



Christians Are a Family

3 John 1:1-4

Main Point: Christian love is grounded in the truth, longing for God's blessings, and joyful in obedience.

Christians are a family, whose love should be grounded in the truth (1-4).

From verse 1 to verse 4, the Apostle John reinforced the connection between love and truth and emphasized the reality of his relationship to other believers, which was based on love that's grounded in the truth. In verse 1, John identified a man named Gaius, whom he called "beloved" and said that he loved in truth. There are several men named Gaius in the New Testament from Debre (Acts 20:4), Macedonia (Acts 19:29), and Corinth (Romans 16:23 and 1 Corinthians 1:14), but it's not clear if the Gaius in 3 John is one of these men or someone else. Regardless, this Gaius was a believer, and as a result, he was someone loved by the Apostle John. In verse 2, John reinforced his love by reusing the title "beloved." In verse 3, he moved from Gaius to other believers who had brought a good report to John about Gaius and those connected to that church. These weren't just men to John, they were "brothers." John saw his relationship with other believers through the lens of the gospel. In Christ, they had been adopted into God's family. In Christ, they were brothers for all of eternity. In John's role as an elder in the early church, his relationship was more than just a brother to other believers. He was a spiritual father to many, as he was surely responsible for bringing the gospel to some and for discipling and growing many believers in the early church. John saw his relationship as that of a father, recognizing the spiritual children he helped to raise. What a beautiful picture of the family of God! God's family is founded on love that's grounded in the truth.

1. What do the words "beloved," "brothers," and "children" reflect about John's relationship with these believers? Do these words capture your relationship with other believers?
2. Who fits into the "beloved" category in your life? Take time to share and to thank the Lord for those who are "beloved" to you.
3. Who fits into the "brothers" category in your life? Why?
4. Who are your spiritual "children?" Take time to pray for them right now.

Christians are a family, who should long for God's blessings in each other's lives (2).

John's greeting included a prayer for God's blessings in the life of Gaius. The prayer was two-fold, including a desire for God's blessings in the physical and spiritual health of Gaius. John first said that he was praying that in all things Gaius would prosper or be successful. Today, we often think of prosperity most often in the monetary sense, but the context here is in all things in Gaius' life. The prayer was for success in the work of the gospel, in relationships at home, in work, etc. In every way, John longed for God's blessings in Gaius' life. He also prayed for Gaius' health. This is important, as physical health has an impact on all

of these areas of life, and this prayer connected physical health with the more important health of Gaius' soul. John knew that the most important thing in the life of his brother was Gaius' life in Christ. John knew how critical the health of the soul was to everything else in the life of a believer. What a beautiful picture of love in truth. Christians are a family, who should long for God's blessings in each other's lives, while recognizing and remembering that the blessings of the soul are what's most important in our lives.

1. What are some of the ways that God blesses us in life? Make a list of things that are blessings from God.
2. What does prospering and success look like in all things in life? Answer this question biblically, using Scripture alone to support your answer.
3. What are some health needs in your group? Take time to share and to pray.
4. How is health or the physical connected to the soul? How does the health of the soul impact the physical?
5. What are some soul needs in your group? Take time to share and to pray.

Christians are a family, who should find joy as others faithfully walk in obedience to the Lord (3-4).

Finally, John ended his greeting with an encouragement for Gaius. Some other brothers had come to John and testified of the truth that Gaius proclaimed and of the fact that Gaius was walking in that truth in his life. In other words, Gaius was holding fast to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the application of that gospel that John had taught in the church. John was grateful for this, and in a general sense, he told Gaius that there's no greater joy than to hear that his children are walking in the truth! John found deep joy in seeing his spiritual children living lives of faith, faithfully and steadfastly walking in the truth of Jesus Christ. While this was true in John's heart, it should be true in the heart of every believer! Christians are a family, who should find joy as others faithfully walk in obedience to the Lord.

1. Does it bring joy to your heart to see others walking in obedience to the Lord? Why? What are some ways that you can respond to the Lord with gratefulness and to those individuals to encourage them?
2. If it brings joy to see others walk in obedience, what does it do to your heart when you see others walking in disobedience? Why? What are some ways that you can seek the Lord on their behalf and that you can talk to them to point them back to the Lord?
3. Take time to identify some younger believers in your church who are walking in obedience, and make a plan to let them know that you see their faithfulness and that they bring joy to your heart.