

— 3 John —  
Lesson #1 Introduction  
Teacher's Guide

Read through the short book of 3 John two times before you begin answering the questions below.

Using only the text of 3 John, try to answer the following questions. Be sure to note the Scripture references to show where you found your answer from the Bible. *At this point in the lesson, you may not be able to answer every question using only your Bible.* You will have an opportunity at the end of this lesson to come back and complete your answers using other Bible study sources.

1. Who wrote the book?

The elder (verse 1). He is fatherly (verse 4). He loves those he is writing to (verse 5). He has authority to write these things (verse 9 and verse 10). He knows those he's writing to (verses 13-15).

"Their place in the canon of New Testament books was disputed for a time, but it is significant that there was no question in the minds of those church fathers who lived closest to the time of John that these two epistles were written by the apostle. The second-century writers Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria entertained no other view." [Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Nashville: T. Nelson.]

2. To whom is it written?

To the beloved Gaius (verse 1).

3. When was the book written?

Nothing internal that indicates a time. Seems very similar in time to 1 and 2 John.

The parallels between Second and Third John suggest that these epistles were written at about the same time (a.d. 90). Early Christian writers are unified in their testimony that the headquarters of John's later ministry was in Ephesus, the principal city of the Roman province of Asia.<sup>1</sup>

4. Where was it written?

Again, nothing internal indicates a place of origin. If it was written at the same time as 1 and 2 John, then it's possible it was written from Ephesus as many scholars believe that was where John wrote the other two letters.

See notes above.

5. What is the general tone of the author in the book?

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. [\*Talk Thru the Bible\*](#). Nashville: T. Nelson.

John is solicitous and commending to his friend, whom he obviously highly regards. He even shares ministry details with Gaius so he could be brought up to speed on things. John trusted Gaius. John loves his friend and yet is still in teaching mode with him.

6. What is the author's purpose in writing this book?

To encourage his friend and to commend him for his faithfulness, inform him about Diotrophes, and remind him about life as a believer and how to care for the brethren.

7. What topics are included in this book?

Walking in the truth. Supporting ministry workers. Dealing with rebellious men in the church. Doing what is right. Demetrius' good testimony.

8. What are the key words of the book? Key words are words that are repeated or carry an important thought.

Walk. Truth. Brethren. Love. Church. Good/Evil. Testimony.

9. What are the main themes of the book? A theme is the main idea, the overall message.

Faithful testimony, faithful life, faithful deeds—all summed up in faithfully living unto the Lord. The example of unfaithfulness (as in Diotrophes) and the faithfulness of Demetrius.

10. What attributes of God do you see in this book?

Verse 6 God is worthy.

God is true and is truth itself, but He is not directly referenced, so I hesitate to note it. But we see these comments in verses 1-4.

God is the Name as noted in verse 7. The One who is the Name is worthy of our labors.

Verse 11 God is good. He is unseen. He is knowable.

11. What attributes of Christ do you find in this book?

No mentions of the Lord Jesus in this book.

12. List any attributes of the Holy Spirit you find in this book.

No mentions of the Holy Spirit.

Now you can go back and add to your answers above using your study Bible, a Bible dictionary or Bible commentary.

13. What insights have you gained thus far in your study of 3 John?

I loved the wisdom gained in verses 5-8 about loving and serving faithful ministry workers. The section in verses 9-11 about dealing with Diotrophes is so helpful and then the reminder again in verse 11 about those who do good are from God and those who do evil are not the Lord's.

As I continue to review this book, I realize it is a short manual on how to serve faithful ministry workers and how to discern those who aren't faithful.

14. Did you discover a verse or two in the book that caught your attention? How did it encourage or convict you, or make you want to study and think about it more?

I like how verse 5 teaches us to prioritize our lives and who we minister to. So helpful!

