

3 John 1:4

i have
A GREATER Joy
than to
hear that ^{my} children
WALK IN
truth



Lesson 15 - 3 John

John, the apostle of love, knew the importance of fellowship. First John emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God through abiding in Christ; in Second John he forbids fellowship with those who do not abide in the teachings of Christ, and in Third John he encourages fellowship with those who do abide in the teachings of Christ. True fellowship is a result of sharing the common bond provided through Christ, abiding in Him, and walking according to His teachings.

Third John, as written in the original Greek, is the shortest book of the Bible. Its subjects are as vital today as they were when John wrote it from Ephesus in approximately 90 A.D. As you read this letter, note its relevancy to the church today. May it encourage you to live as those John commended in the letter.

Memory Verse:

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

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

FIRST DAY – 3 JOHN 1:1-2

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer. Read 3 John in its entirety.

1. To whom is this letter written?

Gaius was one of the most commonly used names of the Roman Empire. Other men referred to by this name appeared in the New Testament four times. Little is known about the recipient of this letter. There is no reference to Gaius being a pastor or elder in the church. Many regard him as an active lay member and personal friend of John's.

2. What was John's desire for Gaius according to verse 2?
 - a. Describe a *prosperous soul*:
3. As Christians, it is important that we care about one another's *spiritual* well-being as well as one another's *emotional* and *physical* health. How is caring about each one of these aspects an expression of love?
4. Physical health is a result of nutrition, exercise, proper rest – a disciplined order of a balanced life. What are the components of good, spiritual health?
5. Personal: If your physical health was in the same state as your spiritual health, what condition would you be in physically?

SECOND DAY – 3 JOHN 1:1-6, 12

Read 3 John for review.

1. John commended both Gaius and Demetrius in this letter. What similar comment did he make about both of them? (see verses 3 and 12)
2. A person's testimony or reputation speaks volumes about not only himself, but about the church and the gospel. How would you explain the importance of a good testimony or reputation to another Christian whose life was not producing good works? Can you support your answer with Scripture?

3. Record John's response to the fact that Gaius was walking in truth. v. 4

- a. Read I Thessalonians 2:11. Like John, Paul had a father's heart for Christians in his care. Summarize this kind of loving care as expressed in the following verses: Ephesians 1:15,16; Philippians 1:4; I Thessalonians 2:19,20 and 3:6-9.

If knowing his children are walking in truth causes a human shepherd to rejoice, how much do you think it means to our Heavenly Shepherd?

4. Personal: Describe a lifestyle of walking in truth.

What are some of the temptations that can prevent a Christian from walking in truth?

What can we do to combat these temptations?

THIRD DAY – 3 JOHN 1:5-8

Read 3 John 1:5-8.

In this paragraph division John praises Gaius for his hospitality. At the time of this writing, it is believed that John would send out missionaries to preach in many different cities. Their room and board was typically provided by those in the church. The strangers which John referred to in verse 5 were probably these traveling ministers. These men carried with them letters of recommendation from their home churches or the disciples and had returned to John bearing witness of Gaius' care.

1. What do the following verses say about showing and giving hospitality? (If you can, look them up in different translations.)
 - a. Romans 12:13
 - b. I Timothy 5:10
 - c. Hebrews 13:2
 - d. 1 Peter 4:9
2. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, included a recommendation for Phoebe, a Christian sister who had helped others, including Paul. *“That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”* (Romans 16:2) There are many ways to “receive someone in the Lord”. How would you describe hospitality as it relates to the church today?

3. Personal: What is your attitude towards hospitality? Are you able to share your home, or a meal, with others “cheerfully”? If hospitality comes easy to you, what advice or word of encouragement would you give to someone who struggles in this area?

4. What reason does John give in verse 8 for receiving these traveling teachers?

When we are obedient to welcome our brothers and sisters in the Lord, and support them as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to others, we are actually partnering with them in the ministry!

FOURTH DAY – 3 JOHN 1:9-12

Read 3 John in its entirety for review.

In this paragraph division, John moves from *commending* to *reproving*.

1. Describe Diotrephes' behavior towards, what did he not do? v. 9

a. Why?

2. Choose one of the following Scriptures and describe how it relates to *loving the preeminence* among men: Matthew 20:20-28; Matthew 23:4-8 or Luke 22:24-27.

3. Rather than loving preeminence what should our behavior be like?
- Romans 12:10
 - Philippians 2:3-5
 - Titus 1:7
4. In addition to not receiving these teachers, what else was Diotrephes doing? v. 10
5. In light of this behavior, what was John's exhortation to the believers? v. 11
6. Personal: In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul reminds us that "bad company corrupts good character" (NLT). Think about the people you spend the most time with, these are the people who will influence you the most – what kind of influence are they having on your character? In other words, are you imitating what is evil, or what is good?

*"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."
1 Corinthians 11:1*

7. As John closes this letter in verses 13-14, you can sense his love for these believers and his desire for fellowship with them. In our day and age when many people experience loneliness and yet not many are willing to step out of their comfort zone and invest in the lives of others, it would help us to remember that our bond of unity does not lie in our physical similarities or shared experiences.... what is it that unites us? See 1 John 1:7.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?