

3 JOHN

Lesson 7

Book Profile ~

John, the apostle of love, knew the importance of fellowship. First John emphasizes the importance of fellowship with God through abiding in Christ; in Second John he forbids fellowship with those who do not abide in the teachings of Christ and in Third John he encourages fellowship with those who do abide in the teachings of Christ. True fellowship is a result of sharing the common bond provided through Christ, abiding in Him, and walking according to His teachings.

Third John, as written in the original Greek, is the shortest book of the Bible. Its subjects are as vital today as they were when John wrote it from Ephesus in approximately 90 A.D. As you read this letter, note its relevancy to the church of the 1990's. May it encourage you to live as those John commended in the letter.

FIRST DAY: Read 3 John using the observation worksheet provided. See last page

1. To whom is this letter written?

- a. *Gaius* was one of the most commonly used names of the Roman Empire. Other men referred to by this name appeared in the New Testament four times. Little is known about the recipient of this letter. There is no reference to *Gaius* being a pastor or elder in the church. Many regard him as an active lay member and personal friend of John's.

List what this Third Epistle of John reveals about *Gaius*.

2. Record the two other men mentioned in the letter and what you discovered about them.

3. Mark the following key words on your observation worksheet. Use a different color or symbol to identify each word.

Truth

witness

good

evil

4. Discovering the author's purpose for writing often gives us a deeper understanding of a book. Knowing *why* a book is written helps us to understand *what* has been written. What were some of John's purposes for writing this letter?

5. As you read this epistle, describe your overall impression.

6. What topics are covered in this letter?

a. Which topic are you most interested in studying further?

Within the covers of the Bible are all the answers for all the problems men face. The Bible can touch hearts, order minds, and refresh souls.
- Ronald Reagan

A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person who isn't.

SECOND DAY:

1. The third letter of John can be divided into five paragraph divisions. Write a title or summary statement for each paragraph division. Note: a summary statement is a phrase or sentence that describes what you think the section is all about.

Verse 1

Verses 2-4

Verses 5-8

Verses 9-12

Verses 13-14

2. Keeping in mind the key words, what do you think is the key verse of 3 John?

3. Taking into consideration the key words, paragraph summaries and the key verse write a brief title for the book of 3 John.

4. Complete the chart below using the information you have previously read or recorded in this lesson.

3 JOHN AT A GLANCE

THEME/TITLE OF 3 JOHN:

PARAGRAPH THEMES
VERSE 1
VERSES 2-4
VERSES 5-8
VERSES 9-12
VERSES 13-14

KEY VERSE:

THIRD DAY:

1. List the four key words and record what 3 John says about each one. (Be careful to use the words from the text)

- a. Summarize what you discovered about each key word.

truth

witness

good

evil

2. Second John and Third John contain many similarities. Compare the two letters as to:

- a. salutation (greeting) and conclusion

- b. similar repeated words and phrases

- c. tone or mood

- d. problems in the church

FOURTH DAY: Read 3 John 1-6, 12

1. Paul commended both Gaius and Demetrius in this letter. What similar comment did he make about both of them? (see verses 3 and 12)
 - a. A person's testimony or reputation speaks volumes about not only himself, but about the church and the gospel. How would you explain the importance of a good testimony or reputation to another Christian whose life was not producing good works?

CHALLENGE: Use Scripture to support your answer.

2. Record John's response from verse 4 to the fact that Gaius was walking in truth.
 - a. *As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children* I Thessalonians 2:11. Like John, Paul had a father's heart for Christians in his care. Summarize this kind of loving care as expressed in the following verses: Ephesians 1:15,16; Philippians 1:4; I Thessalonians 2:19,20 and 3:6-9.
 - 1) If knowing his children are walking in truth causes a human shepherd to rejoice, how much do you think it means to our Heavenly Shepherd?

3. Describe a lifestyle of *walking in truth*.

- a. What are some of the temptations that can prevent a Christian from walking in truth?

- 1) What can we do to combat these temptations?

Those who believe in the Holy Scriptures are bound to observe its teachings. Those who do not are bound by its consequences. -William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Colony

FIFTH DAY: Read 3 John 5-8

1. In this paragraph division John praises Gaius for his hospitality. At the time of this writing, it is believed that John would send out missionaries to preach in many different cities. Their room and board was typically provided by those in the church. The strangers which John referred to in verse 5 were probably these traveling ministers. These men carried with them letters of recommendation from their home churches or the disciples. These men had returned to John bearing witness of Gaius' care. What do the following verses say about showing and giving hospitality?
 - a. I Timothy 5:10
 - b. Hebrews 13:2
2. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, included a recommendation for Phoebe, a Christian sister who had helped others, including Paul. That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you...Romans 16:2. There are many ways to receive someone in the Lord. How would you describe hospitality as it relates to the church today?

Hospitality is a form of worship

SIXTH DAY: Read 3 John 9-12

1. In this paragraph division, John moves from commending to reproof. Describe Diotrephes' behavior.
2. According to verse nine, what did Diotrephes love?
 - a. Choose one of the following Scriptures and describe how it relates to *loving the preeminence* among men: Matthew 20:20-28; Matthew 23:4-8 or Luke 22:24-27.

- b. Rather than *loving preeminence* what should our behavior be like:

Romans 12:10

Philippians 2:3-5

Titus 1:7

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

REVIEW:

1. Write John's desire for Gaius according to verse 2?

- a. Describe a *prosperous soul*.

- b. Physical health is a result of nutrition, exercise, proper rest - a disciplined order of a balanced life. What are the components of good, spiritual health?

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

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

2. What spiritual lessons did you glean from this short letter of Third John?

My prayer for you, my very dear friend, is that you may be as healthy and prosperous in every way as you are in soul. - 3 John 2 JBP

3 JOHN

Observation Worksheet

- ¹ The Elder, to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:
- ² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.
- ³ For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.
- ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.
- ⁵ Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers,
- ⁶ who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,
- ⁷ because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.
- ⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.
- ⁹ I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.
- ¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.
- ¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.
- ¹² Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.
- ¹³ I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink;
- ¹⁴ but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.