

PROSPERING IN CHRISTIANITY (3 John)

I. We must walk in truth (vs 3-8).

- A. Brethren had testified to the fact that Gaius walked in the truth.
 - 1. We noticed from our study of 1 John that this means Gaius walked in the light.
 - 2. We found out this means that Gaius walked in the commandments of Christ.
- B. Gaius lived the Christian life which brought John great joy.
 - 1. He described Gaius as his child.
 - 2. It very well could be that John had baptized Gaius.
- C. How did Gaius live the Christian life?
- D. We see from verse five that was hospitable to his brethren.
 - 1. In that day the inns were not the places we would consider staying today.
 - 2. People needed a place to stay and brethren were commanded to be hospitable to them.
 - 3. John dealt with this idea in 2 John.
 - 4. Gaius was one who followed this command.
- E. When you combine his walking in truth and being hospitable you see a joining of faith and works.
 - 1. Gaius lived what he believed.
 - 2. This caused others to testify of his faithfulness.
- F. Gaius may not have been a preacher or felt comfortable standing in front of others but he could be hospitable and help others forward the gospel of Christ.
- G. John asked him to continue doing this because it allowed those he helped not to be burdensome on those to whom they preached.
 - 1. Paul dealt with the reasons he did not take money from the Corinthians while he worked with them.
 - 2. One of the main reasons is that he did not want others to think that he preached for financial gain.
 - 3. By the help Gaius gave brethren this same pitfall could be avoided.
- H. This allowed Gaius to be considered a fellowhelper to the truth.
- I. Gaius had spiritual prosperity because he walked in truth and we can have the same if we follow the commands of God.
- J. Gaius walked in the truth by following God's commands, being hospitable and generous to his brethren.

II. We must follow apostolic authority (vs 9-10).

- A. Instead of being a fellow worker for the truth, John reminds Gaius that the attitude of Diotrephes was not to be followed.
- B. We don't know if Diotrephes was an elder or a preacher, more than likely he was one of these, but he was one who like preeminence.
 - 1. Preeminence comes from a compound word that means "to love to be first."

2. It is the desire to have oneself placed above others.
- C. Diotrophes was so insistent on this that he refused to accept John and his apostolic authority.
 1. In the prayer of Jesus recorded by John, Jesus says that men will believe on Jesus through the words of the apostles (John 17:20).
 2. Earlier in that prayer, Jesus mentioned that He had given the apostles the words God had given him (John 17:8).
 3. These men had authority in the church because they carried the words of Christ and had been given authority by Him.
- D. Diotrophes thought so highly of himself he was willing to rebel against this apostolic authority in several ways.
 1. He prated against them with malicious words.
 - a. Prated means to babble against, to accuse falsely.
 - b. Malicious means wicked and hurtful.
 2. He refused to receive brethren John had sent to the local congregation.
 3. He kept others of the congregation from receiving missionaries from John.
 4. He threw out of the congregation those that would do so.
- E. This earned the promise that John would deal with him when he came there to see Gaius and other brethren.
- F. You and I are to follow apostolic authority in all that we do religiously and morally.
- G. We have no right to change any words or doctrines given by the apostles because they received them from God.
- H. Spiritually we prosper when we are obedient to apostolic authority

III. **We must imitate godly examples (vs 11-14).**

- A. Instead of imitating someone like Diotrophes who was wholly wicked, we are to follow the example of people who continually do good because this type person is of God.
 1. This type person walks in truth and follows apostolic authority.
 2. He does not live in rebellion to God but in harmony with his will.
- B. This being the case, John points out to Gaius a brother in Christ by the name of Demetrius.
- C. Nothing is known of this Demetrius in terms of where he is from or his profession.
- D. All that is known is that he was known by Christians to be a man of great faith.
 1. People testified to his faithfulness.
 2. He conformed his life with truth and this was a testimony to all that he was faithful to God.
- E. John testified to the fact that he was a faithful person and one worthy of imitation.
- F. If you are like me, you need examples to follow.
 1. Men and women who live right and show you the way.
 2. This was the type of man Demetrius was.

- G. Gaius was a blessed man in that he had the friendship of John, an apostle, and other brethren.
- H. He was a man who was offered the blessing of peace from an apostle.