

Sermon Notes

Series on Third John

Third John 1-8

“Good Example: Faithful Gaius”

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Introduction: Dependable and faithful people are becoming fewer these days in all walks of life. In this passage we'll meet a man, Gaius, whom John states is really dependable, faithful; the kind of person on whom we can count no matter what the situation or need. But before we examine Gaius' life, here's some background information on 3rd John.

Background information to give an overview:

- Third John is perhaps the most personal of all the letters of the New Testament, written by John, one of Jesus' 12 apostles, who identifies himself in the opening verse not by his personal name but as *the elder* just as he does in 2nd John 1. Is it possible that he doesn't use his personal name because of the potential for persecution?
- Most Bible scholars date this epistle about the same time as John's other epistles, 90-95 AD and written from Ephesus.
- Written to Gaius and the Christian community in the Roman province of Asia Minor (known today as Turkey) to encourage him to continue extending hospitality to doctrinally sound/true traveling missionaries, preachers, teachers and evangelists.
- Which Gaius of the New Testament is meant in verses? The answer is uncertain as three are mentioned in the New Testament: **(1)** Gaius of Macedonia, Paul's traveling companion, who was with Paul in the riot at Ephesus, Acts 19:29; **(2)** Gaius of Derbe who travelled with Paul and Timothy into Asia and brought money from his church for the poor in Jerusalem, Acts 20:4; **(3)** Gaius of Corinth who had been such a fantastic host to Paul that he was considered a host for the entire church according to Romans 16:23; according to 1 Corinthians 1:14 he had been baptized by Paul. Origen writes that tradition holds that this Gaius became the first Bishop of Thessalonica.
- Third John gives us a vivid glimpse of a church in the first century.

Similarities and contrasts between John's epistles:

- Unlike 1st and 2nd John, 3rd John makes no mention of the name of Jesus Christ although verse 7 states that *they went out for the sake of the Name*, an indirect yet obvious reference to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 5:40-41).
- Although the content itself is personal, like Paul's "Pastoral Epistles" which had intended recipients yet was shared with other believers, so 3rd John also has universal value like 2nd John though addressed specifically to *the chosen lady and her children...*
- The English scholar and writer of the 19th century, Henry Alford, called 2nd and 3rd John "twin epistles" as there are a number of similarities between these two letters. Like Philemon and Jude, 2nd and 3rd John have only one chapter; 2nd and 3rd John are brief enough to have been written on a single sheet of papyrus (see sermon notes on papyrus on 2nd John).
- Third John is the shortest of the Apostle's three letters. Like the designation for 1st John, 2nd John can also be called "pastoral postcard."

- Second John is shorter in terms of verses, 12, while 3rd John with 15 verses is shorter in terms of words, 219 Greek words versus 245 Greek words for 2nd John.
- Concerning fellowship; in 1st John, the Apostle John discusses fellowship with God; in 2nd John, he forbids fellowship with false teachers and in 3rd John he encourages fellowship with true Christians.
- Both epistles address the concern over traveling evangelists, preachers and teachers; Second John is a condemnation for giving hospitality to false teachers whereas 3rd John is a commendation for giving hospitality to true teachers. Both 2nd and 3rd John are concerned with *truth* and *love* in relation to hospitality.
- Third John is an enjoyable accompaniment to 2nd John, which was written to a *chosen lady and her children* and to those who met perhaps in her home.
- While 2nd John is private and personal, 3rd John seems even more personal dealing with three specifically named people. Of John's three letters, only 3rd John is addressed to a named person. Is it possible that Gaius wrote to the Apostle John and 3rd John is John's reply (see verse 9)?
- Concerning the focus: Third John revolves around three distinct personalities within the church: Gaius, Diotrefes and Demetrius. John begins this letter with his first shining example, Gaius, ending his letter with another great example, Diotrefes, and placing the disruptive person, Demetrius, in between. In contrast, 1st John mentions only one historical character, Cain (1 John 3:12).

