing when all the believers in a local church can agree to commend your life and testimony. If all men, saved and lost, good and evil, speak well of us, it may mean that we are compromising and masquerading. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[Guzik](#) quips that "Demetrius was so faithful to the truth that even the truth was a witness on his behalf."

**Demetrius** means "belonging to Demeter," the Greek goddess of fruits and crops, and indicates this Demetrius was of pagan background

**Strauss** comments "It is an essential requirement for Christian service that we be "men of honest report" (Acts 6:3), that is, men of good reputation such as were Cornelius (Acts 10:22), Timothy (Acts 16:2), Ananias (Acts 22:12), and others. These men were bearing a good witness for Christ and that witness was making its mark in the lives of others. The Christian of "good report" is the man who keeps God's Word. The "truth" itself testified in behalf of Demetrius. His life harmonized with the teachings of Christ and the apostles. To all of this evidence John adds his own testimony, "and we also bear record: and ye know that our record is true" (verse 12). How wonderful when the life of any child of God can have so complete a witness!" ([Epistles of John](#))

[J Vernon McGee](#) on **Demetrius** - Demetrius is one of the shining lights of the New Testament, a humble saint of God. Around us today, there are multitudes of people like him. They are not a Diotrephes. And they are not even a Gaius -- they are not outstanding Christians. They are just humble saints of God, doing the thing God has called them to do. In a humble way, they are maybe just teaching a little Sunday school class. I heard the other day about one who teaches the handicapped. How wonderful that is, but nobody knows about her. Nobody has ever given her a loving cup. They ought to, but they never have. She doesn't want it, and she would be embarrassed if you gave her one. There are many saints of God like that today. God is using them in a small way. They are not trying to be the chief soloist; they are just singing in the choir. They don't try to be the main speaker. They don't want to preside. They don't want to be the chairman of every board in the church. They are willing just to fade into the woodwork of the church. But they are pillars of the church. They are supporting the work, and they are encouraging the preacher.

One of the most wonderful church members I ever knew was a dear little lady who came in every Sunday morning on a cane. She never missed a Sunday morning, and she always had something nice to say. She was always encouraging the preacher. She told me one time, "I think that's my job. It's all I can do." Well, she did other things, too. The church is filled with wonderful saints of God. Don't get the impression that I think that everybody in the church is a Diotrephes. Thank God that there are very few of them. In this epistle here, it is two good men to one bad. I think the average is better than that today in the church -- I think maybe it is one hundred to one. Thank God for the Demetrius folk in our churches today.

The tense that John uses here indicates that Demetrius had a good reputation in the past and that he still has a good reputation. Over a long period, Demetrius has demonstrated a time-tested faith. He is Demetrius, the dependable brother. The church knows him as a man of God. Now you might deceive the church, but Demetrius was tested by the truth. He measures up to the definition of a believer. John knows him and agrees. There are three witnesses to the fact that Demetrius adorns the doctrine of Christ.

The real test of the Christian life is not in the arena backed by applause. It was not before the crowd in the Colosseum. There were five million martyrs who bore testimony to the truth of the gospel in the first three centuries and who laid down their lives for Christ. Did you know that there were many more millions who bore witness by the faithful lives they lived each day? Nothing spectacular, nothing sensational, nothing outstanding -- they just lived for God. They had a purpose, they had a direction, and they had a thrilling experience. (Our contemporary civilization is experiencing a decadence that characterized Rome in the first century. After World War II, an Englishman wrote the play, *Look Back in Anger*. It revealed a bottomless pessimism without any hope for the future. This attitude produced the Beatle-brained mob of youth we have today who are without direction. Three young people I met in Athens told me they simply wanted to drop out of society.) Into the decadent first century, with its low morals and erosion of character, there came the message from God that He had given His Son. There were multitudes who came into contact with Him, and they got involved. May I say to you, you may not find their names in the Yellow Pages, but you will find them in the Lamb's Book of Life. They lived for God unknown to the world, and they died unknown to the world. But they are known to God, and their names are inscribed on high. (BORROW [Thru The Bible](#) with J. Vernon McGee)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Demetrius in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - There are two men named **Demetrius** in the Bible: 1) a rabble-rousing silversmith in Acts 19:23–41, and 2) a Christian of good repute in 3 John 1:12.