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Lesson #2 Chapter 1 Overview  
Teacher's Guide

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 1 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 1. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 1. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-4).  
In his opening statements, John greets his beloved brother in the Lord, Gaius. John rejoices that Gaius' soul prospers as he walks in the truth.
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 5-8).  
John commends Gaius for acting faithfully in his care for the brethren, especially strangers. Others have testified of Gaius' love for these traveling ministers, who should be cared for and honored because they have given themselves for the sake of The Name.
  - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 9-10).

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

Unlike the faithful workers of the previous verses, John now addresses the rebellion of Diotrefes, who doesn't accept what John and the other apostles teach. Because of his hard-hearted response to the Word of God, John intends to point it out so the church will be on guard against his wicked deeds.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 11-12).

With Diotrefes' bad example still in mind, John urges Demas to do what is good because the one who has seen God does what is good, while the one who does evil reveals they have not seen God.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 13-15).

John closes his short letter by expressing his desire to talk further when he can visit with Gaius face to face.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main thrust of this letter is how to care for the needs of faithful preachers while also showcasing the unfaithfulness of Diotrefes, who lords himself over the sheep and rebels against John's and the other apostles' teaching from God.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

Contrasting Faithful Men with the Unfaithful

4. MARK and LIST. On the 2 *John Bible Text* handout mark any *key words* you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It's easiest to start with these "God" words first. Next mark *words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times*. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time *God* is mentioned in 2 John Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 3—from *God the Father*

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Verse 3—the Son of the *Father*

Verse 4—received commandment to do from the *Father*

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the “3 times or more” rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author’s thoughts throughout the book.

## God

Verse 6 send them on their way in a manner worthy of God

Verse 11 the one who does good is of God

Verse 11 the one who does evil has not seen God

## Jesus

Verse 7 for [because] they went out for the sake of the Name

## Holy Spirit

none

## Truth

Verse 1 to the beloved Gaius whom I love in truth

Verse 3 John very glad when the brethren testified to your [Gaius'] truth

Verse 3 how you [Gaius] are walking in truth

Verse 4 John has no greater joy than to hear of his children walking in the truth

Verse 8 so that we may be fellow workers with the truth

Verse 12 Demetrius received a good testimony from everyone and from the truth itself

Verse 12 we add our testimony and you know that our testimony is true

## Beloved

Verse 1 the elder to the beloved Gaius

Verse 2 beloved [masculine singular], I pray that in all respects you may prosper

Verse 5 beloved [masculine singular], you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish

Verse 11 beloved [masculine singular], do not imitate evil, but what is good

## Brethren

Verse 3 I was very glad when the brethren came and testified to your truth

Verse 5 you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren

Verse 5 especially when they [the brethren] are strangers

Verse 6 they [the brethren] have testified to your love before the church

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Verse 6 you will do well to send them [the brethren] on their [the brethren] way in a manner worthy of God

Verse 7 they [the brethren] went out for the sake of the Name

Verse 8 therefore we ought to support such men [brethren]

Verse 10 [Diotrephes] does not receive the brethren either

## Faithfully

Verse 5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren

## Testify/testimony

Verse 3 I was very glad when the brethren came and testified to your truth

Verse 6 they have testified to your love before the church

Verse 12 Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone

5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

## Commands

Verse 11 Do not imitate what is evil.

Verse 11 [Do imitate] what is good.

Verse 15 Greet the friends by name.

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See observation sheet.

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

John uses “beloved” as his way to transition to his next topic.

8. MARK and LIST. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

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Verse 8 we ought to support such men *so that* we may be fellow workers with the truth.

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.  
Verse 14 I hope to see you shortly.

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.  
Gaius and Beloved.  
God and "the Name."

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You'll start this list by going back up to your listed "God" words that you marked earlier in Question #4. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

For example, you might read John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## Attributes of God

Verse 6 God is worthy of any sacrifice; He is due our worship; He is holy, righteous, King.

Verse 11 God is good.

Verse 11 God is Spirit yet is "seen" in our lives. He is knowable.

## Attributes of Christ

Verse 7 Jesus is the Name. He is worthy to be served and to give our all for.

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See observation sheet.

13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any "nuggets" you observed that you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further.

Been continuing to think on verse 6...to send the saints on in a "manner worthy" of God. How to do this and what it may look like.



