

Letter to a Dear Christian Friend

3 John

- Last time:
 - Pious greetings
 - Keep loving!
 - Essential doctrine
 - More on this later
 - This week:
 - An illustration of Christian love
 - Building others up
 - Warning of obstacles
 - Reputation means something
 - Key verse:
 - "For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth." (3 John 1:7-8, ESV)
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1. Greetings (*Read 3 John 1:1-2*)

a. From "the Elder" to "Gaius" (v. 1a)

- i. As with 2 John, the author identifies himself as "the Elder."
- ii. The name "Gaius" (Γάϊος) is a Greek rendering of the Latin name "Caius" and appears four other times in the New Testament.

1. Paul's Macedonian travel companion (Acts 19:29)

2. Paul's travel companion from Derbe in central Asia Minor, who traveled with Paul from Corinth to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4)

3. Paul's host in Corinth when he wrote the letter to the Romans (Romans 16:23)

4. One of only a handful of believers baptized by Paul (1 Corinthians 1:14)

5. In the Eastern church, Gaius has traditionally been held to be one of the seventy referenced in Luke 10:1-24.

b. Whom he "loves in the truth" (v. 1b)

i. *Cf.*, 2 John 1:1

c. Praying for well-being and good health for Gaius, and taking for granted that Gaius's soul prospers (v. 2)

2. Acknowledging faithfulness in ministry (*Read* 3 John 1:3-8)

a. John experienced joy in hearing from other believers about Gaius's continued, faithful orthodoxy. (v. 3)

i. No greater joy than when one's children walk in the truth (v. 4)

1. See Proverbs 22:6 ("Train up a child...")

2. *Cf.*, 2 John 1:4 (John's great joy hearing of the lady's children walking in truth)

3. Proof of successful evangelism!

b. John acknowledges the faithfulness of Gaius toward brethren who were not acquaintances of his. (v. 5)

i. Ἀδελφός (*a-del-phos*): *lit.*, from the same womb; brethren, brothers, kindred; *fig.*, fellow believers in Christ

ii. The brethren John references have been telling other believers about Gaius's charitable love. (v. 6a)

iii. John exhorts him to send them off in a God-honoring way. (v. 6b)

iv. They went out "for the sake of the Name" – that is, for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ – and they did not receive support from the nations/Gentiles/pagans (ἔθνος). (v. 7)

1. These brethren were traveling Christian evangelists.

c. John states that we (believers) ought to show such evangelists hospitality so that we are working together with them in sharing the truth of the Gospel. (v. 8)

i. Ἀπολαμβάνω (*ap-ol-am-ban'-o*): receive what is due or promised, take aside; to receive with full hospitality

ii. *Cf.*, 2 John 1:10-11 (warning *not* to welcome false teachers and so become their accomplices)

3. An opponent within the church (*Read 3 John 1:9-10*)

a. John wrote something to the church, but the self-promoter Diotrophes subsequently refused to welcome John and the brethren. (v. 9)

i. Diotrophes is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. His name means "nourished by Jupiter."

b. John will speak out about Diotrophes when he arrives. (v. 10a)

i. A slanderer and inhospitable, Diotrophes interferes with and even tries to exclude from fellowship other believers who *do* try to be hospitable (v. 10b)

4. Reputation means something (*Read 3 John 1:11-12*)

a. Addressing Gaius with love, John admonishes him to imitate only good and not evil. (v. 11a)

- b. Doers of good are from God, while evil-doers have not seen Him. (v. 11b)
 - i. See also 1 John 5:3 (love for God means keeping His commandments); 1 John 5:18 (believers do not remain in persistent sin)
- c. Demetrius has a good reputation generally, and his character is testified to by the truth itself. John says that Gaius already trusts him, he should trust John's personal vouching for Demetrius, too. (v. 12)
 - i. The only other Demetrius mentioned in the Bible is a silversmith who made money selling shrines for Diana and incited a riot against Paul, Gaius, and Aristarchus in Ephesus. (Acts 19:23-41)

5. Closing (Read 3 John 1:13-15)

- a. So much more to say, but John prefers not to say it with pen and ink. (v. 13)
- b. Instead, John wishes to speak to Gaius in person, "face to face." (v. 14)
- c. Benediction: peace, greetings from friends present with John, and greetings to friends present with Gaius. (v. 15)