The **Demetrius** whom John mentions in 3 John is likely the man who delivered the epistle to [Gaius](#), the recipient. John says that Demetrius is well-known for his commitment to the truth and has well-deserved praise from all who know him.

This rest of this article will concentrate on the more prominent Demetrius, found in Acts. This Demetrius was a silversmith who made his livelihood from making silver shrines of Ephesus' famous temple of Diana ([Artemis](#)). These small shrines were sold to tourists who were told they could take the shrine anywhere in the world and worship Artemis just like they would in her temple in Ephesus. These silver shrines are thought to have been a cupped enclosure with a small female figure inside.

[Paul](#) spent years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10), and his ministry began impacting people for Christ. God performed extraordinary miracles through Paul (Acts 19:11). As the gospel began changing lives, the followers of Artemis noticed.

Demetrius noticed, too. Sales of his idolatrous shrines were falling off. He became concerned that Paul's teaching would put an end to his business. If people began worshiping the true God, they would no longer want his idols of Artemis. Demetrius gathered the tradesmen of Ephesus and said, "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business [selling Artemis shrines]. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty" (Acts 19:25–27). While Demetrius claimed his motivation for opposing Paul was to defend the "majesty" of Artemis, his true motivation seems to have been less

altruistic. We can speculate that his real motivation was his profit margin.

Demetrius and the other craftsmen took to the streets, stirring up a crowd of Artemis-worshippers and starting a riot. Paul's companions [Gaius](#) and [Aristarchus](#) were captured by the crowd and taken to the theater in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). The frenzied mob shouted chants of praise to Artemis in the theater for two hours straight (verse 34). Finally, the city clerk gained an audience and reminded Demetrius that the proper place for him to air his grievances was in court. He then told the mob they were breaking Roman law by disturbing the peace. The rioters dispersed after that (verse 41).

After the commotion caused by Demetrius, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). The Bible does not mention Demetrius again, although the [Alexander](#) mentioned in Acts 19:33 is thought by some to be the coppersmith Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 4:14. [GotQuestions.org](#)

### 3 John 1:13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink;

KJV 3 John 1:13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

BGT 3 John 1:13 Πολλὰ ἔχον γρ ψαί σοι ἅλ' οὐ θέλω διὰ μὲλανος καὶ κάλμου σοι γρ φεῖν·

NET 3 John 1:13 I have many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink.

CSB 3 John 1:13 I have many things to write you, but I don't want to write to you with pen and ink.

ESV 3 John 1:13 I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink.

NIV 3 John 1:13 I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink.

NLT 3 John 1:13 I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to write it with pen and ink.

NRS 3 John 1:13 I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink;

NJB 3 John 1:13 There were several things I had to tell you but I would rather not trust them to pen and ink.

NAB 3 John 1:13 I have much to write to you, but I do not wish to write with pen and ink.

YLT 3 John 1:13 Many things I had to write, but I do not wish through ink and pen to write to thee,

MIT 3 John 1:13 I had in mind writing to you about many things, but I did not want to write to you with pen and ink.

GWN 3 John 1:13 I have a lot to write to you. However, I would rather not write.

#### ■ 2Jn 1:12

## A POST-SCRIPT SCRAPPED

**I had many things to write to you** (singular), **but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink** - This is almost identical to the closing words of 2Jn 1:12 "Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink." Today we might say, I am not going to text you, facetime you or shoot you an email. Why? I prefer a face to face meeting as described in the next verse.

**Brian Bell** on **pen and ink** - **Pen** – a reed used for writing. **Ink** – black ink [chief ingredient “soot” or “black carbon”] It was also mixed w/gum or oil for use on parchments (sheep or goat skins). 2. Or, it was mixed w/a metallic substance for use on papyrus.

