

3 John "Good, Bad and Great"

The **THINGS** that matter in life are not things at all ...

Cliff notes on 2 John "STAY AWAY FROM HERETICS," HE WRITES, "WALK IN TRUTH. AND DON'T FORGET LOVE."

Love and truth our watchwords ... Love and truth, like the right and left ventricle of the heart, function as the circulatory system of the church. When the two are functioning freely, the body of Christ is healthy. **PRAY**

Third John differs from Second John in many ways! One key difference is the 2 John is written to a **group of people**, while 3 John is written to a **single individual, Gaius**.

3 John 1 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.

Over and over again the Bible airs the dirty laundry of men so we can keep our clean... shows us how to live and how not to live... Good... Gaius, Bad...

Diotrephes, UGLY... No not ugly but GREAT Demetrius **AGAIN JOHN TEACHES US HOW TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE WITH RESPECT TO DIFFICULT CHURCH PROBLEMS.**


3 John ¹ The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I **love in truth: WE DON'T KNOW WHO THIS GUY IS_ THE IDENTIFICATION IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE GAIUS WAS A VERY COMMON NAME IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE. 4 times in this short letter John addresses Gaius as "beloved" (vv. 1, 2, 5, 11).**

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. "Name It And Claim It" **teachers love to camp on this verse. Oh it's ok to pray for it but we have no right to "Claim" it.**



Courson... regarding the heresy of prosperity doctrine... Some of us preach sermons. Others *are* sermons as they continually deal with pain and loss. Therefore, it is a damnable heresy for anyone to imply that those who are sick lack faith or that those who are poor are second-rate believers.


The word for **prosper** literally means "to have a good journey." It metaphorically means to succeed or prosper. It is like saying, "*I hope things go well for you.*"

 Much of the preaching in the Word of Faith movement focuses on physical health and wealth rather than on spiritual health and wealth. External health is important, but not nearly as important as our spiritual health.

George Whitfield has a fascinating sermon on this verse that is worthy of our consideration. He asks and answers the question of how we can know that our soul prospers. He talks about the sad condition of many people who are more concerned about a pimple on their face than the rottenness of their heart.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when **BRETHREN** came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. **“BRETHREN”** whom John mentions in verse 3 and again in verses 5 – 8 can be identified as itinerant teachers. So **2** John blasts itinerant false prophets, **3** John is praises the ministry of those who teach the truth!

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Same thing he said in 2 John... **TO WALK IN TRUTH MEANS TO WALK IN A WAY THAT IS REAL AND GENUINE, WITHOUT ANY PHONINESS OR CONCEALMENT. JOHN'S FAITHFUL MINISTRY HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO MANY SPIRITUAL CHILDREN.**

 As Hughes points out, “Notice all of the emotive terms in these first 4 verses: John loves Gaius; he is concerned for his physical and spiritual welfare; he rejoices in his spiritual progress. John’s own warm heart of love for the Lord and for fellow Christians oozes from these verses.”

5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, **These “strangers” were Christian brothers who deserved to be treated in a Christian manner. Gaius showed them hospitality, and these “brother strangers” gave public testimony to the church about how Gaius had helped them.**

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 (**non-Christians**) **Non-Christians are under no obligation to support Christian missions, but we Christians are!**) We may not be able to travel to foreign lands to carry the gospel, **but when** we support those who do with our **prayers**, our **finances**, and **our encouragement** we become fellow laborers with them in the gospel. Gaius opened his heart, his home, and his hand to fellow Christian teachers, and we should do the same.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth. **Oh yes John says don't let false teachers in but those who speak the truth... take care of them!** John praised Gaius for his hospitality. This may seem somewhat trivial to us, but it is not to God. This is a practical outworking of the essential command to love one another; it is love in action. In **Matthew 10:42** 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

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.

End of verse 6... in a manner worthy of God **Christians are not only called to help, but to help in a manner worthy of God. We are to do our best to help others excellently.**

Jesus in Matthew 10:40 "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. **41** 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. **42** And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a

disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Now John turns his attention to address the problem that motivated his writing to Gaius in the first place. **9** I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, 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, **Public exposure is John's plan when he arrives. This is John's meaning when he writes, "I will call to mind his deeds which he does" Remember John was one of the "Sons of Thunder"... He still has a little thunder left in his lighting!**

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.

Diotrophes Called this guy out by name!

2 Tim. 4:14 **14** Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. **15** You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. **18** For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the

hearts of the simple.

who loves to have the preeminence among them Simply, the problem for **Diotrephes** was *pride*. In his **PRIDE**, he did not **receive** the apostles such as John. This was in contrast to the humble hospitality of Gaius, who walked in the truth.

PRIDE Boice on **who loves to have the preeminence among them**:

"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'."

[*Psalm 147:6*](#) *The LORD lifts up the **humble**; He casts the wicked down to the ground.*

[*Micah 6:8*](#) "He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk **humbly** with your God.

Humble yourselves James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

In the movie the Gladiator... Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius asked Maximus one more favor as he knows he is dying...