*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

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### 3 John Chapter 1

1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.  
2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.  
3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.  
4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.  
5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;  
6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.  
7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.  
8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.  
9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.  
10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.  
11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

John's prayer for Gaius  
1 prosper  
2 good health  
3 as soul prospers

Serving the brethren

1 acting faithfully  
2. whatever you accomplish  
a known  
b unknown

3 love  
4 send men worthy to God

5 support  
6 fellow workers

Diotrephes

1. loves to be 1st  
2 does not accept

3. deeds exposed  
4 accusing wickedly

5 not receive brethren  
6 forbids them out

7 puts them out

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12 Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the **truth** itself;  
and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is **true**.

13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with  
pen and ink;

14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.



SS with brethren SS

god Δ  
Beloved ♡  
love ♡  
truth =  
true

SS synonyms  
brethren ←  
command ←  
time Ⓛ  
church ←

testimony  
good  
church  
write/wrote

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Lesson #3 Chapter 1:1-8  
Teacher's Guide

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?

John calls himself the elder.

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?

John is now writing to the beloved Gaius. John loves Gaius in truth. Gaius is well regarded and very dear to John. And Gaius is "in truth." Some translations render the end of verse 1 as in "the" truth, which at least for me helps me understand better what John is communicating about Gaius, i.e., he is a believer.

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?

**John 3:21** "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." *He who practices truth comes to the Light. In other words, he who practices truth is of faith.*

**1 John 1:6-7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. *Carrying on from John 3:21, we can say that he who practices truth comes to the Light (is saved) and has fellowship with God, which leads to fellowship with one another.*

**2 John 1-4** The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. *When we walk in truth, we abide in the Father and the Son and obey the command to walk in truth.*

**3 John 3-4** For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. *Walking in the truth creates a common bond that draws us near to the Lord and to one another. We love one another when we walk in truth.*

4. What does John desire for Gaius according to verse 2?

He desires that in all respects Gaius would prosper and be in good health to the degree or in the same measure as his soul prospers.

a. What is the *primary focus* of John's hopes for Gaius?

That Gaius' prosperity would reflect the "fatness" or abundance of his own soul's health.

"John adds to the formula by praying that the physical health of Gaius may equal the health of his soul, which latter health was robust. If the physical health of some saints equalled the health of their souls, they would be persons of the stature of an Atlas or a Hercules, while in the case of others they would be physical dwarfs, emaciated and weak. How often great spiritual vitality is found in saints of infirm health and broken bodies." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. [Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#). Vol. 15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

"The spiritual is indeed "the standard of measurement for the physical." [Akin, Daniel L. 2001. [1, 2, 3 John](#). Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.]

"To be healthy spiritually is holiness; it is to be growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ." [McGee, J. Vernon. 1991. [Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles \(2 and 3 John/Jude\)](#). Electronic ed. Vol. 57. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.]

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?

If our hearts aren't filled up in the Lord, then no amount of health or prosperity will truly bring us joy. He is the gateway to a satisfied and thankful heart.

c. How does that help you adjust your own thinking about real "prosperity"? Everything begins and remains in Him. If I am struggling, it's because I am not resting in or enjoying the Lord as my portion and inheritance.

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; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:18; Colossians 1:3-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 4-7.

## **Psalm 23**

A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. <sup>3</sup> He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

## **Psalm 92:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. <sup>13</sup> Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. <sup>14</sup> They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green,

**Proverbs 3:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup> It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

**2 Corinthians 9:8** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

**Colossians 1:3-6**

<sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;

**2 Thessalonians 1:3**

<sup>3</sup> We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is *only* fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows *ever* greater;

**Philemon 4-7**

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; <sup>6</sup> *and I pray* that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake. <sup>7</sup> For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

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.

When my soul isn't prospering in the Lord, there's a tight, shriveled up feel to my heart. I am not grateful. I am struggling in my flesh. I am not rejoicing in new mercies or finding new treasures from the Word.

