

## Receive the Brethren: 3 John 1:1-8 Explained

### Scriptures for Today

#### ""3 John 1-8

The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.""

### Introduction — A Short Letter With a Big Message

3 John is the shortest book in the New Testament — but its message is enormous for the church.

This is not a letter about doctrine like Galatians. It is not a letter about suffering like 1 Peter. It is not a letter about fellowship like 1 John.

#### **3 John is a letter about how believers treat other believers.**

John writes to a faithful Christian named **Gaius**, praising him for receiving traveling preachers and missionaries and warning against men like Diotrephes who refuse the brethren.

The theme is simple and powerful: **How you treat God's people reveals how you treat God.**

This short passage (verses 1–8) gives us a model of Christian love, Christian truth, Christian hospitality, and Christian partnership.

### Verse 1 — Gaius: Loved in Truth

#### ""3 John 1:1

The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.""

John calls himself “**the elder**” — the older apostle, the shepherd, the overseer. He writes to **Gaius**, a man who is: wellbeloved, faithful, generous, and walking in truth.

The phrase “**whom I love in the truth**” shows two things:

**1. Their bond is based on truth, not personality.** Christian love is rooted in shared doctrine and shared loyalty to Christ.

**2. Truth creates unity.** Truth is the foundation of real Christian relationships. No church can have unity without truth.

## **Verse 2 — A Prayer for Physical and Spiritual Prosperity**

### **""3 John 1:2**

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.""

This is not the prosperity gospel. John is simply praying for Gaius's physical health to match his **spiritual** health. Gaius is spiritually strong. John wishes him to be physically well also. This verse shows:

- Spiritual prosperity is more important than physical prosperity.
- It is biblical to pray for someone's health and wellbeing.
- Soul prosperity matters most.

## **Verses 3–4 — Walking in Truth Brings Joy**

### **""3 John 1:3-4**

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.""

John's highest joy is not: church size, programs, numbers, finances, buildings. It is this: **Believers walking in truth.** This shows:

1. **Truth should not only be believed, but it should be lived.** Gaius didn't just know truth; he walked in it.
2. **Real Christianity is visible.** Others testified of Gaius's faithfulness.
3. **A leader's greatest joy is seeing his people live out the Word.** Actually make changes to forsake this world and live for God.

## **Verse 5 — Faithfulness to Brethren and Strangers**

### **""3 John 1:5**

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.""

Gaius is faithful in two ways:

**1. He serves the brethren faithfully.** Traveling preachers, missionaries, evangelists – you might say – because later in verse 7 it says they went forth or got up and moved. Traveling believers. Men who went out for the name of Jesus.

**2. He serves strangers.** People he did not even personally know. We serve strangers that we don't know.

This is biblical hospitality: meeting needs, offering food or lodging, supporting missionaries, helping God's servants continue their work, Gaius was reliable, generous, and trustworthy in all his service.

## **Verse 6 — His Charity Was Praised by the Church**

**3 John 1:6**

Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church, whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well."

Other believers reported Gaius's charity (love in action). He "brought them forward on their journey" — meaning he assisted, supplied, encouraged, supported, and sent them out equipped.

**Biblical hospitality is not just opening your home;** it is helping people continue the work of God.

John says: **"Thou shalt do well."** Meaning: **This is pleasing to God. This is the right thing to do.**

## **Verse 7 — They Went Out for His Name's Sake**

**3 John 1:7**

Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

These traveling preachers were: missionaries, evangelists, church planters, gospel workers. We go forth from this church with the Gospel. We get up. We leave the church building. And we go out there with the Gospel weekly.

They went out **for Christ's name** — not for money, fame, or applause. They also **took nothing of the Gentiles.** Meaning:

They did not ask unbelievers for support. They did not seek funding from the lost world. They relied on **God's people** alone.

Missionary work is the responsibility of the **saved**, not the unsaved. They took nothing of the Gentiles or unbelievers in this context of the word.

## **Verse 8 — Fellowhelpers to the Truth**

### **""3 John 1:8**

We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.""

John declares a powerful principle: **When you support preachers of the Gospel, people who are out spreading the truth using their feet, you become part of their work.**

As people all over this country and world help to support us through prayer, donations, spreading the word, and other ways, they become a part of this work. You are a: partner, helper, co-laborer, fellowhelper.

You share in the reward, in the fruit, in the labor, in the eternal impact.

Receiving the brethren is not a small thing. It is obedience to God — and it makes you a fellowhelper to the truth.

## **Application — Lessons for Today**

- 1. Christian love must be rooted in truth.** Unity without truth is fake. Truth without love is cold. Gaius had both.
- 2. Hospitality is ministry.** Helping God's servants is honoring Christ Himself.
- 3. Supporting Gospel preachers makes you part of their work.** Every soul they win goes to your account as well.
- 4. A church must treat the brethren better than the world treats its own people.** We are commanded to honor, receive, support, and encourage God's workers.
- 5. A Christian's reputation should match his walk.** Others testified that Gaius lived out his faith.
- 6. Walking in truth brings joy to spiritual leaders.** Every pastor's greatest joy is seeing believers live out the Word.

## **Conclusion — Receive the Brethren, Walk in Truth, Support the Work**

3 John may be a small letter, but its message is enormous: **How you treat the brethren reveals your heart toward God.**

Gaius received God's servants. He supported them. He walked in truth. He lived charity. He strengthened the work. He partnered in the Great Commission. Preach the Gospel, get people baptized, and teach them all things.

Others refused. Others hindered. Others rejected the brethren.

John calls us to be like Gaius — faithful, generous, loving, doctrinally sound, and helpful to the work of God.

When you receive God's people: You receive God Himself. When you support God's workers: You support God's work. When you walk in truth: You bring joy to heaven and to every spiritual leader who loves you.

**Let us receive the brethren.** Let us support the truth. Let us walk in love. Let us walk in truth.

Let's pray.