

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

3JOHN

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

John identifies himself as the elder. His position of spiritual maturity authorizes him to serve as a mentor/advisor. This letter is to another dear friend, Gaius. His love for him is based on a bond of fellowship in the Lord.

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

John is expressing his desire for Gaius to grow as healthy and wealthy materially as he is spiritually. That's a blessing that would cause many of us to pause and consider our ways.

3John 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.

This verse tells us that John is aware of Gaius' spiritual growth through the testimony of fellow believers. Gaius was living his life in such a way that others could see in his actions what was in his heart.

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

This was a source of joy to John, especially when the news concerned one of "his children." I believe this refers to the fact that John had led Gaius to the Lord. He had the feelings that any parent has when he sees his child growing in wisdom and being successful.

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

John commends Gaius for showing hospitality to Christian brothers even though he did not know them. (Why are we so slow in our churches to embrace our Christian brothers and sisters? Often it is due to shyness or insecurity—but too often we are just too comfortable in our own little worlds. We are afraid of how reaching out to someone else in love might impact "our world." God please help me be a better instrument of your love toward others.)

3John 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:

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

These Christian brothers were so impressed by Gaius' treatment/support/testimony that they felt his example was important enough to share with the church (probably as an encouragement for them to do the same). Then John encourages Gaius to send them on their way in a way that would glorify God. (I think he is saying don't send them away without some provisions to ease their journey.) These men were out spreading the gospel because of their love for the Savior. They had received no help or assistance from the Gentiles (probably unbelieving friends).

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

John emphasizes that we, as believers, should show hospitality to such men (missionaries) since we are working together for the same truth. (We are all part

of one body. What one part of the body does is much more effective when the whole body cooperates.)

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

John then tells Gaius that he had written the church, but evidently had not gotten a good response because of Diotrephes. He was evidently in the leadership position and wasn't willing to take the chance of one of these new guys being able to usurp his position. Diotrophes loves being the main man. John took this rejection personally.

Power and position are a dangerous combination. They can be used by Satan so easily in bringing down a Christian. It gives one a feeling of significance that begins to overshadow his/her ministry. Self instead of others begins to show itself in the making of decisions and the message being shared. I pray God's protection over Bob—and the many other pastors in the world—from this seduction of pride.

3John 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.

John tells Gaius that if he gets to come to the church, he will identify this sinful reaction and treatment of Christian brothers. He will expose the lies that Diotrephes is spreading (malicious words) concerning his brothers in Christ. Not only is he gossiping, he is refusing to welcome his brothers. Not satisfied with that, he is intimidating church members and preventing them from sharing hospitality with the threat of being put out of the church. (The power of his position has really gone to his head. The strange thing to me is how the people allow one man to maintain a position he is abusing. It has been an enigma throughout my study of history. We are truly gluttons for punishment.)

3John 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.

John is encouraging his friend to be strong and not to follow or imitate the actions of one who is evil. He is to imitate what is good (as defined by the teachings of Christ). Your actions show whom you follow. Those who practice evil are not followers of God.

3John 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.

John gives encouragement regarding the testimony of Demetrius (obviously another dear Christian brother).

“of the truth itself” – I'm not sure what this means. Maybe it's like how the law reflects/identifies what is sin and the truth is revealed most effectively in the life of an obedient believer. The one thing we can be sure of is that Demetrius was well respected by everyone because of his consistent walk with the Lord. (Lord, help me be a Demetrius.)

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

3John 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.

Having communicated the main burden on his heart, John decides to close his letter. Although he has much to say—as in his second letter—he wants to share with his friend “face to face.” So he closes by wishing him peace and sending him greetings from his friends who are with John. They are such good friends that he asks Gaius to greet his friends there by name without even including a list. He knew Gaius would know who they were.