**Psalm 37:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. <sup>2</sup> For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb. <sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. <sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. <sup>6</sup> He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday.

**Psalm 119:17-24**

<sup>17</sup> Deal bountifully with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word. <sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law. <sup>19</sup> I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me. <sup>20</sup>

My soul is crushed with longing After Your ordinances at all times. <sup>21</sup> You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, Who wander from Your commandments. <sup>22</sup> Take away reproach and contempt from me, For I observe Your testimonies. <sup>23</sup> Even though princes sit *and* talk against me, Your servant meditates on Your statutes. <sup>24</sup> Your testimonies also are my delight; *They are* my counselors.

**Psalm 119:25-32**

<sup>25</sup> My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. <sup>26</sup> I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your statutes. <sup>27</sup> Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders. <sup>28</sup> My soul weeps because of grief; Strengthen me according to Your word. <sup>29</sup> Remove the false way from me, And graciously grant me Your law. <sup>30</sup> I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances *before me*. <sup>31</sup> I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame! <sup>32</sup> I shall run the way of Your commandments, For You will enlarge my heart.

**Isaiah 55:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

**1 John 1:9**

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“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 Wiersbe<sup>1</sup>

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.

**Psalm 19:7-14**

<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. <sup>8</sup> The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. <sup>9</sup> The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous

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

altogether. <sup>10</sup> They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. <sup>12</sup> Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. <sup>13</sup> Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. <sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

**Psalm 119:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. <sup>26</sup> I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your statutes.

**Psalm 119:97-104**

<sup>97</sup> O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. <sup>98</sup> Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. <sup>99</sup> I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts. <sup>101</sup> I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. <sup>102</sup> I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me. <sup>103</sup> How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth! <sup>104</sup> From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

**Jeremiah 6:16**

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk *in it*.'"

**James 1:21**

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

The key to a prosperous soul is the Word of God. This unlocks the heart and brings sin and dullness to the light of God's holiness. In this way, sin is put off and we learn to run after God's commandments.

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)?

I can build into my soul's prosperity by meditating upon the Word as a daily habit. My soul always feels "fatter" when I've had time to think on and pray through the Word. My soul is prosperous to the degree that I live upon the Word by faith, clinging tightly to it.

9. What news brought joy to John according to verse 3?

John was very glad when the brethren brought him news of Gaius' walking in truth.

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.

John says he has no greater joy. John delights to hear of his children walking in the truth.



**1 Corinthians 13:6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. *Love rejoices with the truth, so no wonder John delights to hear of Gaius walking in the truth.*

**1 Thessalonians 3:6-8** But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. *Fathers in the faith rejoice when they see their "children" standing firm in the Lord as they live by faith.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:3** We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater. *The delight of all spiritual fathers is to see faith growing and love among their spiritual children.*

**1 Peter 1:22** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart. *Love for the brethren is a key component to all thriving believers.*

**1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. *Love for the brethren is an indicator of true, spiritual life.*

*Walking in the truth and love for the brethren go hand in hand.*

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?

**John 4:23-24** "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." *If we walk in the truth, we will worship in truth as well.*

**John 8:43-47** "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." *If we walk in the truth, then we will hear and obey God's Word.*

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. *If we walk in the truth, it is a result of coming to the Father through Jesus, understanding He is The Way, The Truth, The Life.*

**John 17:17-19** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. *If we walk in the truth, it's a result of being sanctified in the truth, which is the Word of God.*

**1 John 1:6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. *If we walk in the truth, we will not walk in darkness. Instead, we will practice the truth.*

**2 John 1-4** The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace

will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. *If we walk in the truth, it's because we know the truth and it abides in us forever. The truth we walk in comes from God alone and He desires, commands, that we walk in truth.*

**3 John 3-4** For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. *If we walk in the truth, we bring joy to our spiritual fathers and are a blessing to the brethren.*

**3 John 8** Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. *If we walk in the truth, we will desire to bless and support "truth-filled" ministries.*

**3 John 12** Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. *If we walk in the truth, the truth itself will testify about our truth.*

- 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?