Overview of Third John

Verses 1-8	Verses 9-11	Verse 12	Verse 13-15
A Deserving Man	A Divisive Man	A Devoted Man	Dedicated Saints
Gaius	Diotrefes	Demetrius	You/friends
Participation	Pride	Praise	Greetings
Righteousness of Gaius	Rebellion of Diotrefes	Recommendation of Demetrius	Reciprocal Greetings
Good Example: Faithful Gaius	Bad Example: Elitist Diotrefes	Good Example: Reputable Demetrius	Good Examples: Saints who love fellowship
Gladness	Sadness	Truthfulness	Peacefulness

Verse 1: *The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.* As in 2nd John, here John also identifies himself as *the elder* in order to set the stage for his apostolic authority to deal with a person in the church who was a problem, Diotrefes, whom we'll meet beginning in verse 9. This letter begins with a resounding affirmation of John's affection and *love* for Gaius whom he probably knew personally and met while ministering in Asia Minor. It is not known whether he was in a leadership position in the church to whom the Apostle John is writing this letter or simply a very integral part of the body. John calls him, *beloved Gaius*, then follows that designation with an affirmation of John's *love* for *Gaius* based on their mutual *love* of the *truth*, the Word of God. The Greek word for the adjective *beloved* is ἀγαπητῶ, agapeto, (also used in verse 2 plus cf. how Paul uses this

same word αγαπητω in Romans 16:5, 8, 9. 12; & Philippians 4:1) and the verb is αγαπω, agapo, both forms of the same New Testament Greek word for *love*. John is speaking about a God-given bond that unites true Christians; a double-stranded cord of *love* and *truth*. *Loving* others is just basic to the body of Christ! The Apostle John admits that he *loves* Gaius in the faith, as brothers and sisters in Christ ought to do. We live in such a politically correct time that men in the church are afraid to say that another brother is *beloved*; we are afraid to admit to *loving* anyone! People today, even Christians are very independent, assert need for no one, and express that there's no time for others except family. John's concern for both *love* and *truth* is evident here as in 2nd John; the reciprocating kind. To John, and also to Gaius, living and ministering in the sphere of *truth* is simply a way of life to them. Although the Bible mentions a number of men called *Gaius* no one can pinpoint which one of the three Paul is addressing in this book as the name was quite common in New Testament times, as common as "Smith" or "John" is today. Dr. Hiebert adds, "It is generally agreed that the Gaius to whom the Elder wrote this letter is not to be identified with any of the men by that name who were associated with Paul." [Hiebert, D. Edmond, "Studies in 3 John," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144:573 (January-March 1987); 58]. Whoever he was, he no doubt "occupied a position of responsibility and leadership in the local church. Visiting evangelists seem to have stayed with him rather than with others, and the Elder would hardly have written so outspokenly of Diotrephes to any but a church leader." [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.218].

Verse 2 is John's wish for *good health* for Gaius: *Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers*. John calls Gaius *beloved* for the 2nd time in two short verses. The verb *pray* is a common New Testament word translated *pray* but it is also used to express a strong desire for something as in Romans 9:3 & w Corinthians 13:9. With the phrase, *in all respects*, John states that he wishes that in Gaius' life and health, he may be as *prosperous* as with his spiritual life. That's just the opposite of what we express to other believers as we too often think about *prospering* materialistically rather than spiritually. Interestingly, the verb *prosper* (the Greek is ευοδοουσθαι, euodousthai) literally means "to have a good journey" with an emphasis on mental health and therefore metaphorically "to succeed" or "to prosper;" as translated here in NASV & KJV; cf. its use in Romans 1:10 & 1 Corinthians 16:2. Therefore, there are only three occurrences of this verb in the Greek New Testament. It could include such things as financial *prosperity*, success in business and/or relationships and include happiness in family matters and relationships as well. The next verb, *be in good health* (Greek is υγιαινειν, hugiainein) is a word that Dr. Luke, the physician, who wrote both New Testament books of Luke and Acts, uses often to describe those who are physically fit and healthy as well as *safe and sound*; (read Luke 5:31; 7:10 & 15:27). It is not necessary, as some commentators do, to assume that Gaius had some physical illness at the time of John's writing. Stott adds a comment about the literary custom of that day followed by a statement of application; 'Taking the words together (*prosper & be in good health*) the elements of progress and vigour are combined (Westcott). Both verbs belonged

