



# WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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## 3 John 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

### 3 John 1.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the apostle John supplemented his statements on Christian hospitality in 2 John with this late-first-century letter to Gaius, a member of one of his churches. John applauded Gaius for living out the teachings of the apostles and for welcoming travelling Christian missionaries into his home. Gaius condemned Diotrephes, a selfish church leader who not only refused to help these itinerant, godly teachers, but also had slandered John and opposed Gaius and anyone else who disagreed with him. This book demonstrates that pettiness can divide Christians if they are not living by God's word, God's love and God's grace. To avoid the dual dangers of false teaching and division within the church, John encouraged believers to the dual challenge of love and discernment.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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#### Topics.

- John writes to Gaius a beloved brother.
- The truth and walking in the truth.
- John's greatest joy.
- The kindness and faithfulness of Gaius.
- Supporting ministers of the Gospel.
- The spirit of Diotrephes contrasted to the Spirit of Christ.
- Do not imitate evil but imitate good.
- The global and worldwide church of God.

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### 3 JOHN 1:1-4

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#### John writes to Gaius a Beloved Brother.

- **3 John 1:1-4:** The elder (John) to the beloved Gaius whom I love in truth. <sup>2</sup>Beloved I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. <sup>3</sup>For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. <sup>4</sup>I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

**Beloved:** means dearly and well-loved.

**Elders:** John was an elder of the churches, meaning he had the oversight over them, but the churches in John's era were not like they were today, since there is no mention of church buildings in the New Testament most churches were in the homes of faithful believers. It is likely the elders would have had the oversight over many home churches in the towns they lived in. They were men who obviously had a good knowledge of the Scriptures and recognised as one who was faithful and devoted to the Lord and served him and those they ministered to with integrity and honesty. John is a perfect example of a church elder; he not only clearly understood the Gospel and what was important to the heart of God, but was also full of love for God and love for God's people. For more on New Testament churches see the title:

- The Global and Worldwide Church of God (at the end of this chapter).

**Brotherly love:** just as there is a natural bond and affection between earthly brothers and sisters who care for each other there is a natural affection amongst brothers and sisters in Christ toward others who have a deep love and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and especially toward those who follow him with integrity and honesty and bring a good testimony not only to their own faith, but also to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Gaius was one of these brothers who John felt a deep brotherly affection toward.

**Johns pray for Gaius has two parts:**

1. For the well-being of his natural earthly life and his body (i.e., may all go well with his life and with his health).
2. For his spiritual well-being, (i.e., may all go well with his soul which means may all go well with his mind may it be kept in mental peace and may all go well with his heart, may it be filled with joy, love and contentment).

**The Truth:** the word truth in the phrase, "I love in truth" (v1) embraces all things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle's teachings such as:

- Jesus was a man born of a woman.
- Jesus came from the Father and was sent by God.
- Jesus is the Christ the Son of God who was crucified and raised to heavenly and eternal glory at the right-hand side of God.
- Eternal salvation is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace.
- Jesus was born to be a King and that his Kingdom is not of this world.
- The Spirit that unites God the Father, Jesus and believers together is love.

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Throughout the New Testament the phrase the truth refers to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to Christ himself. Obviously, the Bible is not the only truth everything that is true is truth whether it is biblical or secular, whatever is not a lie is truth but the Bible contains the only truth that teaches about God, his eternal plans, purposes and promises and the way to eternal life. When a careful study is done through the New Testament to discover what biblical writers had in mind when they used the term, the truth it becomes very clear that they did not have in mind all Old Testament history or every doctrine of the Bible, but rather only that truth that relates to the following two things:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Right behaviour and doing-good.

The truth as used by Christ and the apostles embraces everything pertaining to Jesus, the message of the cross, the grace of God, the Gospel and teachings that lead to salvation, eternal life and right behaviour.

