

3 John

Another short personal letter from John providing insights into the early church life



3 John

The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

3 John

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone--and even by the truth itself.

We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

The elder,

John uses the same 'title' in this letter. It may have been written around the same time as 2 John.

Obviously people in the churches recognised who 'the elder' was.

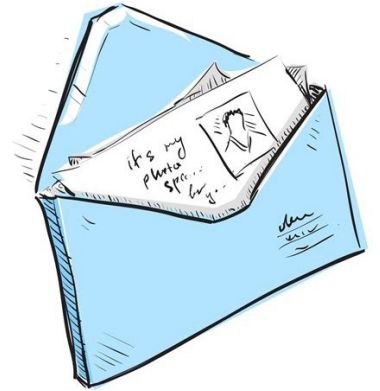


To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

The letter was addressed to Gaius. It was a very common name in the Roman empire of those times.

What we can tell is that he probably was one of the local church leaders. He was valued by John as someone with whom he had real fellowship in their common faith.

We are not given the address to where this letter was sent, but it may have been in the area around Ephesus.



A valued friend

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

It was a 'common' form of greeting and prayer
(eg. I hope you are well)

John offers a prayer for his physical and mental health
(he may or may not have been ill)

Spiritually he is fine - this can affect our physical state.



Some have wrongly taken this as a guarantee of perpetual wealth
and perfect health for the Christian.

It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

Visitors (brothers in the faith) of the Christian family – had come to John and in conversation had reported how Gaius was doing.

They had noted his:-

Faithfulness to the truth

(evidence from past trials?)

Walking in the truth

(present life choices etc. genuine)



I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

The good news warmed the elder's pastoral heart

"His children" – he led them to the Lord and taken others under his wing

Living faithfully to the gospel and his teachings
(the truth he received from Jesus)



Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers,
even though they are strangers to you.

It's nice to be encouraged!

Faithfulness is a wonderful thing.

John expressed particular appreciation for showing hospitality to itinerant ministers. Originally they were personally unknown to Gaius' This is love in action.



They have told the church about your love.

They gave a good report to the church where they were.
This had been passed on to John by the visitors.



**GOOD
REPORT**

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

They are still with Gaius at present, but will be moving on soon. John encourages him to see that they get some support as they continue their work for the Lord.

Mission support



It was for the sake of the Name that they went out,
receiving no help from the pagans.

Some things about these missionaries:-

Perhaps John knew them since he recounts details about them.

They felt called by God (the Name as revealed in the Lord Jesus) and went 'by faith'
They were not looking to non-believers (pagans -Gentiles!) for support.

This is an interesting use of the term.



We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men
so that we may work together for the truth.

Since they are trusting in the Lord for support, we are meant to be part of the answer to that trust.

Then we have fellowship in the work of the Gospel ministry.

Hospitality was important for these workers since the inns/taverns etc. of those days were rather unsavoury places to stay.

Jesus said,

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 (Matthew 10:40-41).

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us.

John had already written to encourage the church to welcome the visitors BUT there was an egocentric leader there - Diotrephes the Proud!

John relates a number of the wrong things that he has done

The root cause is that he wanted to feel important. It is sad when a leader is on an ego trip.

(It can happen to believers!)

He distanced himself from the apostles and refused to accept their authority.



So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing,
gossiping maliciously about us.



A personal visit by John will deal with him.

Exposure of his wrong attitude and behaviour
would be for his good!

Gossip is bad – malicious gossip is worse.
He was aiming to discredit John and others in
order to boost his own importance.

Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers.

There is no stopping a deranged ego – it goes from bad to worse

His refusal to welcome the missionaries is insulting to them and is hindering the work of ministry among the people.

Probably he is afraid they may get some of the 'glory' that he wants for himself.



He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

He is 'lording it over others'. He is throwing his leadership weight about, interfering in the choices of godly brothers and sisters, and excluding them from fellowship.

He wants to be surrounded by 'yes men' so they have to go.



Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.

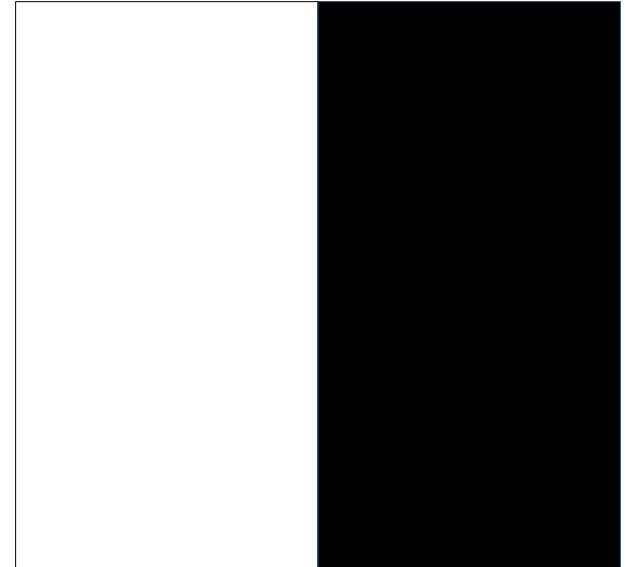
Gaius, don't be tempted to follow his bad example.
There are better role models to follow.