Believers walk in truth...they can't help it!

"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 Wiersbe<sup>2</sup>

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

You are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren—especially when they are strangers.

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.

**Romans 12:13** contributing to the needs of the saints, *practicing hospitality.*

**Galatians 5:13** For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but *through love serve one another.*

**Galatians 6:9-10** *Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

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

**1 Timothy 5:8** But if anyone does not *provide for his own, and especially for those of his household*, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

**Titus 3:8** This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that *those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds*. These things are good and profitable for men.

**Titus 3:13-14** *Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.*

**Hebrews 6:10** *For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.*

**Hebrews 13:1** *Let love of the brethren continue.*

**James 2:14-17** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?* Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

**1 John 3:16-18** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

- 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?  
Prioritize the brethren over unbelievers. Seek to show hospitality to the brethren. To consider how we can do good to them.

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?

It is heartily encouraging to think the Lord is pleased with my efforts to do good to His children. I am blessed and convicted when I read "acting faithfully." I know that in some things I am "acting faithfully" though in others there is so much more I could be doing.

15. How did the recipients of Gaius' ministry respond? See verse 6. What does this tell you about how Gaius ministered to them?

The recipients of Gaius' ministry to them turned around and told others of his loving service to them. They told it to the church! This kind of testimony shows that Gaius must have really blessed their socks off for them to share this in such a public way.

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.

You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

**Matthew 25:40** "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' *Our loving service to the brethren is also done by extension to the Lord Jesus Himself.*

**2 Corinthians 9:6-8** Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. *Our loving service to the brethren is seen by the Lord. He loves it when we give cheerfully. It's also encouraging to know that the Lord will give grace to meet the needs of the brethren.*

**Philippians 4:15-19** You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. *Our loving service to the brethren is commendable and an example to the rest of the believers to emulate. It is a fragrant aroma to the Lord.*

**Titus 3:13-14** Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. *Our loving service to the brethren is important and a way for us to be fruitful in the Lord's service.*

**Philemon 7** For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother. *Our loving service to the brethren brings joy to other believers.*

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.

They went out for the sake of The Name. They also didn't accept any gifts from the Gentiles (probably unbelievers).

Because they are seeking to serve the Lord and not to be a bad examples to unbelievers, we should be all the more eager to serve them.

**1 Corinthians 16:15-16** Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. *Those who devote themselves to serving the brethren are worthy to be supported and blessed.*

**1 Corinthians 16:18** For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. *Their labors refresh the hearts of the saints.*

**Philippians 2:29** Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard. *They are worthy to be regarded highly.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13** But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. *We are to esteem them highly in love because of their work.*

**1 Timothy 5:17-18** The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." *Elders who rule well are worthy of double honor.*

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.

We ought to support such men, so we can be fellow-workers with the truth.

**2 Corinthians 1:7** and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort. *There is a sharing aspect that comes with the body of Christ. We enter into each others joys, sorrows, and even ministries.*

**Galatians 6:6-10** The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. *We are commanded to share all good things with those who minister the Word of God to us.*

**Philippians 2:29-30** Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me. *We are to receive with joy those who labor for the Lord. We are to hold them in high regard.*

**Hebrews 10:33** partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. *We share in the persecutions of others by aligning ourselves with them.*

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?

Verse 2 is still in my mind—that my soul would prosper!

"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 Henry<sup>3</sup>

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

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

— 3 John —  
Lesson #4 Chapter 1:9-15  
Teacher's Guide

As you come to this last lesson, ask the Lord to pull things together for you in your heart. May you be blessed as you dig into this passage!

1. In verse 9 John relates something rather shocking. What is it (verse 9)? What apparently happened to John's letter according to verse 9?

John wrote something to the church, but Diotrefes didn't accept what he had to say. Apparently, Diotrefes blocked the letter or discounted it in a public way. Somehow Diotrefes interfered with the message John wanted to convey to his friends in the church.