**Walking in the truth:** John says that:

- He rejoiced greatly when he was told that Gaius was walking in the truth (v3).
- His greatest joy was to hear that his children were walking in the truth. (v4).

In the New Testament walking in the truth refers to:

- Character and behaviour (i.e., doing what is true, good and right).
- Being sincere honest and our authentic self in contrast to hypocrisy and pretence.
- Speaking and acting in love in contrast to jealousy, bitterness and malice.
- Living a lifestyle that is in accordance with the teachings of Christ and the apostles.
- Godly behaviour and fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Endeavouring to live a lifestyle that honour God and keep His commandments.
- Living in a manner that brings a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

Walking in the truth is about behaviour and lifestyle (a person does not walk in doctrine they believe them). It means living a lifestyle that brings honour to God, a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. It means showing love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness not only to brothers and sisters in Christ, but also toward those who do not know the love of Christ as Gaius did toward the strangers. The phrase, walking in the truth is Biblical language that means a person is living a godly lifestyle. For further information see the title:

- Truth in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**John's greatest joy:** the following glorious statement of John:

- I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth (v4).

Shows the true heart of a minister of the Gospel, it is not the things of this world that gives the greatest joy, excitement and pleasure, but seeing other faithful brothers and sisters (especially those under their ministry) following Christ with love, honesty and integrity and sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

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### 3 JOHN 1:5-8

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#### **The Kindness and Faithfulness of Gaius.**

- **3 John 1:5-8:** Beloved it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, <sup>6</sup>who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>For they have gone out for the sake of the name accepting nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup>Therefore we ought to support people like these that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

John is commending Gaius for his willingness to take into his home and provide food and shelter for strangers and foreigners who were travelling from home church to home church ministering the Gospel of Christ. John is thrilled when he hears the testimonies of these ministers because they all speak highly of Gaius faithfulness to the Lord, the hospitality he showed them and of his love toward all who belong to the family of Christ regardless of whether he knows them or not.

**Send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God:** these travelling ministers were not being paid wages for their service to the Lord, they are motivated by their love for Christ and the passionate desire to see others saved to eternal life. This is why John tells Gaius to, "Send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God" (v6). This means send them on their way with whatever you are able to give them that will help them in their journey, (i.e., food, clothing, footwear and money etc.).

**Supporting ministers of the Gospel:** during the New Testament the words, "We ought to support them" (v8) did not mean ministers of the Gospel should be supported in mega million dollar houses, top of the range cars and all the luxuries of the world, but that they should be supported in what they need to live as others do. Sadly there is amongst the Kingdom of God today ministers who do not view their calling as a privilege nor do they consider it an honour to share the words of eternal life, but rather view their ministry as a career and therefore compare themselves with the C.E.O. of mega million dollar companies and as such think they should be supported in the same lifestyle. During the years of the early church being supported meant being taken into another brothers or sisters home and being provided with food and shelter while they ministered in that town. Obviously, a minister today who works full time in the ministry needs to provide for his family and their needs, so it is not wrong that he should be paid accordingly, but indulgence and excess is abusing the generosity and kindness of those who are supporting them. John is telling Gaius and by extension all who belong to Christ's family that by supporting faithful ministers of the Gospel in whatever way we are able we become fellow workers for Christ with them.

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### 3 JOHN 1:9-10

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#### **John's Warning of Diotrephes.**

- **3 John 1:9-10:** I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. <sup>10</sup>So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

**Diotrephes:** was clearly an opponent of Christianity who appears to have been a leading member of a church that had great authority in the area. Very few facts are known about him, but John's words, "He likes to put himself first" (v9) show that he was driven by self, ego and pride and had a domineering and controlling attitude which are all totally contrary to the Spirit of Christ and the humility of the Lord. Paul in his letter to the Philippians wrote:

- Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Do not look only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philip. 2:3).

