

## The Third Epistle of John

*Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 1:8 NASB)*

### 3 John 11-12

Someone read 3John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-14 (15)

**Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. (3 John 1:11 NASB)**

This is the third time John addresses Gaius as “beloved.” Where are the other 2?

Vv 1, 5

Typical of John, he expresses his advice to Gaius both negatively and positively.

E.G., 1Jn 1:6, 8; 2:4

The Greek translated “imitate” is *mimou*, which sounds like what English word?

Mimic, mime

This phrase is a severe warning: Don't be doing it! We are all susceptible to malign influences in our lives. We must be careful to choose our models wisely. We must be discriminating in who we follow.

John knows how infectious evil is and was anxious to Gaius away from any danger, lest he succumb to the evil that Dio is practicing. John is intent on urging Gaius to continue in the course of action for which he is already known. Even good men need encouragement in an hour of crises. When faced with evil, they will always learn from it what not to do.

Do you remember the 3 tests we talked about when we studied 1 John? What were they?

1. Truth
2. Love
3. Obedience

These tests are all repeated in this letter, albeit briefly. Can you find them?

1. Truth vv3, 4
2. Love v6
3. Obedience v11
  - a. C.f., 1John 3:18

What does the fact that these 3 tests are repeated signify...

...About the author?

... About how important they are to the author?

“Do not imitate what is evil” = is in the Greek “the Evil (thing).”

Obviously, John has Dio in mind to illustrate what is evil, but his words indicate that he is speaking well beyond the evil of Dio’s inhospitality. He is expressing any evil act. Notice how artful John’s use of language is: The example of Dio appears in the preceding verse. And its antithesis appears in the next.

“but” is the strongest possible Greek term that signifies the polar opposite

Grammatically, it is an “adversative conjunction”

Greek = *alla* vs *de*

“what is good” is literally “the good”, signifying whatever is morally and spiritually beneficial.

John follows up with 2 axiomatic statements (axiom = self evident, requiring no proof):

“The one who does good is of God”

What does “of God” mean here?

It is literally “out of the God”, it carries the sense of being in union with God or being born out of God, and hence being a spiritual child.

We might almost define it as “good doing.” The believer’s “good doing” does not produce his new birth (out of God), but it is the outward manifestation that demonstrates to the world that the new believer has undergone a radical change, has literally been born again (spiritually).

“The one who does evil has not seen God”

What does “has not seen God” mean? Isn’t God invisible to everyone?

1 Tim 6:16

Jn 14:9

Can we “see” Jesus today – Yes, through the HS

We have God literally dwelling in us, and we in Him!

The one who does evil has not seen God – that is, has no real Christian experience. His conversion must be judged to have been an illusion. Evil, unloving conduct – as exhibited by Dio – calls into question his profession to be a Christian in the first place.

1Jo 3:20

So, was Dio truly saved?

**Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. (3 John 1:12 NASB)**

Without warning, John introduces Demetrius. This is, as I just mentioned is the example of “good” that Gaius should imitate. But there is another reason for John to introduce Demetrius at this point, a practical one.

After the warning of the evil Dio, John would have wanted Gaius to know something about Demetrius.

It can be taken as a certainty that Deme delivered the letter to Gaius, and highly probable that he was a traveling missionary, possibly with the same group that had previously encountered Dio.

He was a stranger to Deme, and in the present situation, John no doubt felt his sincere commendation should be given, even though Gaius was known for showing hospitality to strangers.

The name “Demetrius” means belonging to Demeter (Ceres), the goddess of agriculture. This implies he came from a pagan family who probably were rural.

The name appears in Acts 19:24, 38. On the surface, it is unlikely that these two may be one in the same person. But as one commentator wrote: “the conjecture has nothing in the least improbable.” He feels that the very vehemence of his language is an argument that he had an inner sense that Paul was right in his teaching in Acts 19:26.

All we can say for certain is that he received a strong endorsement by John.

His commendation is three-fold

1. He is given a good report by all (that knew him). What tense is “has received”? And what does that mean?
  - a. It was ongoing in its lasting quality and validity.
  - b. The verb for “testimony” is related to our “martyr.” In the NT, it usually refers to bear witness to Christ and to His Gospel, but here it is applied to an individual Christian.
2. “and from the truth itself”
  - a. Notice that it is a particular truth that John has in mind: “The Truth”
  - b. And it may be a personification
    - i. The Truth = The Lord (Bruce)
    - ii. The Truth = The Spirit of Truth (Plummer)
    - iii. The truth signifies the whole body of truth as exemplified in the character of Deme. It is a figurative personification, not meant to be taken as representing any entity. (Smalley and Hieber)
      1. This is most likely, that it occurs between two human commendations.
      2. The apostolic faith so manifestly governed the faith and conduct of

Deme, that this truth could be cited as a clear witness to its genuiness.

3. To this double-testimony, John adds his own. How many witnesses were required to establish the truth of any testimony in Biblical Times?
  - a. See Deut 19:15

“and you know that our testimony is true.”

“You” is singular, and was directed to Gaius himself. John appeals to his own reputation. Gaius knows that he can fully rely on John’s testimony because (to echo the Apostle) it is true and not a lie. John’s character was such that Gaius could implicitly trust John. Such self-testimony is natural coming from John the beloved disciple, but unnatural coming from another.