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**Pen** (reed, rod) ([2563](#)) [kalamos](#) refers to a flexible stalk or stem of a plant. It refers to the plant itself which is easily shaken (bent or broken) and which sways in the wind (Mt. 11:7; 12:20 from Isa. 42:3; Lk 7:24; 1 Ki 14:15; Job 40:21). **Kalamos** can refer to the stalk which is cut for use, e.g., as a mock scepter in mocking Jesus, a "scepter" the soldiers then took and began to beat our Lord on the head (Mt. 27:29, 30). **Kalamos** describes a measuring reed (rod) in the Revelation and Ezekiel (Rev. 11:1; 21:15, 16; Ezek. 40:3, 5, 6 - see below for all uses in Ezekiel). **Kalamos** was used of reed for writing, (3 John 1:13; Ps. 44:1) which was used on papyrus. Used in medicine for [insufflation](#), etc. This word gives us *calamus*, the quill of a feather.

**Ink** (melanos) Lit., that which is black. The word occurs only once outside of John's Epistles (2 Cor. 3:3), and only three times in all (2 John 12; 3 John 13). Ink was prepared of soot or of vegetable or mineral substances. It was mixed with gum or oil for use on

parchment, or with a metallic substance for use on papyrus . Colored inks, red and gold, were also employed.

### 3 John 1:14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

KJV 3 John 1:14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

BGT 3 John 1:14 λπ ζω δ ε θ ως σε δε ν, κα στ μα πρ ς στ μα λαλ σομεν.

NET 3 John 1:14 But I hope to see you right away, and we will speak face to face.

CSB 3 John 1:14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace be with you. The friends send you greetings. Greet the friends by name.

ESV 3 John 1:14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

NIV 3 John 1:14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

NLT 3 John 1:14 For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face.

NRS 3 John 1:14 instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face.

NJB 3 John 1:14 However, I hope to see you soon and talk to you in person.

NAB 3 John 1:14 Instead, I hope to see you soon, when we can talk face to face.

YLT 3 John 1:14 and I hope straightway to see thee, and mouth to mouth we shall speak. Peace to thee! salute thee do the friends; be saluting the friends by name.

MIT 3 John 1:14 I hope to see you shortly and then we shall speak face to face.

GWN 3 John 1:14 I hope to visit you very soon. Then we can talk things over personally.

#### ■ hope - 2Jn 1:12

#### Related Passages:

2 John 1:12+ Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak **face to face**, so that your joy may be made full.

1 Corinthians 13:12+ For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then **face to face**; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

## FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION

**But I hope ([elpizo](#)) to see you shortly, and we will speak face ([stoma](#) - mouth) to face ([stoma](#) - mouth)** - Literally this means "To speak mouth to mouth" which is how God spoke with Moses (Nu 12:8+ - Lxx = "stoma kata stoma").

**THOUGHT** - When God speaks to believers in His Word, does He not in a sense do it "mouth to mouth?" Isaiah 55:11 says "So shall **My word** be which goes forth **from My mouth**; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." In 2Ti 3:16+ that Word is said to be God breathed, so when we go to His Word I would submit that we are in effect receiving "mouth to mouth" resuscitation from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word! This restoration/revival is something we (I certainly know this is true in my case) are all daily in need of because we live in this fallen sinful world which tends to sap our spiritual strength. Are you daily being "resuscitated" (revived - cf Ps 119:25+) by the pure Word from the mouth of Jehovah (not devotionals, as good as they are, but with the pure milk of His Word because by it alone you will grow in respect to salvation [aka progressive sanctification] 1Pe 2:2+)? If not, this might be why you are a bit spiritually sluggish. Just a thought to consider!

**Colin Kruse** - The expression of a desire to communicate face to face rather than by letter is typical of the friendly letter tradition of the first-century Mediterranean world. Even though 3 John is not simply a friendly letter, the elder does make use of this typical expression here. (See [The Letters of John - Page 216](#))



[Barclay](#) adds a good word to **face to face** - John was wise and he knew that letters can often only bedevil a situation and that five minutes heart to heart talk can do what a whole file of letters is powerless to achieve. In many a church and in many a personal relationship, letters have merely succeeded in exacerbating a situation; for the most carefully written letter can be misinterpreted, when a little speech together might have mended matters. Cromwell never understood John Fox, the Quaker, and much disliked him. Then he met him, and after he had spoken to him, he said, "If you and I had but an hour together, we would be better friends than we are." Church courts and Christian people would do well to make a resolution never to write when they could speak.