to the conventional language of letter writing, although the concern John thus expressed for Gaius' body and estate was doubtless a sincere one. There was no need to express a similar desire for his spiritual well-being also because he knew, he said, that *thy soul prospereth*. There is biblical warrant here for desiring both the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of our Christian friends.' [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, Pp. 218-219]. Is it possible that John's wish for *good health* for Gaius is because Diotrephes' rebellious and snobbish behavior in the church was beginning to take a toll on Gaius? Therefore, John is encouraging Gaius with this brief letter which is primarily about him. Application: This verse reminds us that we should be concerned not only about the spiritual lives of fellow Christians but also their physical *health* as well. We usually pay more attention to one's spiritual *health* and ignore their physical *health*. With the phrase, *just as your soul prospers*, John is hoping that Gaius' general well being was as good as his spiritual well being. It's like saying; I wish that your mental and physical *health* equates with your spiritual *health*.' In the next verse John writes about *walking in truth*, implying that Gaius' spiritual life is right on the money. If our physical *health* corresponds to our *soul/spiritual health*, many Christians would be in bad shape physically or stated another way; if our financial state was as bad as our spiritual state, many would be bankrupt!

Verse 3: It's clear from this verse that spiritual *health* means to continue to *walk in truth*: *For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth*. The Apostle heard from other believers that Gaius' spiritual life was right on the money. They *testified* about Gaius' life and because his *testimony* was favorable, the Apostle John was *very glad*. Hearing good things about other Christians ought to make us rejoice; shout 'hallelujah! Whoever these *brethren* were, they *testified* that Gaius' lifestyle was consistent with the *truth*, with his doctrinal beliefs—'he's no hypocrite!' His *walk* matched his talk! He didn't know *truth* just in his head; he also followed *the truth*. He lived life according to the Word of God. Gaius stands in stark contrast to the next man mention in this short letter, Diotrephes who did not *walk in truth*. Think about what John is trying to teach here; our spiritual lives cannot help but be noticed by other Christians! Stott adds, 'Since testimony can be borne only to what has been seen (cf. 1 John 1:2), it is clear that Gaius was a transparent, open Christian who was letting his light shine and *not* hiding it under a bushel. His truth and love were known to all. Even strangers (5) could see his sterling worth and bear witness to it. [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p. 219]. Paul writes a fascinating dialogue about the impact that godly men and women, boys and girls can have on other. Note especially Paul's words in verse 2: (2 Corinthians 3:1-3): *1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.* (NASU) Then, the New Living Translation expresses it this way: *1 Are we beginning again to tell you how good we are? Some people need to bring letters of recommendation with them or ask you to write letters*

of recommendation for them. 2 But the only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves! Your lives are a letter written in our hearts, and everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. 3 Clearly, you are a letter from Christ prepared by us. It is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on stone, but on human hearts. (NLT). Who came? John doesn't tell us who these brethren are but traveling missionaries went from one Christian community to another on a regular basis; hence the concern about hospitality for only those who spoke and taught the truth. They may have experienced the great hospitality for which Gaius was known. Is it possible that they personally experienced Diotrephes; refusal of hospitality stated in verse 9? Again, may I remind us that there were no mission organizations and/or boards in the 1st century, like Campus Crusade for Christ and there were no Holiday Inns and Chick Fil-A's! Therefore, believers provided support