"There is one more duty... that I ask of you before you go home. What would you have me do, Caesar? I want you to become the protector of Rome after I die. **Passing the power to one other than the rightful heir.** Will you accept this great honor that I have offered you?

With all my heart, **no** Maximus... *that is why it must be you.*

He knew humility is what was needed... The emperor of our lives knows that humility is what we need as well. If we will humble ourselves He will lift us up. **Diotrephes was not humble!**

On three separate occasions Jesus said the same thing... Luke 18:14; Matthew 23:12; and Luke 14:11 "for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."



Doctrine might have been an issue but I doubt it. Diotrephes might have aligned himself with the false teachers... doubt that as well. Personalities, agendas, and

PRIDE

Pastors and other church leaders are not immune from the temptations of pride and personal aggrandizement. In fact, just the opposite is the case! Pastors are probably more prone to these temptations and must guard against them at all costs. I call it the "Emperor Syndrome". **I built... it I did it... Therefore I deserve...**

This is ambition for leadership, and it is especially problematic with someone who is unqualified to lead!

Taken from Riken's commentary on John's letters... This was the problem with some of history's great leaders. George Armstrong Custer, for example, finished last in his class at West Point. Just two years later, at the age of twenty-three, because of his exploits during the Civil War he had been named a brigadier general Like Diotrephes, he was an "impulsive blabbermouth" with an ego the size of the eastern Montana Territory, where he ingloriously lost the Battle of Little Bighorn along with his life in 1876. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter reminded them that they must shepherd God's flock, "not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." A pastor is a shepherd, not a swaggering dictator. I have seen some pastors who are so full of themselves they can strut sitting down! Diotrephes is still among us, unfortunately. John desires Gaius not to begin to imitate Diotrephes in his evil actions.

Some 10 years ago when God allowed me to become your lead Pastor I knew our by-laws were way out of balance to secure the lead Pastor's position even if the "Emperor Syndrome" kicked in... We changed the by-laws to take power out of the Senior Pastor's role.

PRIDE... John said Diotrephes prated against us with malicious words.

PRATING The meaning of the Greek word translated “prating” refers to bubbles underwater that burst when they reach the surface. Diotrephes was one who stirred up bubbling accusations against John that were without substance but which caused undercurrents of turmoil.

PRIDE... He goes on to say that Diotrephes **put *them* out of the church.**

Diotrephes not only used his influence to forbid others from showing hospitality to John or his associates; he even tried to excommunicate those who tried to show such hospitality.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. Diotrephes (evil) do not do what he did... Gaius (good) follow this guys example. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. **John’s point is that your character and behavior evidences your relationship with God, or lack of it.**

Another good example... verse 12 Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. **This means Demetrius lives in a manner consistent with the truth. So John puts his stamp of approval on this brother... show him hospitality worthy of God.** 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. **This is a letter about contention and conflict yet John appropriately ends the letter with a desire and expectation for peace**

The Holy Spirit calls for application... are you a Diotrephes or Demetrius?

When people think of you, do they think of someone who is **selfless**, seeking to give himself on behalf of others in Christian service, or do they think of someone who is **selfish**, always seeking to be first and in charge?

You may not be a leader or in a position of leadership, but it would behoove all of us to remember that every Christian is the best Christian that somebody knows. The church and the world are always watching ... not to mention God.

As one man notes, "Scripture has much to say about pride. Pride caused Satan to be cast out of Heaven. Pride caused Adam and Eve to sin and be cast out of the garden. It brought down prophets, priests and kings of the Old Testament times. It kept many a Pharisee and Sadducee out of Heaven in Jesus' days. It caused Pilate to wash his hands concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Pride goes before a fall, Scripture says. Of the seven things God says he hates, first on the list is pride (Proverbs 6:16-19). There are a few sins as destructive as pride. The Latin word for pride is "*superbia*," which means "**aspiring to be on top.**" More than one preacher has been brought low by pride. Only God is on top.

"The Ministers' Fainting Fits" in his book *Lectures to My Students*, **Spurgeon pungently states**, "*Be content to be nothing, for that is what you are.*"



C. S. LEWIS SAID CONCERNING PRIDE, "THERE IS NO FAULT WHICH MAKES A MAN MORE UNPOPULAR, AND NO FAULT WHICH WE ARE MORE UNCONSCIOUS OF IN OURSELVES. AND THE MORE WE HAVE IT OURSELVES THE MORE WE DISLIKE IT IN OTHERS."



Leave it to Mark Twain to cleverly drive this point home: "If I ever achieve humility, I'll sure be proud of it."

Sometimes it takes very little to puff up these proud preacher hearts of ours. A little success, a little prosperity, and we are ready to burn incense to our own accomplishments.

Instead of an unwelcome intruder, seek to make **humility** the spouse of your soul to whom you have wedded yourself forever. To reflect God's light, don't seek the limelight.

Even the donkey that brought Jesus into Jerusalem knew the applause was not for him. If you get too big for your britches, don't be surprised if God gets you a smaller pair of britches.

Let the Diotrefes in us be crucified... Long live Demetrius.