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3JOHN

## HOW'S YOUR HEALTH

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. I have asked this question before, but it begs to be asked again: "If our physical health was in the same condition as our spiritual health, what condition would we be in this morning?"
  - 1. Would we be healthy and full of life? Would we have a slight cold? Would we have the flu or pneumonia? Would we be hospitalized right now?
    - a) Or would they be calling all the family to come be at our bedside while we slipped from this world into the next?

### II. 3JN 1 NKJV THE ELDER, TO THE BELOVED GAIUS, WHOM I LOVE IN TRUTH:

- A. **The Elder:** John once again humbly identifies himself simply as **the Elder**. This was the Apostle John writing, the same John who wrote the **Gospel of John, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> John**, and the **Book of Revelation**.
  - 1. And he is writing **To the beloved Gaius**: We don't know who this specific **Gaius** is because there are several Gaius' mentioned in the New Testament (**Act 19:19, 20:4; 1Co 1:14; Rom 16:23**).
    - a) And **Gaius** was a very common name in Rome at the time, but John loved him in the Lord – in the Truth!

### III. 3JN 2-4 NKJV 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.

- A. **Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things:** The word for **prosper** literally means "to have a good journey." It would be like saying, "I hope things go well for you."
  - 1. According to John Stott, "Both verbs [for **prosper** and **be in health**] belonged to the everyday language of letter writing" at that time. The phrase was so common that sometimes it was condensed into only initials.
    - a) It would be something like our current text messaging of LOL (Laugh Out Loud) or ROTFL (Rolling On The Floor Laughing) or WYSIWYG (What You See If What You Get). People knew that the phrase meant, "If you are well, it is good; I am well."
      - (1) BTW – I highly encourage you parents to become **very** familiar with current text messaging abbreviations!!
      - (2) There are MANY of them out there and I would suggest that husbands and wives have open access to each other's phones and the same with parents with their children.
        - (a) If you see abbreviations that you do not understand – look

them up!

- B. **I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers:** John is sending best wishes and blessings to **Gaius**, but please understand, this is NOT a guarantee of perpetual wealth and perfect health for the Christian.
1. Of course, the Lord wants the best for us and one day we will have perfect health.
  2. But in this life the Lord may - according to His purposes – use a lack of material prosperity and physical health to work something greater in our lives that is non-perishing...
    - a) I also believe that it is just as dangerous to use God's blessing to indulge a carnal desire for ease, and comfort, and luxury.
- C. **Just as your soul prospers:** It is here that John makes the comparison between the condition of our health, and the condition of our soul.
1. And I think that many Christians would be desperately ill if our physical health was instantly in the same condition as our spiritual health.
- D. **I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth:** John's was pleased that **Gaius** walked in the truth. I think the Lord is also very pleased when His children walk in truth.
1. John knew that Gaius walked in truth because **brethren came and testified of the truth that** was in Gaius. His walk of truth was noticed by others, and they could talk about it in a good light - because they saw it.
    - a) Let me ask us all another question, "If someone were to ask our closest friends to rate our walk on a scale of 1-10, how would we line up?"
- E. **That my children walk in truth:** Walking in truth means more than just hearing or reading about correct doctrine.
1. To **walk in truth** means to walk consistently in the truth we believe. If we believe that we are fallen, then we need to take care of that and get things right with the Lord. If we believe we are a child of God, then we should walk like a child of heaven. If we believe we are forgiven, then we should walk like a forgiven person.
  2. To **walk in truth** means to walk in a way that is real and genuine, without any phoniness or concealment. If we must hide and conceal things – we are phonies!
    - a) Gaius was not a phony – he was the real-deal!

IV. **3JN 5-8 NKJV** 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.

- A. **You do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers:** John praised Gaius for his hospitality. This may seem somewhat trivial to us, but it is not to God. This is a practical outworking of the essential command to love one another; it is love in action.
1. This was a great compliment: **you do faithfully whatever you do**. Whatever God gives us to do, we should do it **faithfully**. Jesus said that when we see Him face to face some will hear the words, ***well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*** (Mat 25:21) Of the good servant, it is said he *was faithful*.
- B. **Send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God:** In that day, Christian travelers in general and itinerant ministers in particular were greatly dependent upon the hospitality of other Christians. John knew that when Christians assist those who contend for the truth, they become **fellow workers for the truth**.
1. The reward for these support people is the same as those who are out on the front lines. **1Sa 30:21-25** shows this principle, where the spoils are distributed equally among those who fought and those who supported. King David understood that the supply lines were just as vital as the soldiers, and God would reward both soldiers and supporters properly and generously.
  2. Jesus promised that even the help offered in a cup of cold water to one of His children would not be forgotten when God brings His reward (**Mat 10:42**).
  3. This also explains why John would pray for the prosperity of Gaius: he used his resources in a godly way, being a blessing to others. If God blessed him with more, others would be blessed more also.
- C. **Taking nothing from the Gentiles:** The ancient world of the early church was filled with the missionaries and preachers of various religions, and they often supported themselves by taking offerings from the general public. But John said that these Christian missionaries should take **nothing from the Gentiles** (non-Christians). Instead of soliciting funds from the general public they were to look to the support of fellow Christians.
- D. **In a manner worthy of God:** Christians are not only called to help, but to help **in a manner worthy of God**. We are to do our best to give our best – not our leftovers.
1. Christians must first see that they are doing something to help the spread of the gospel. Then they must see that they do it **in a manner worthy of God**. God calls every one of us to have a part in the great commission, the command of **Mat 28:19: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*** One can have a part by going or have a part by helping, but everyone has a part and should do it well.
  2. 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.*** (**Mat 10:40-41**) This should make us consider how we receive and help those who are preaching the gospel.

a) **Diotrephes**: A bad example.

V. **3JN 9-11 NKJV** 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.

A. John publicly rebuked **Diotrephes**, and he rebuked him by name.

1. **Diotrephes** presented himself as a "prominent Christian leader" (at least in his own mind), and he used that platform to publicly gossip and criticize the apostle John and his associates (**prating against us with malicious words**).

B. **Who loves to have the preeminence among them**: Simply, the problem for **Diotrephes** was *pride*. In his pride, he did not **receive** the apostles such as John. This was in contrast to the humble hospitality of Gaius, who walked in the truth.

1. There are many men like Diotrephes, who say to themselves, "Why should these big shots get all the attention and honor? Look at my ministry! It is just as good!" And pride leads to destruction.
2. This is the very opposite of the nature of Christ '**who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant**'. **Php 2:6-7 KJV**

C. **Putting them out of the church**: Diotrephes not only used his influence to forbid others from showing hospitality to John or his associates; he even tried to excommunicate those who tried to show such hospitality.

1. Diotrephes and men like Diotrephes, not only like **to have the preeminence**, but they also love to use whatever power they think they have as a sword against others.

D. **Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good**: John gave us two clear examples, one good (Gaius) and one bad (Diotrephes), and he now applies the point - follow the good!

1. We are going to see another good example in **Demetrius**.

VI. **3JN 12 NKJV** 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.

A. John recommended this man to Gaius. Perhaps he was the one who carried the letter from John to Gaius, and John wanted Gaius to know that he was worthy of Christian hospitality.

VII. **CONCLUSION**

- A. John explains such a short letter to Gaius. **3Jn 13-14 NKJV** 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.
1. John preferred a face-to-face with Gaius, so his letter was short.
  2. So, are we healthy spiritually, or no?
    - a) Are we walking in Truth or are we fake.
    - b) Are we “real” and as a result can be open and honest – or do we hide and conceal in the darkness?
      - (1) If we are not spiritually healthy – the first step is **true** repentance!