Verse 4: John continues to speak with excitement about the fact that Gaius' creed and conduct were consistent. Here's John's response: *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. No greater joy—what brings us our greatest joy? Is it children? Food? Chocolate? Sleep?* John shares that his greatest joy is knowing that one of his disciples is continuing to mature spiritually (2 Peter 3:18). Allow me to challenge all of us to actively disciple someone and perhaps we too can experience the kind of joy about which John writes. Allow me to stretch John's point by applying this to families as one of the greatest joys that a parent/s can experience is to know that their child/children are living for the Lord Jesus Christ—*walking in the truth*. I can recall when all of our children trusted Christ as Savior—that's an exciting moment and a treasured memory, right? Consider what Solomon writes in Proverbs 23:24: *The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice and he who sires a wise son will be glad in him*. Now here's a question drawn from verse 4; is it possible that Gaius was John's flesh and blood son? There's no indication of that anywhere in the Bible so we'll safely conclude that the Apostle John must have been Gaius' spiritual father as he calls him his spiritual *child*, his convert and disciple, like Paul's Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2. Read also 2nd John 4 where the same phraseology is used by John. Stott continues this thought, "He had a fatherly affection for them (cf. 1 Cor. Iv. 14-16; 1 Thes. ii.11). Thus his joy as a parent was bound up in the welfare of his children (cf. 1 Thes. iii. 1-10)." Then he adds this insightful comment about the phrase *walking in the truth*; "In particular he rejoiced if his children were continuing *to walk in truth* (cf. the similar statement in 2 Jn. 4). This expression, which has the definite article (en te aletheia), explains the meaning of the two earlier phrases in the previous verse, 'thy truth' (RV; RSV, 'the truth of your life') and 'even as thou walkest in the truth' (which has no definite article)." [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p. 219]. Applying John's excitement about *walking in truth*, from time to time we all ought to assess whether we are living out the principles of the Word of God.

Verse 5: In the previous verses, the Apostle John commends Gaius for his adherence to *the truth*, now he continues to praise Gaius for his *faithfulness* as evident in his generous hospitality. *Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers*. Did you notice that this is John's third time to use

beloved in reference to Gaius? The phrase, *you are acting faithfully* has captured my attention for many years as it speaks about the character of a person's life. John is writing that Gaius is **consistent, dependable, and reliable**. He's saying; you can count on me! Wescott suggests that *faithfully* can be translated, 'you make sure' your hospitality is *accomplished*. [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.221]. Then Stott adds, "his work was the outcome of his faith; it was a faithful work." [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, p.221]. "The early Christian community's deep interest in hospitality is inherited from both its Jewish roots and the Greco-Roman culture of its day." [Leonhard, Barbara, "Hospitality in Third John," *The Bible Today* 25:1 (January 1987): 11.] Anyone who has done hospitality knows that hospitality costs cash as well as time! One of the proofs that God has really gotten hold of someone's heart is his/her giving! It becomes generous, gracious and cheerful (read 2 Corinthians 8:2-5; 9:5-12; 11:8-10; Romans 15:27 & Philippians 4:15). Gaius is a giver of hospitality! He doesn't just give when his emotions are moved by some preacher/missionary but he responds to God's commands about giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2 for similar thought). John commends Gaius for his financial ministry to others which included food, housing and money for the traveling evangelists, preachers and teachers. Notice that the Apostle John writes that Gaius also invited perfect *strangers* into his home as well; he didn't need to know them personally. The Bible has much to say about those who showed hospitality: Romans 12:13—the generosity of saints; 15:23-24—Paul's desire to enjoy the hospitality of the Romans; 1 Corinthians 16:15-18—addiction to ministering to saints; 2 Corinthians 1:15-16—how to be blessed; Galatians 6:10—the needy within the church; Titus 3:13—financial support for other believers; 1 Timothy 5:9-10—concerning widows, Et ali. Some translations and Greek text indicate that Gaius had shown hospitality to *brethren* and to *strangers*. However, the New American Standard Version translates the phrase *for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers*, differently than other translations and Greek texts. The NASV implies that Gaius showed hospitality to the *brethren* even those *brethren* who were *strangers* to him. Interestingly, in Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2 & 1 Peter 4:9 a fascinating Greek word is used, φιλοξενία, philoxenia or philoxenos meaning a true love for *strangers* which is descriptive also of Gaius in 3 John. Whenever I teach the subject of "spiritual gifts," my lists of "spiritual gifts," include hospitality as one of the "spiritual gifts" of the Bible. But, it may surprise some to learn the number of times in the New Testament that Christians are commanded to do something regardless of whether we are 'gifted' in that area or not. John's challenge here in 3rd John is just one of those places as well as Paul's teaching in 2 Timothy 4:5 about *doing the work of an evangelist* and Matthew's closing challenge about *going...making disciples...baptizing...teaching*, Matthew 28:19. Is Peter commanding everyone to show hospitality even if you don't own a nice home or excel as a host/hostess? (1 Peter 4:9). Maybe some Christians need to be stretched in the area of hospitality! By way of application, I like what one person has written; "hospitality is other centered!" So it really doesn't matter whether your home/apartment looks like the something out of "Better Homes and Gardens" if