Paul then tell the Philippians that they should have the same mindset as Christ who though he is the Son of God made himself nothing (meaning he did not make himself a great worldly King though he had all the wisdom and power to do so), but instead humbled himself taking the form of a servant and even laid his life down not for himself, but so that you and I and whoever comes to him could be reconciled to God and saved to eternal life.

**The spirit of Diotrephes contrasted to the Spirit of Christ:** Diotrephes spirit in contrast to the Spirit of Christ was one of pride and the love of pre-eminence. This is evident by the fact John says, "He likes to put himself first and does not acknowledge the apostles authority" (v9), but instead he not only speaks and spreads malicious rumours about them, but also refuses to welcome other brothers and sisters who would like to join the fellowship of the church. Added to this wickedness he puts those who do welcome others into the fellowship of their church out of the church. This kind of behaviour sounds almost bizarre to those who know the love of Christ and the grace of God, but even today there are amongst Christianity certain groups that view themselves as the elite of God and the only ones upholding, the truth. The character of these groups is so dogmatic and legalistic that only those who strictly adhere to their doctrines and their rules can enter their secluded fellowships. Instead of spreading the Good News of the Gospel they like Diotrephes are an obstacle to the progress of God's Kingdom and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Do not Imitate Evil but Imitate Good.**

- **3 John 1:11:** Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

This verse is in the context of Diotrephes and his wickedness. Diotrephes clearly had power and authority and was no-doubt esteemed and exalted by those who were of the same spirit. John is saying do not follow or imitate religious leaders as many do simply because they have a massive church empire and religious power and authority or because they are gifted orators and speech makers and esteemed as important and famous, but rather follow those who are humble honest sincere and serve the Lord from love not selfish ambition.

**While we are focused on (3 John 1:11) here is a fun moment:** one Sunday many years ago as we were driving home from church, I ask my four-year son, "What did you learn in Sunday school?" He said, "That there were no good witches" (he had proudly taken his children's book titled Hansel and Gretel that his Grandparents had given him for his birthday; one of the main characters is a witch), his teacher had obviously taught him there is no such thing as a good witch, and gave us a note to keep the book at home. Six weeks later as I was digging in the garden my son said, "Daddy there are good witches." Wondering how he came to that conclusion I asked, "How do you know that?" He replied, "The Bible says so." I thought this is interesting and asked, "Where?" He proceeds to quote the Sunday school memory verse he had memorised for that week, saying, "Three John chapter one verse eleven says, 'follow not that which is evil, but follow that which is good' (3 John 1:11), see Daddy there are good witches."

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**3 JOHN 1:12-14**

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**Demetrius a Faithful Brother in Christ.**

- **3 John 1:12-14:** Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. <sup>13</sup>I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. <sup>14</sup>I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, every one of them.

Here is the best testimony any brother or sister in Christ could have:

- Everyone spoke well of Demetrius.
- John and those with him spoke well of Demetrius.
- The truth itself testified to the goodness of Demetrius, meaning his lifestyle, acts of charity and hospitality testified to his sincerity, devotion and faithfulness to the Lord.

Clearly John has a deep affection for Demetrius as he would for any brother or sister in Christ who is not only devoted to the Lord in love, but who every other brother and sister in Christ speaks highly of. John has a lot more he would love to share with Demetrius, but hopes to see him soon so prefers (as any friend would) to talk to him face to face rather than write.

There is in the secular global world today a mindset that the church is a Sunday meeting in a religious building but the church should never be limited to the established religious institutions, denominations or church

buildings though they may form a part of the body of Christ they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes (as the early church did) to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with Him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives. God is not limited to any one pattern or organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. In many third world countries church is held outside under a tree (for shade) with its members sitting on the dusty ground often with dogs, chooks and other animals roaming around. It is also important to be aware that the word church does not embrace everyone simply because they confess to be Christians (Matthew 7:21-23). When the Bible uses the term church it primarily refers to those who belong to Christ and those who do the will of his Father.