2. What do we learn about Diotrefes from verse 9?

He didn't honor John or accept his leadership and apostleship. Whoa! Can you imagine?! Diotrefes was rebellious. Diotrefes loves being first among all the brethren, so it seems that he is fighting for preeminence above the Apostle John.

3. Galatians 5:19 tells us the deeds of the flesh are evident, and that's certainly true in this little description about Diotrefes. As you think about Diotrefes, what sins are on display in verse 9?

Rebellion. Selfishness. Pride. Hatred of the brethren. Love of self. Envy. Coveting. Bitterness.

4. How should Diotrefes have responded to the letter from John? See Matthew 23:11-12; John 13:12-17; Romans 12:10, 16; Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

**Matthew 23:11-12** "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. *Diotrefes should have humbled himself.*

**John 13:12-17** So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him." *If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. Diotrefes should have followed Jesus' example of serving others in humility and honor.*

**Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. *Diotrefes should have been devoted to John, his Lord's apostle, and should have given him preference and honor.*

**Romans 12:16** Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. *Diotrefes should not have been haughty or wise in his estimation.*

**Philippians 2:3-5** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. *Diotrephes should have been humble, not being selfish or prideful, regarding others more highly, and following Jesus' example.*

**1 Peter 5:1-3** Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. *Diotrephes should have been an example instead of trying to lord his importance over the flock of God.*

5. It can be so easy to distance ourselves from the sins on display in verse 9, yet they can show up in us as well. Sometimes the seed-versions of those sins are renamed so they sound less...well...sinful. Descriptions like *strong, independent, opinionated, proactive, sassy, competitive* and more can keep us from dealing with the sin of our own hearts. Take some time to talk with the Lord about any areas where you might notice your own version of Diotrephes' sins, like the love of being noticed and enjoying preeminence or not cultivating a teachable and humble spirit regarding the Word of God and church leadership. Remember and apply the counsel from Psalm 139:23-24; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 5:24-25.

**Psalm 139:23-24** Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

**2 Corinthians 13:5** Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

**1 Timothy 5:24-25** The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

6. But wait! Diotrephes' sin only gets worse! What further sins has he committed according to verse 10?

He used wicked words and accused John and the other leaders. He didn't receive the traveling preachers, the brethren who were worthy of support. He forbids the brethren in the church to minister to these faithful men. And he even threatens to put the brethren out of the church if they try to minister to the traveling preachers! Goodness! That is so wicked!

7. How does John intend to deal with Diotrephes according to verse 10?  
John will call attention to Diotrephes' deeds.

8. Why is this public calling out of Diotrephes necessary? See Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:11-13; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:14-18; 3:1-5; 4:15; Titus 1:10-11; 3:9-11.

**Romans 16:17-18:** 17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the



hearts of the unsuspecting. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because men like this cause dissension and hindrances in their hearers. They are deceivers we must be on guard against.*

**Ephesians 5:11-13:** 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because their deeds are unfruitful and of the darkness. The light reveals their wickedness.*

**1 Timothy 5:19-20:** 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because elders are to be rebuked in the presence of all.*

**2 Timothy 2:14-18:** 14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because their talk will spread quickly and harmfully, like gangrene.*

**2 Timothy 3:1-5:** 1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because these men are just trouble! We are to avoid them!*

**2 Timothy 4:15:** 15 Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because we are to be on guard against them.*

**Titus 1:10-11:** 10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because they are rebellious and empty talkers, who must be silenced for the sake of the hearers.*

**Titus 3:9-11:** 9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. *The public calling out of Diotrephes is necessary because their strife and disputes are unprofitable and worthless.*

Kenneth Wuest relates this story in his commentary, “Robertson, in connection with his discussion of this man’s character, says that he wrote an article for a denominational paper on Diotrephes, and the editor told him that twenty-five deacons stopped the paper to show their resentment against being personally attacked.”<sup>1</sup> Diotrephes’ story is all too common and shameful.

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<sup>1</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

9. What is John's counsel for Gaius according to the beginning of verse 11?  
John tells Gaius not to imitate what is evil, but to do what is good.

a. Why would John feel the need to remind Gaius of this admonition?

