

3 John

3 Men & A Little Book

Text: [3rd John](#)

Introduction:

It is not unusual for people to wonder what the early church was like. We know a lot about its early leaders, such as the apostles Paul and Peter; but what about the average Christians themselves? Were they more spiritual than Christians today? Did they experience the kind of problems seen so often in churches today?

Several books of the New Testament reflect the life of the early church, and this is especially true of the Third Epistle of John. It is a private letter, between the apostle John and a Christian named Gaius. It provides portraits of three different men, and in so doing gives us a glimpse of 1st century life in local churches

It is the same John that wrote the Gospel and 1st & 2nd John. It was written somewhere in the last decade of the first century probably in Ephesus. This letter is similar to 2 John in its focus on "Love" and "Truth." However, while 2nd John warns against supporting false teachers, 3rd John commends supporting those who teach the truth. Another comparison notes that 2nd John condemned false teaching, or heresy, while 3rd John condemns a lack of love resulting in "schisms."

1. The Three Men Of Third John

A. Gaius -- A Man Whom John Would Have Prosper (1-8)

1. John prayed would prosper physically as well as he did spiritually - [3 John 1-2](#)
2. John loved and prayed for Gaius, because he was a man who...
 - a. Had a good reputation - [3 John 3a](#)
 - b. Walked in the truth - [3 John 3b](#)
 - c. Gave John great joy when hearing of his faithfulness - [3 John 4](#)
 - d. Was hospitable toward all - [3 John 5-6a](#)
 - e. Was encouraged to continue supporting gospel preachers - [3 John 6b-8](#)

B. Diotrephes -- A Man Who Would Be Preminent (9-11)

1. Self-promoter -- He strove to be first - [3 John 9a](#)
2. Insubordinate -- He would not receive the [authority of] apostles - [3 John 9b](#)
3. Slandorous -- He slandered the apostles - [3 John 10a](#)
4. Vindictive -- He did not receive certain brethren, and cast out other brethren - [3 John 10b](#)
5. His character serves as a warning: "he who does evil has not seen God" - [3 John 11b](#)

C. Demetrius -- A Man Who Would Be A Pattern (11-12)

1. John encouraged Gaius to imitate what is good, for he who does good is of God - [3 John 11](#)
2. Demetrius was offered as a pattern for Gaius, because he had a good report... - [3 John 12](#)
 - a. From all the brethren
 - b. From the truth itself
 - c. From John and the apostles

2. Lessons From Third John

A. Christians Are Not Always What They Should Be...

1. We may have to serve in the face of opposition from other brethren
2. Will we allow this to effect our service?
3. Will we allow this to effect our salvation?

B. Christians Often Imitate Other Christians...

1. John says to imitate what is good for two reasons:
 - a. Those who do good are of God
 - b. Those who do evil do not know God
2. What example are we setting in the local church? Who are we imitating?
3. Gaius had the example of Diotrephes and Demetrius. Which do you suppose he would seek to imitate?

C. Christians Often Allow The "Spirit Of Diotrephes" To Reign...

1. Diotrephes was successful because some of the members...
 - a. Allowed Diotrephes to dominate
 - b. Would not take a stand for the truth
 - c. Would not support those who took a stand for the truth
2. Diotrephes was successful because there was a certain climate of complacency and cowardice within the local church

D. Scriptural Motivation For Supporting Ministers

1. **It Is A Testimony To Our Faithfulness...** "Beloved, you do faithfully..." - [3 John 5](#)
2. **It Is A Testimony To Our Love For One Another...** [3 John 6a](#)
3. **It Honors God...** "in a manner worthy of God" - [3 John 6](#)
4. **It Is A Testimony To The Lost...** "taking nothing from the Gentiles" - [3 John 7](#)
When the gospel is offered free of cost, being supported whole-heartedly by those who know it best, it can be a powerful testimony of the value we place on it!
5. **It Obeys God...** "We therefore *ought* to receive such" - [3 John 8a](#)
[Galatians 6:6](#) Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

[1 Corinthians 9:11](#) If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

6. It Makes One A Fellow Worker For The Truth...

[verse 8](#): "that we may become fellow workers for the truth"

- a. If we support teachers of error, we share in their evil deeds - [2 John 10-11](#)
- b. If we support teachers of the gospel, we share their work [Philippians 1:3-5](#); [4:15-16](#)
- c. As coworkers, we will one day enjoy the same rewards
[Matthew 10:40-42](#) He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.