

— 3 John —
Lesson #3 Chapter 1:1-8

Before you begin this lesson, prepare your heart by going to the Lord for help in understanding His Word and wisdom in applying it. May you be blessed as you dig into this passage!

1. John identifies himself in the opening of this letter in the same way he did in 2 John. What does he say about himself in verse 1?

2. Who is he writing in according to verse 1? What do you learn about the recipient of this letter and how John regards him from verse 1?

3. In verse 1, we read that John's love for Gaius is guided by the truth. How does a common truth lead to love for the brethren? See John 3:21; 1 John 1:6-7; 2 John 1-4; 3 John 3-4?

4. What does John desire for Gaius according to verse 2?
 - a. What is the *primary focus* of John's hopes for Gaius?

 - b. Before John hopes the more temporal blessings upon Gaius, John recognizes that those things are best enjoyed in a fully satisfied soul. Why do we need our own soul's to be rich and thriving in the Lord before we can fully enjoy the more fleeting blessings of this life?

- c. How does that help you adjust your own thinking about real “prosperity”?
5. What does it look like when your soul prospers? See the following Scriptures to get you started. Feel free to add your own verses to this list: Psalm 23; 92:12-14; Proverbs 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Colossians 1:3-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 4-7.
6. Conversely, describe what it’s like when your soul isn’t prospering in the Lord. What’s the answer for returning to that place of richness of soul? See Psalm 37:1-6; 119:17-24, 25-32; Isaiah 55:6-7; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:9.
- “It is clear that Gaius was a man whose “spiritual health” was evident to all. “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). Physical health is the result of nutrition, exercise, cleanliness, proper rest, and the disciplined order of a balanced life. Spiritual health is the result of similar factors. We must nourish ourselves with the Word, and then “work out” that nourishment in godly exercise (1 Tim. 4:6–7). We must keep ourselves clean (2 Cor. 7:1) and avoid the contamination and pollution that is in the world (2 Peter 1:4; James 1:27). While exercise and service are important, it is also important that we rest in the Lord and gain new strength through fellowship with Him (Matt. 11:18–30). A balanced life is a healthy and happy life, a life that honors God.” ~Warren Wiersbe¹
7. What is the “key” to gaining and maintaining a prosperous soul? See also Psalm 19:7-14; 119:25-26, 97-104; Jeremiah 6:16; James 1:21.
8. What are some ways *you* can build into *your* soul’s “prosperity” and apply Paul’s counsel to Timothy to “take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:15)?

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

9. What news brought joy to John according to verse 3?
10. In fact, how does John rate his joy upon hearing this news according to verse 4? Why is that according to verse 4? See also 1 Corinthians 13:6; 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:14.
11. What do you learn about walking in the truth from John 4:23-24; 8:43-47; 14:6; 17:17-19; 1 John 1:6; 2 John 1-4; 3 John 3-4, 8, 12?
- a. If you could sum up in one simple statement what you've just discovered about those who walk in the truth, what would it be?

"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." ~Warren Wiersbe²

12. What reminder and commendation does John give Gaius in verse 5?

² Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

13. What do you learn from the following Scriptures that encourages us in the same direction? See Romans 12:13; Galatians 5:13; 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 5:8; Titus 3:8, 13-14; Hebrews 6:10; 13:1; James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18.
- a. Quick! Come up with a short list of ways you can do good to the brethren. How might you be able to put them into practice this week?
14. Dear friend, take this word from the Lord to heart, “Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren.” How do those words encourage you? If they cast reproach upon you, what needs to change in your heart, and then in your life, so those words can become a blessing to your soul?
15. How did the recipients of Gaius’ ministry respond? See verse 6. What does this tell you about how Gaius ministered to them?
16. What further encouragement does John give Gaius in verse 6? Note any tidbits you gain about this loving service from Matthew 25:40; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Philippians 4:15-19; Titus 3:13-14; Philemon 7.
17. What reason is given for showing such care for the brethren? See verse 7. Why is this reason enough to shower care upon these devoted brethren? See also 1 Corinthians 16:15-16, 18; Philippians 2:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

18. John gives another reason for the care and support for those who labor in the ministry in verse 8. What do you learn? See also 2 Corinthians 1:7; Galatians 6:6-10; Philippians 2:29-30; Hebrews 10:33.
19. We've covered a lot of soul-searching ground in these few verses. What truths have stood out to you in this lesson that you want to hang onto and apply?

“Christians should do even the common actions of life and of good-will after a godly sort, as serving God therein, and designing His glory.” ~Matthew Henry³

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31

³ Henry, Matthew. 1994. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.