John was extra protective of his flock and desired them to walk in the truth. John understood the seductive pull of wickedness when presented in a supposedly "harmless" light.

b. How might Gaius be tempted to respond to Diotrephes?

Gaius might be tempted to follow Diotrephes' example, or he might want to respond in an ungodly way to Diotrephes' rebelliousness.

c. What truths should we remember when we are dealing with a situation like this?

See Psalm 37:1-11; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 10:13 to get you started.

Feel free to add to this list.

**Psalm 37:1-11: 1** Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. **2** For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb. **3** Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. **4** Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. **5** Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. **6** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday. **7** Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. **8** Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. **9** For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. **10** Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. **11** But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. *Not fret about evil doers or respond in like kind because the Lord will deal with the man who carries out wicked schemes for they will be cut off by the Lord. We can wait upon Him and trust Him.*

**Romans 12:17-21: 17** Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. **20** "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. *We are never to repay evil for evil but to trust in the Lord and His perfect justice.*

**1 Corinthians 10:13: 13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. *We can always respond well if we only look for the way of escape. The Lord will help us respond in truth and with faithfulness.*

10. In the second half of verse 11, what wise reminder is given that helps us look at situations like these with clarity and insight?

The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil is not of the Lord.

It's just so helpful to have that simple reminder that wickedness reveals an unredeemed heart!

11. John spoke similarly in his other letters: John 10:27; 1 John 1:6-7; 2:4, 29; 3:6-10; 5:18-20. Again, how do these clear and defining statements help us when we're dealing with "people situations" within the church?

**John 10:27: 27** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

**1 John 1:6-7: 6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**1 John 2:4: 4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

**1 John 2:29: 29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

**1 John 3:6-10: 6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. **7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; **8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

**1 John 5:18-20: 18** We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. **20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

God's sheep follow Him. They don't follow other shepherds. They listen for His instruction and guidance. The verses above all clearly reveal the follow/don't follow aspect of believers and unbelievers. It's just so simple and so very clear about those who are believers and those who aren't.

12. In contrast to Diotrephes, John points out the example of Demetrius. What do we learn about this brother in the Lord from verse 12?

Demetrius, on the other hand, has received a good testimony from *everyone*. And even the truth of God's Word affirms his faithfulness. John also adds his testimony of Demetrius' faithfulness to the Lord.

Interestingly, Kenneth Wuest postulates that Demetrius may have been the one who brought John's letter to Gaius. That's kind of fun to think about!

13. What do you learn about the word *testimony* [Strong's #3140 (NIV *well spoken of*)] from verse 12?

Testimony has its roots from which we get the word *martyr*. The martyrs were killed because their testimony was such that everyone knew they were believers. Here the testimony of Demetrius is the same. The word means good report. People had good things to say about him.

"The tense that John uses here indicates that Demetrius had a good reputation in the past and that he still has a good reputation. Over a long period, Demetrius has demonstrated a time-tested faith. He is Demetrius, the dependable brother. The church knows him as a man of God. Now you might deceive the church, but Demetrius was tested by the truth. He measures up to the definition of a believer. John knows him and agrees. There are three witnesses to the fact that Demetrius adorns the doctrine of Christ." [McGee, J. Vernon. 1991. *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles (2 and 3 John/Jude)*. Electronic ed. Vol. 57. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.]

14. The reason isn't given outright in the text as to why Demetrius is introduced at this juncture in John's letter to Gaius, yet the context clearly reveals why John mentions him. Based on what we've been studying, why does John mention Demetrius?

In contrast to the wicked Diotrephes, Demetrius is a godly example and a man to be trusted. What they see with Demetrius is his true character—he is a godly and faithful man. The contrast between the two men is very marked and different.

15. In God's Kingdom, God blesses those who devote themselves to Him. What do you learn from the following Scriptures about how to do that, why you should, and anything else you notice? See John 21:20-22; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Philippians 1:20; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:10-11.

