

3 JOHN

1:1 *Who is Gaius?*

All that we know of Gaius is written here (CP V3-6). V4 indicates that Gaius was a disciple of John. He was highly commended by his brethren for being an outstanding example of the outworking of God's love. His door was always open to the brethren - not only to those he knew, but to strangers alike. His hospitality was not merely a kind and generous act – he considered it his Christian service to God. Gaius treated the brethren as God would have treated them. We should all strive to serve the Lord like this. There are three other men called Gaius in scripture, but there is nothing to indicate that this Gaius was one of them (CP Ac 19:29; 20:4; Ro 16:23 with 1Cor 1:14).

1:2 *What do we learn from what John says here?*

We learn from this that it is God's will to prosper His children financially as well as heal their bodies and save their souls. Sadly however, not every Christian believes that is what it teaches, but there are three blessings of God involved in John's prayer here - (*wish* (KJV), means pray): material prosperity, bodily healing and health, and the saving of Gaius' soul. If any one of those blessings was not the will of God, John would have known and he would not have prayed for them. Further, if such blessings are the will of God for Gaius, they are for all men alike, for God is no respecter of persons. Throughout scripture God promises to bless His children financially as well as heal their bodies and save their souls (CP De 28:1-14; Jn 1:8; Psa 1:1-3; 112:1-3; Pr 3:9-10; 8:20-21 with Isa 53:4-6; Mk 16:17-18; Lu 4:16-21; Ga 3:13-14, 26-29; Jas 5:14-15; 1Pe 2:24). All believers have to do to appropriate these blessings is to comply with the conditions.

1:5-8 *How are we to understand this?*

This teaches that it is every Christian's duty to contribute to the needs of those who preach and teach the gospel, and it is to be done in a manner worthy of God. It is the duty of all who are taught the word to provide material support for those who teach the word (CP Ga 6:6). Every Christian is individually responsible for ensuring that those who minister the word live off the word (CP 1Cor 9:7-14). No one who ministers the word should ever have to seek help from those they are trying to evangelize. To have to seek help from unbelievers could hinder the gospel and expose the messengers of the gospel to charges of preaching and teaching for financial gain. Christians have a duty, and it should be seen as a privilege, to contribute to missionary needs and works. Workers of the word must not be treated like beggars, but received, sent out and supported in a manner worthy of God (CP Mt 10:40-42; Lu 10:3-7; Php 4:10-19; 1Ti 5:17-18; Tit 3:13). See also comments on Ga 6:7-8.

1:9-10 *Who is Diotrephes?*

Nothing is known about Diotrephes other than what is recorded here. He was self-proclaimed leader of Gaius' local church, who rejected instruction from John, and refused to allow teachers John sent into the church. He opposed John publicly, and maliciously slandered him and the teachers. He even excommunicated church members who fellowshipped with the teachers. Sadly, Diotrephes' authoritarian, one-man rule is replicated in many local churches still. It is a direct contradiction to what New Testament church leaders are meant to be according to scripture (CP Mt 20:20-28 (also Mk 10:35-45; Lu 22:24-27); Php 2:5-8; 1Ti 3:1-3; 1Pe 5:1-3). The New Testament church is to be centred around servant - leadership, not authoritarian rule (See also comments on Ac 11:27, 13:1-4, Ro 11:13, Eph 4:11-12, 1Ti 3:1-7, 1Pe 5:1-3).