

Gleanings of Grace

3 John

Lesson 25

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.

OBSERVATION: Read James 3

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *God*.

Key Words: *God, love, truth, witness, testified/testimony, good, and evil*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used five times in 3 John. Mark the word. Choose one instance and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used twice in 3 John. Mark the word and record what the conclusion is based upon.

Background:

1. Discovering the author's purpose for writing often gives us a deeper understanding of a book. Knowing *why* a book is written helps us to understand *what* has been written. What were some of John's purposes for writing this letter?
2. As you read this epistle, describe your overall impression.
3. What topics are covered in this letter?

Gaius

1. Three men are mentioned by John in this third letter: *Gaius*, *Diotrephes*, and *Demetrius*. This homework will be divided according to each of them, beginning with *Gaius*. *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. Scan the letter and list the characteristics and behavior John noted about Gaius.
2. John referred to *Gaius* as *beloved* four times in this letter. *Gaius* was not only *beloved* by John; he was *beloved* by God (as are all believers). How does knowing you are *beloved* by God help you to receive God's instructions for you?
3. Note the two statements about *truth* in verse 3. What are they?
 - a. Why must we first have *truth in us*, before we can *walk in truth*?
 - b. What *truths* have been most instrumental in your life that have inspired you to *walk in truth*?

- c. 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. Gaius walked *faithfully* (verse 5). Using Matthew 24:45, relate *faithfulness* to whomever you are responsible for.
 - a. Using 2 Corinthians 4:1-3, describe Paul's *faithfulness*.
 - b. Using your own words, describe *faithfulness*.
5. Gaius not only walked in *truth* and *faithfulness*, he walked in *love* (verse 6). John specifically addressed Gaius' treatment of traveling Christian workers. What did John write about them and how they should be treated (verses 6-8)?
 - a. The phrase, *taking nothing from the Gentiles*, refers to not taking material support from unbelievers. Why is this wise behavior?
 - b. What can we learn from the example of David in 1 Samuel 30:21-24?
 - c. Consider Paul's request in Philippians 4:3. What do you think Paul was asking when he asked the believers in Philippi to *help* those *who labored with him in the gospel*?
6. Read through John's letter again and make a list of his desires and instructions for *Gaius*.
7. In 3 John 1:2, John expressed his desire that Gaius *prosper in all things, even as his soul prospers*. Describe a *prosperous soul*.

- a. 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?

1.) In what ways does spiritual health affect physical and emotional health?

- b. As Christians, it is important that we care first about one another's spiritual well-being, but also for one another's emotional and physical health. How is caring about each of these aspects an expression of love?

8. Ponder the instruction in 3 John 1:11. Define the word *imitate*.

- a. John provided examples of *evil* (Diotrephes) and *good* (Demetrius). Consider the examples of *good* set by the following and list a few things worthy of *imitating* in each.

Jesus

Peter

John

Paul

- b. Record Paul's words in Philippians 3:17.

- c. John wrote that *he who does good is of God*. What do you think he meant?

Diotrephes

1. Using 3 John 1:9,10, describe *Diotrephes*.

- a. Define *preeminence*.
- b. 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.

- c. Rather than *loving preeminence*, what should our behavior be like?

Romans 12:10

Philippians 2:3-5

Titus 1:7

- d. What did John say he would do about *Diotrephes if he came*?

- 1.) Why do you think John would choose to do this?

*...for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Peter 5:5b*

Demetrius

1. Paul commended both Gaius and Demetrius in this letter. What similar comment did he make about both of them? (see verses 3 and 12)

- a. 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?

CHALLENGE: Use Scripture to support your answer.

- b. Consider the words of John 3:21. What do you think this means as it relates to our calling to having a *good testimony*?

c. 1 Timothy 3:7 warns of the consequences of not having a *good testimony*. What can happen as a result of lacking a good testimony?

1.) How does this happen?

2. Notice that *Demetrius* had a *good testimony* from both *all* in the church and *from the truth itself*. What do you think people noticed about him?

Those who believe in the Holy Scriptures are bound to observe its teachings.

Those who do not are bound by its consequences.

- William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Colony

REVIEW:

1. Summarize what you gleaned about each of these key words.

truth

witness

good

evil

2. What will you personally do to make *walking in truth* more of a priority?

*My prayer for you, my very dear friend,
is that you may be as healthy and prosperous in every way as you are in soul.*

- 3 John 2 JBP

Observation Worksheet

3 John

The Elder, to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: ² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. ³ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. ⁵ Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, ⁶ who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, ⁷ because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth. ⁹ I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. ¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. ¹¹ 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. ¹² Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true. ¹³ I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; ¹⁴ but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.