[Brian Bell](#) - **Face to face** is always best...not text's(SMS MMS), email, letters, facebook...

**3 John 1:15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.**

BGT 3 John 1:15 Ε ρ νη σοι. σπ ζοντα σε ο φ λοι. σπ ζου το ς φ λους κατ νομα.

NET 3 John 1:15 Peace be with you. The friends here greet you. Greet the friends there by name.

ESV 3 John 1:15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

NLT 3 John 1:15 Peace be with you. Your friends here send you their greetings. Please give my personal greetings to each of our friends there.

NRS 3 John 1:15 Peace to you. The friends send you their greetings. Greet the friends there, each by name.

NJB 3 John 1:15 Peace be with you; greetings from your friends; greet each of our friends by name.

NAB 3 John 1:15 Peace be with you. The friends greet you; greet the friends there each by name.

MIT 3 John 1:15 Peace to you. Your friends greet you. Greet the friends on your end by name.

GWN 3 John 1:15 Peace be with you! Your friends here send you their greetings. Greet each of our friends by name.

- **Peace:** Ge 43:23 Da 4:1 Ga 5:16 Eph 6:23 1Pe 5:14
- Our: Ro 16:10,11
- **Greet:** Ro 16:1-16

#### Related Passages:

John 15:13-15+ - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends ([philos](#)). 14 "You are My **friends** ([philos](#)), if you do what I command you. 15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends** ([philos](#)), for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

### WARM CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS

**Peace** ([eirene](#)) **be to you** - John has been rejected and reproached by Diotrephes and yet he does not let that keep him from wishing peace (presumably the **you** is Gaius). John is giving us all an example to follow, an example of how to still exhibit the supernatural fruit of peace in the midst of testing times and unsettled seasons!

**Warren Wiersbe** - George Morrison of Glasgow wrote, "**Peace** is the possession of adequate resources." The believer can enjoy the "peace of God" because he has adequate resources in Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:6-7, 13, 19) (**ED**: YES, BUT I WOULD ADD THE BELIEVER ALSO HAS PEACE BECAUSE HE HAS THE INDWELLING SPIRIT WHO ENERGIZES HIM/HER TO BEAR THE FRUIT OF PEACE - Gal 5:22+). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[Bob Utley](#) - **Peace be to you**" This is obviously a reference to the Hebraic idiom shalom (cf. Luke 10:5). It can mean "hello" or "good-bye." It expresses not only the absence of problems but the presence of God's blessings. These were the resurrected Christ's first words to the disciples in the upper room (cf. John 20:19,21,26). Both Paul (cf. Eph. 6:23) and Peter (cf. 1 Pet. 5:14) used this as a closing prayer for God's people.

The **friends** ([philos](#)) **greet** ([aspazomai](#)) **you**. **Greet** ([aspazomai](#)) - [present imperative](#) the **friends** ([philos](#)) **by name** - Aristotle defined a "friend" as "one soul inhabiting two." (cp use in Lxx of Dt 13:7) Since they were believers, they were

**friends** of Jesus (Jn 15:13-15+) and **friends** of Jesus are **friends** of each other!

**THOUGHT** - We are going to be together for a long time up there, so it only makes good sense to form good Christian friends down here. Are you a friend to your brethren? Do you have Christian **friends**? More specifically, do you have an accountability partner, another mature man or woman that is such a good friend that they will hold you accountable? They are willing to ask you when you tell them you are doing just fine, "Did you just lie to me?"

**Irving Jensen** comments that "John's epistles end on a bright, warm note in the last two words: **"by name"**". The words are an appropriate reflection of the man who wrote them. Plummer writes, "S. John as shepherd of the Churches of Asia would imitate the Good Shepherd and know all his sheep by name."

While **Michael W Smith's** song seems to be related to someone special in his life who has gone on to the next life, the sentiment in the title is apropos for all of us as believers - friends down here will be friends up there FOREVER!

