

Walking in Righteousness

3 John (Psalm 1)

“To walk in righteousness means to live each day according to God’s revealed standards, reflecting His character through our attitudes, words, and actions. It’s not a self-righteous strut but a Spirit-led stride—a humble, faithful journey that begins with our standing in Christ and extends to our daily conduct. Scripture states, “The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23). Righteousness is not merely a theological category—it’s a lifestyle that aligns us with God’s will and purposes. And as we pursue this path, we become living testimonies of God’s grace in a world darkened by sin (Matt 5:14-16).

At salvation, we are declared righteous before God through faith in Christ (Rom 3:22-24; 5:1; Phil 3:9). This is our judicial standing—unearned, complete, and irrevocable. But walking in righteousness refers to our progressive sanctification—how we live in light of that declared position... As we grow spiritually, our conduct should increasingly reflect the holiness of the One who called us (1 Pet 1:15-16). thinkingonscriptre.com

1 Peter 1:15-16 *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

“Third John is the most personal of the three Johannine epistles like 2 John. It addresses the issue of believers’ duty to show love and hospitality within the bounds of faithfulness to the truth. Second John revealed the negative side: false teachers are not to be granted hospitality in the name of showing love. Third John expresses the positive counterpart to that principle: all who embrace the truth are to be loved and cared for.

This letter revolves around three individuals and their relationship to truth and love: Gaius, who walked in the truth and loved sacrificially; Diotrephes, who rejected the truth and hindered sacrificial love (vv. 9-11); and Demetrius, who was to receive sacrificial love for his faithfulness to the truth (v. 12). John opens by expressing to Gaius his concern, commendation, and counsel.” MacArthur

Vv. 1-2 John must have been so well known as “the elder,” that he didn’t have to mention himself by name. It is a reflection on how well loved and appreciated he was for his care and concern for those whom he loved in the truth, which is seen in his prayer for Gaius. Wow, to think that an Apostle of John’s stature was praying for his friend’s health must have brought Gaius great joy. And for us to know that Jesus’ is praying for us should also bring us great joy. **YOU ARE BEING PRAYED FOR!**

Hebrews 7:25 *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

Rom. 8:26-27 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.*

ἀγαπητός agapētós, ag-ap-ay-tos'; beloved:—(dearly, well) beloved, dear. Strong's

"...in fifteen verses in 3 John, the apostle refers to Gaius as 'beloved' four times. Two of these are in the first two verses and the others in verses 5 and 11. It refers to 'one who is dearly loved, dear, beloved, prized valued.' Here, it communicates a very close, personal relationship between John and Gaius." Swindoll

Vv. 3-4 John points out two things about Gaius that brought him great joy, they are the gold, silver, and precious stones Gaius is using to build upon the foundation of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-13). They are the treasures he is storing up in heaven (Matt. 6:20) by keeping his mind and heart on things above knowing that he died and his life is now hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). What kept Gaius' soul healthy was his walk in the truth.

Amos 3:3 *Can two walk together lest they are agreed?*

- There's no indication that Gaius was an elder or in church leadership like John. He was John's friend, whom he loved very much, and it warmed his heart knowing that Gaius took living the truth of God's Word seriously. Living the truth was how he chose to walk through life.

Matthew 5:14-16 14 *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Eph. 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Vv. 5-8 *"you are faithful in what you are doing"* Gaius was faithful in showing Christ's love to itinerant missionaries and evangelists who depended on the hospitality of others in serving Christ.

1 Peter 4:9-11 9 *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

- All of us have been created in Christ Jesus for good works so that we might work together for the truth (vs. 8b). Each one of us has been given spiritual gifts for that very purpose. Gaius had the gift of hospitality, and he used it for God's glory. He understood that loving in the truth meant putting into practice Christ's love through the grace gifts he had been given upon salvation.

Rom. 12:6-8 *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching,*

then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (cf. 1 Cor. 12)

χάρισμα charisma, grace or gifts denoting extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating on their souls by the Holy Spirit. Strong's Concordance

“Spiritual gifts are special abilities, talents, or capacities given to individual Christians by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of serving God and others within the Christian community. These gifts are not natural talents or skills but supernatural endowments provided by God's grace. They are meant to be used to build up the body of Christ, which is the community of believers.” christianity.com

Vv. 9-10 Scripture provides us with many examples of those who walk in the truth and those who don't. Sadly, even among those who profess Christ, there are men and women who choose not to love and walk in the truth. Diotrophes, who apparently was an influential leader in the church, was one of them. He brought a stench to the aroma of Christ's love, grace and mercy by not imitating the humility of Christ before others.

Phil. 2:5-11 *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

“Gaius had walked in the truth, but Diotrophes would not acknowledge John's authority. Gaius had entertained strangers; Diotrophes had not only failed to entertain them but had even forbidden others to do so. Gaius loved the brethren; Diotrophes was attempting to lord it over them.” Boice

John publicly rebuked this man, and he rebuked him by name. In rebuking him by name the apostle of love did not act outside of love. Instead, he followed the clear command of the Scriptures (Romans 16:17) and the example of other apostles (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Guzik

Rom. 16:17 *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

“Diotrophes, who loves to be first” gives us the reason why he acted the way he did, he was full of himself. What was it about Philippians 2:5-11 that he didn't get?

- His failure to put into practice the humility of Christ hurt the church in four ways.

First, he hurt the spiritual wellbeing of the church by rejecting John's apostolic authority thru not wanting anything to do with him (Vs. 9). He felt he knew better than the truth of God's Word. John

wasn't saying my word is authoritative, instead he was rebuking Diotrephes for not obeying Christ's command to love one another.

Second, he hurt the spiritual wellbeing of the church by gossiping maliciously about John and others in order to promote self as one who knew better than them.

"The Greek verb that is here translated 'gossiping' comes from a root that was used of the action of water in boiling up and throwing off bubbles. Since bubbles are empty and useless, the verb eventually came to mean indulgence in empty or useless talk. This was the nature of Diotrephes slander, though, of course, the words were no less evil in that they were groundless." Boice

Third, he hurt the spiritual wellbeing of the church by not welcoming in and providing for those sent by God to minister to the church he was a part of (vs. 10).

Fourth, he hurt the spiritual wellbeing of the church by abusing his authority as a leader in excommunicating believers who disobeyed him by giving hospitality to those who were ministering in the Name of Christ (vs. 10b). (cf. 1 Peter 5:2-3)

- A church should never put up with a man who acts in that way. Unfortunately, churches have split over such matters.

Vs. 11 Was Diotrephes saved? Perhaps he was, but his evil actions showed that his relationship with Christ was wanting at best. He didn't love Jesus. If he had loved Him as He should, then he would have obeyed His command to love one another.

"John gave us two clear examples, one good (Gaius) and one bad (Diotrephes), and he now applies the point — follow the good, for we serve a good God and those who follow Him will likewise do good." Guzik

Vs. 12 By contrast, Demetrius let Christ determine his walk. He didn't follow man but Christ alone, which always bears the fruit of righteousness. Notice, as a godly man, the people spoke well of him and the Word spoke well of him. Who cares what man thinks, what does Christ think? He must be the determining factor in all we say and do.

Phil. 1:27 *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel*

Vv. 13-14 *"Peace to you: This is a letter about contention and conflict; yet John appropriately ends the letter with a desire and expectation for peace. As Christians, we can and should have a sense of peace even in the midst of difficult times. Christians have the resources in Jesus Christ to have peace even in unsettled seasons." Guzik*