Anyone who does what is good is from God.
Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God.

This is a general statement of reality.
God is the source of goodness and so if
someone does good, then God is at
work in them

If someone practises evil, then there is a
question about their experience of God



Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone--and even by the truth itself.

We don't know much about Demetrius. He seems to be an acquaintance of Gaius. He may have been one of the visiting missionaries.

He has a good reputation.

Does 'everyone' include outsiders too?
cf. 1 Timothy 3:7

His life matches what a Spirit enabled believer's should be as revealed in the teachings of Scripture.



We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

John and the fellowship can personally recommend him too.
We (the apostles?) assured by the Holy Spirit can bear witness that what we have given you is the truth.

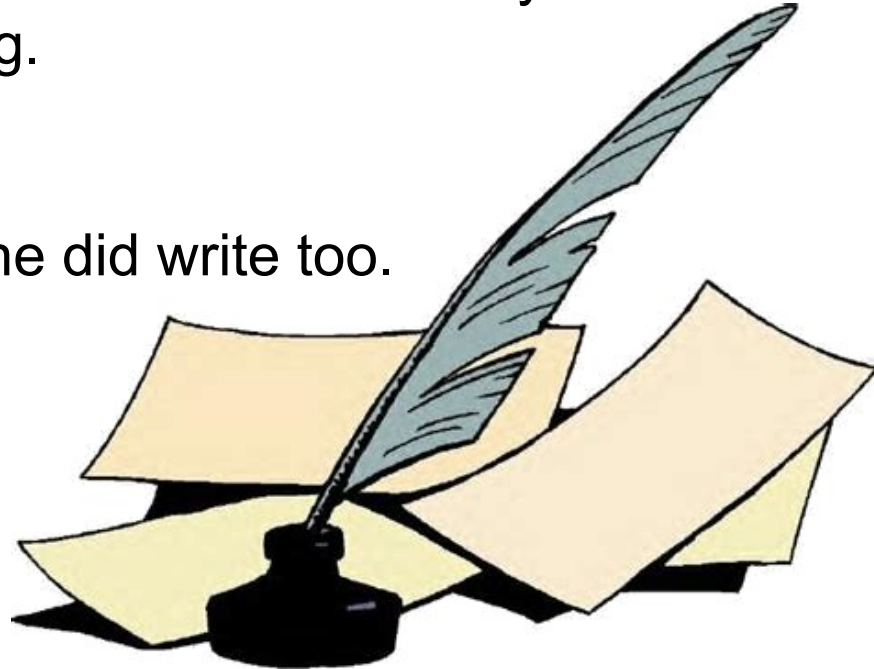


I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink.

but I do not want to use paper and ink.

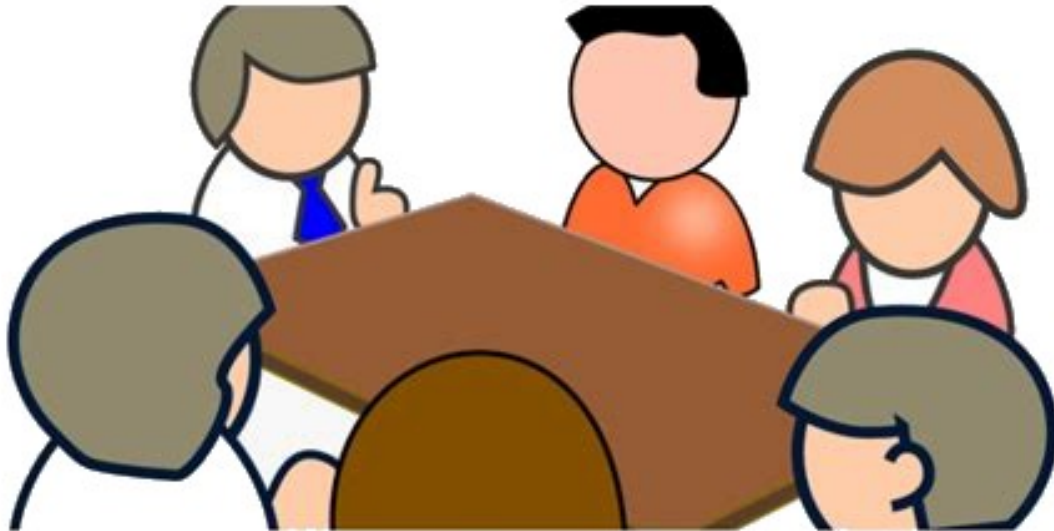
There is a slight variation this time.
There's more to share but there's a better way
to tell you than just writing.

But again ...
We can be thankful that he did write too.



I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Perhaps John was fairly near to where Gaius lived.
It's good to share fellowship together.
Looking forward to seeing a friend.



Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings.
Greet the friends there by name.

His final greeting – Shalom!

The friends are the members of the church where John was.

The 'friends' at Gaius's church are to be greeted by name.
No names are given, perhaps for safety reasons.



Summary of John's third letter:-

I'm glad to hear that people are living out their faith.

Mission support and hospitality are important.

I'll deal with ego-trippers.

Good role models are worth following.

See you soon.