**John 21:20-22: 20** Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" **21** So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" **22** Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" *God blesses those who follow Jesus.*

**1 Corinthians 6:20: 20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. *God desires that we glorify Him in our bodies.*

**Philippians 1:20: 20** according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. *God blesses us when we desire to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ in our bodies, whether in life or in death.*

**1 Timothy 4:12: 12** Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. *God blesses those who make His ways their focus.*

**2 Timothy 3:10-11: 10** Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, **11** persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! *God blesses and cares for those who seek to give Him glory.*

It's truly all about living for the Lord and devoting ourselves to Him. He has done everything for us, so why wouldn't we want to do everything for Him?

16. John closes his letter as he did previously in 2 John. What does he desire to do according to verses 13-14?

He has lots of things to talk to them about, but he wants to come and talk with them in person instead. He hopes to see them shortly.

17. What final blessing does John give in verse 14? What is conveyed in that little statement? See John 20:19, 21, 26; Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 6:23; 1 Peter 5:14.

Peace be to you. There is a ton conveyed in that statement! Jesus used it as a blessing, so it's wise to follow His example. He truly desired that His followers experience peace in the midst of their trials and difficulties. It's one of the ways we can give a high and holy blessing to someone as we see from Paul and Peter too.

To speak a blessing of peace to someone is to desire that they are at peace with God, with men, and in their spirit. It is to rest easily. Lenski states that this is a peace which no Diotrepes can disturb! To give this blessing is to convey God's highest favor and good to someone.

**John 20:19** So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

**John 20:21** So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

**John 20:26** After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

**Galatians 6:16** And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

**Ephesians 6:23** Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 5:14** Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

18. *The Believer's Bible Commentary* ends this letter saying, "We are indebted to him [John] for these Letters, giving us an insight into life in the early days of Christianity, and setting forth timeless instruction for the people of God. Soon we shall speak face to face in heaven, and then we shall understand more fully the occasional obscurities of divine revelation."<sup>2</sup> What truths from our studies in John's letters have made an impact on your life and thinking?

It's difficult to convey how strengthened and encouraged I have been by these letters. I have been blessed by the straight thinking and clearly defined ways we can judge situations rightly. I have been greatly impacted by God's love for us and the implications of being His children in holiness, in following His ways, in obtaining help

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<sup>2</sup> MacDonald, William. 1995. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Edited by Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

and answered prayer. God desires that we be assured of His love and help. That is awe inspiring to me. I have been actively thinking on how to love the brethren more faithfully since this is a high priority to the Lord.

19. What verse(s) have you grown to appreciate or appreciate even more during your study of this book?

Verse 2 is one that has captured my heart, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, *just as your soul prospers.*"

I also loved the emphasis on a faithful life and how we are to notice and honor those who faithfully minister God's Word to us.

20. Commentator David Jackman perceptively writes, "As we have looked at these three very different, and yet representative, church members around whom the letter revolves, we cannot fail to be challenged concerning our own discipleship. *The ultimate proof of the truth we profess to believe and the love we profess to exercise will be seen neither in words nor in feelings but in the progressive transformation of our character, and therefore of our lifestyle, into the image of Christ.*"

He goes on to say, "The challenge to us now is how much are we really prepared to let Jesus Christ change us. Is it to be my will or His? On this will depend the ultimate verdict, whether we proved to be frauds or followers. Who is at the centre of our lives? Is it 'self' with its longing to be first, to be number one? Or is it Christ, enabling us to keep faithful and to continue walking in the truth? There is still no issue with greater or more far-reaching implications for the church or for the Christian."<sup>3</sup> *Dear friends, how much are we really prepared to let Jesus Christ change us?*

Oh my! Talk about a heart-searching little paragraph! I just love thinking on this question—how much am I really willing and prepared to let Jesus change me? Dear Father, may you grant me the faith, courage, right thinking, and trust to line up with Your works and ways for me. *It always boils done to whatever, whenever, however You think is best.* The words to the old hymn, "I surrender all" are still needed and necessary for my heart to follow well.

Peace be to you.

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<sup>3</sup> Jackman, David. 1988. *The Message of John's Letters: Living in the Love of God.* The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.