The will of God in this context is summed up in Jesus words:

- Love your neighbour as yourself (Matt 22:37-39) (Mark 12:29-31).

In the New Testament this is called the, Royal Law (James 2:8) and means do-good to others. Those (especially those who belong to Christ) who deliberately harm people physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and those who use others for their own selfish gain and greed are referred to by Christ himself as workers of iniquity. The Bible teaches that some will be cast out of God's Kingdom which means not everyone who confesses to know Christ is part of his church there are those in his present Kingdom who he calls wicked servants. They use God's grace, Jesus good name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to Christ. Nevertheless, Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and will not only reject anyone who uses his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain, but when he returns will deny them entry into his eternal Kingdom. (Matt. 8:12) (Matt. 22:13) (Matt. 25:30).

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:14) (John 10:26-27).

Building God's house is not about financing opulent mega million dollar buildings, but rather it is about people gathering together to share their faith in any place they are able, nevertheless a building maybe required for practical purposes (i.e., the size of the congregation etc.), but if it is built by cleverly twisting and distorting Scriptures to manipulate the congregation to give from guilt or built upon vast amounts of borrowed money so that the oversight and the congregation are put under extreme financial oppression then the building is not in the will of God.

The book of Proverbs states:

- The borrower is the slave of the lender (Prov. 22:7).

Building God's House (Temple) is about becoming more Christ like, and living in the will of God. New Testament Christianity is fluid and not restricted to a particular building or even a special day. The Christianity Christ taught is so exciting and real, it cannot be contained. It has no limitations and overflows into every moment of a Christian's life; which shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that the New Testament house of God is global, moving and manifested in the lives of all those who are faithful and who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ



Since the Bible was written in an entirely different culture to ours and the body of Christ is a global family filled with people from different nations, countries, cultures, backgrounds, knowledge, levels of education, hurts and troubled pasts there is always going to be certain amount of Scripture we will all understand differently. Paul in the book of Romans tells us to avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine that he taught the brothers and sisters in Rome. In the context of the entire letter that he wrote to the Roman brothers and sisters the doctrines he had in mind when he said, "Avoid those who cause divisions" are the following three:

1. Doctrines that are contrary to the teaching that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ contrasted to works of the law, self-effort and keeping religious customs and traditions etc.
2. Doctrines that are contrary to the truth that Jews and Gentiles who accept Christ become one nation in Christ, contrasted to them being two separate nations.
3. Doctrines which are contrary to godly behaviour and lead people away from the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the three major topics Paul has focused on in his letter to the brothers and sisters in Rome and the doctrines he has in his mind when he says be careful of those who cause divisions and create obstacles. Naturally within the global House of God there are many varied understandings of many Scripture, but not all teachings are important to know to be saved to eternal life nor does one have to have perfect understanding of every teaching from Genesis to Revelation to know Christ and be in union with him, but of course we must all understand the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. No-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be in the family of Christ and saved to eternal life, but should any teacher proclaim a message of works and self-effort to be saved or teach that Jews and Gentiles are two separate groups/nations in Christ, or teach doctrines that lead people away from godly behaviour and from Christ Paul says they should be avoided (Rom 16:17-19).

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**NOTE:** though the visible global church in many regions has not presented a good reflection of Christ to the secular world, it should always be remembered that there are literally hundreds of thousands of humble Christian brothers and sisters in Christ spending their time helping the poor and the less fortunate, but sadly this type of news does not attract the attention of global TV news media since there is no profit to be made in good news.

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**THE BODY IS THE REFLECTION OF CHRIST ON EARTH AND  
THEREFORE WE SHOULD BE WALKING IN THE SAME  
SPIRIT OF LOVE, KINDNESS, COMPASSION AND  
AND GRACE ETC. THAT CHRIST WALKED IN  
WHILE ON EARTH**

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For further information see the title:

- Church (The Definitions of a Church).
  - In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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