### **Friends are Friends Forever**

Michael W Smith

Packing up the dreams God planted  
In the fertile soil of you  
Can't believe the hopes He's granted  
Means a chapter in your life is through

But we'll keep you close as always  
It won't even seem you've gone  
'Cause our hearts in big and small ways  
Will keep the love that keeps us strong

And friends are friends forever  
If the Lord's the Lord of them  
And a friend will not say never  
'Cause the welcome will not end

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**Warren Wiersbe** - It is interesting to contrast these two little letters and to see the balance of truth that John presented. Second John was written to a godly woman about her family, while 3 John was written to a godly man about his church. John warned "the elect lady" about false teachers from the outside, but he warned Gaius about dictatorial leaders inside the fellowship. The false teachers in 2 John would appeal to love so that they might deny truth, while Diotrephes would appeal to truth as, in a most unloving way, he would attack the brethren.

How important it is to walk "in truth and love" (2 John 3) and hold the truth in love! (Eph. 4:15) To claim to love the truth and yet hate the brethren is to confess ignorance of what the Christian life is all about. (**ED**: THIS IS POTENTIALLY A SIGN THAT SUCH A PERSON IS NOT A TRUE BELIEVER - 1Jn 2:10,11+, 1Jn 3:10 1Jn 3:17, 1Jn 4:20) When God's people love Him, the truth, and one another, then the Spirit of God can work in that assembly to glorify Jesus Christ. But when any member of that assembly, including the pastor, becomes proud and tries to have "the preeminence," then the Spirit is grieved and He cannot bless. The church may outwardly appear successful, but inwardly it will lack the true unity of the Spirit that makes for a healthy fellowship.

What we need are more people like Gaius and Demetrius—and fewer like Diotrephes! ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

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**Peace** (1515) **eirene** from **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. Peace was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word shalom - "peace to you". The expression "having it all together" speaks of everything in place and as it ought to be. When things are disjointed, there is lack of harmony and well being. When they are joined together, there is both.

**Eirene** can convey the sense of an inner rest, well being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God, effected by placing one's faith in the gospel. In eschatology, peace is prophesied to be an essential characteristic of the Messianic kingdom (Acts 10:36).

**Greet** (salute, embrace, take leave, pay respects) (782) **aspazomai** from **a** + **spao** = draw out as a sword, pull, breathe) means to enfold in arms, to welcome, to embrace. To salute one (not in a military sense), greet, bid, wish well to. In classical literature

aspazomai can also be used of physical expressions of welcome, such as “embrace” and “kiss.” It is spoken of those who meet (Mt. 10:12; Mk 9:15; Lk 1:40; 10:4; Acts 21:19; Lxx = Ex. 18:7) or separate (Acts 20:1; 21:6). This is one final expression of Paul's paternal love. A salutation on meeting; an expression of good wishes at the opening (or in Hellenistic times times also the close) of a letter. Aspazomai is constantly used in the papyri for conveying the greetings at the end of a letter (Ro 16:3, 5–16, 21–23; 1Cor. 16:19, 20; 2Cor. 13:12; Phil. 4:21, 22; Col. 4:10, 12, 14, 15; 1Th. 5:26; 2Ti 4:19, 21; Titus 3:15; Philemon 1:23; Heb. 13:24; 1Pet. 5:13; 2 John 1:13; 3 John 1:14).

**Friends** (5384) **philos** means loved (loved one), dear, befriended, friendly, kind. **Philos** can mean kindly disposed or devoted ([Acts 19:31](#)). **Philos** describes one having special interest in someone else. One who is on intimate terms or in close association with someone else **Philos** can describe a love which is emotional and conditional. Philos refers to one who has a liking for, is fond of something or someone.

**PHILOS - 29X/27V -friend(12), friends(17).** - Matt. 11:19; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 11:5; Lk. 11:6; Lk. 11:8; Lk. 12:4; Lk. 14:10; Lk. 14:12; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 21:16; Lk. 23:12; Jn. 3:29; Jn. 11:11; Jn. 15:13; Jn. 15:14; Jn. 15:15; Jn. 19:12; Acts 10:24; Acts 19:31; Acts 27:3; Jas. 2:23; Jas. 4:4; 3 Jn. 1:15