we're willing to *act faithfully* and be dependable in serving others. Do you have a guest room in your house? If so, then without knowing it you have turned your home into a hospital! Our English word hospital comes from a Latin word meaning "guest room;" which means every time we extend hospitality to some guest, that person has been hospitalized! Wow—that's thinking out-of-the-box! Because Grace Community Church is a mission-minded church, I want to include this rather lengthy quote from Dr. Townsend as he applies this passage to support for missionaries. 'From verses 5-8 we may glean three principles. (A) Missionary Supporters: Verses 5 and 8 indicated that missionaries need dependable backers. One *ability* any Christian ought to cultivate is *reliability* ("you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers," vs. 5). Front-line marines who establish beachheads require artillery support from the rear and air support from planes overhead. So, also, traveling missionaries need solid supporters. William Carey compared his missionary work to exploring a mine: "I will go down, if you will hold the ropes." (B) Missionary Stimulus: What should stimulate the missionary? The apostle declared: "It was for the sake of the Name [cf. Acts 5:40-41; James 2:7] that they went out" (vs. 7). In other words, the main motive for missions is not cultural change, agricultural betterment, social reform, nor technological improvement (although a missionary may be embroiled profitably in any of those activities), but the generating engine for Christian missions is "the Name," for one day "at the name of Jesus every knee" will bow (Phil. 2:10). (C) Missionary Support: In Bible times there were no Holiday Inns or Motel 6s. In fact, in the ancient world "inns were notoriously dirty and flee infested. Innkeepers were notoriously rapacious so that Plato compared them to pirates who hold their guests ransom..." Because ancient inns were a combination of tavern, brothel, and gyp joint, it was necessary for Christians to house and help traveling missionaries.' [Townsend, James A., The Epistles of John & Jude, David C. Cook, Pp. 79-80].

Verse 6: *...and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.* In this verse the Apostle John is writing that Gaius' dependable hospitality and *love* went hand in hand and the whole *church* could speak favorably of this character trait in him. This comparison makes me look really bad compared to Gaius but I'm simply trying to illustrate John's principle; the entire Grace Family knows that I love dark chocolate but the entire *church* family where Gaius serves knew that he loves hospitality! The concept behind the phrase, *you will do well to send them on their way*, conveys the idea of providing ample supplies even as they leave. The Apostle John is encouraging Gaius to continue to provide hospitality to godly and biblical traveling evangelists, teachers and preachers. John is adding the dimension that when someone entertains other Christians, make sure that when they leave they have been refreshed and their needs provided. That's being a great host/hostess! After a great meal, dessert, lodging, a game of Mexican Train dominoes, Bible study, prayer, or you name it—send them away *well*—after a godly sort! Illustration: Let me illustrate the phrase *you will do well to send them on their way* by recalling what so many of you did so fabulously during June's Pastor Appreciation Month and reenacting Mayberry (I love "The Andy Griffith Show"). One Sunday in June, Louise Birchfield played a fantastic Aunt Bea.

Whenever someone would be traveling through Mayberry, Aunt Bea was the hostess with the most-tess! She not only fixed a scrumptious meal plus dessert, served breakfast the next morning, and then as everyone was leaving, we see her running out of the house with a picnic basket or bag filled with sandwiches for her guests to each on the road. That's what the Apostle John is describing with those words; *you will do well to send them on their way*. Stott adds, "They are servants of God and represent Him. We must treat them as we would treat Him (Matthew 10:40)".... The verb translated *bring forward on their journey* (propempas) or as the NASV reads, *you will do well to send them on their way*; this was something like a technical term of early Christian missions, implying the assumption of financial responsibility for the journey of departing missionaries. This is probably the case for, although in Acts 20:38 and 21:5 it seems to mean no more than to accompany or escort, in other places, as here, it indicates to receive and entertain someone in preparation for the next stage of his journey (Romans 15:24; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 11; 2 Corinthians 1:16) and possibly to supply him with money or provisions as well when he leaves (as in Titus 3:13 and possibly Acts 15:3." [Stott, John R. W., The Epistles of John, Tyndale Bible Commentaries, Eerdmans, Pp.221-222]. It's possible that Gaius did so much because Diotrephes had influenced others in the church that these traveling evangelists, teachers and preachers were almost rejected by others in the church out of fear or some other reason. The phrase at the end of verse 6, *in a manner worthy of God*, means in a manner becoming those who are servants of God Himself; the emphasis is on *manner* (cf. Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:1). Those words bring to mind Jesus' admonition in Matthew 10:40-41. Jesus and John both don't want us to do for others because we're obligated, or because no one else is stepping up to help or because we'll be looked down on if we don't. Simply stated; do something for others as if we are doing it for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! By the way, two interpretations have been given for that phrase, *in a manner worthy of God*; (1) These traveling guests were to be treated as the very representatives of God and *worthy* of that fact and (2) those who showed hospitality were to do so as God would do. I believe both interpretations are in view.

Verse 7: *For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.* I love our missionaries—all of them. To illustrate, I'll mention just one—Kathy Barger plays the piano so faithfully and along with her husband, Paul, many years ago *went out for the sake of Jesus' Name*, knowing then and still knowing that it is an honor to go out in His *Name*. This is the only New Testament book that doesn't mention the name of Jesus Christ. Often those in ministry, missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and the like have gone *out*, leaving behind many things including the ability to be financially successful in order to obey God's calling in their lives ((read 1 Timothy 5:17-18). But what's the underlying motive? *The sake of the Name*—Jesus! Read what is written about that *Name* in Ephesians 1:21 & 2:9-10. What a privilege for all of us to just speak the *Name*—Jesus! The song writer has said: "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! There's just something about that *Name*. Master! Savior! Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Let all heaven and earth proclaim. Kings and Kingdoms may all pass away; but there's something about that *Name*!" The New Testament often states that many godly evangelists, preachers and

teachers received financial support from other believers and/or they supported themselves (read Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 9—entire chapter & 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10). There is nothing in the New Testament where these received remuneration from unbelievers (read Matthew 10:8; 2 Corinthians 12:14 & 1 Thessalonians 2:9). The term *Gentiles* is used to refer to unbelievers. The principle that John is advocating is that God's people should support God's work. However, we must never press the point that churches, missionaries, pastors, etc. can never receive anything from unbelievers who voluntarily offer gifts. Jesus accepted water from a sinful Samaritan woman (read 2 Corinthians 2:17).

Verse 8: Because such godly workers are not supported by unbelievers, John writes: *Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.* How are we helping? Are we doing **all** we can for the spread of the gospel? Are we doing hospitality? All of cannot go to Moscow, Tunisia, to business people in Austin, Texas, etc. But, we can become partners, *fellow workers* with missionaries, evangelists, pastors and teachers—joint participants in God's work around the world. John's choice of verbs is interesting as the verb, *that we may be*, indicates something that we weren't but we became! We had not been a *fellow worker with the truth* but by *supporting* God's workers we became participants in God's world wide ministry of reaching the lost. The principle is that when believers provide *support* of any kind to one of God's workers, we also share **personally** in their ministry. Don't forget that on our "One Year Commitment" forms, we can sign up for (1) financial support; (2) encouragement or (3) prayer or all three! That's similar to what John has in mind in this passage.

Conclusion: Ask ourselves this question: when we get to heaven, will God announce—you have been a wonderful FW! (*Fellow worker with the truth.*)

Note: It is my prayer that these printed notes will encourage Bible students to do further study on this passage. If you find any typos, errors or have any questions, please contact me. Since these notes are also available on our website, www.gcc-am.org, your assistance in drawing my attention to necessary corrections will be greatly appreciated. I've made every effort to give credit to quotations from other authors. Thank you. Pastor John A. Eastman