

TESTS OF TRUTH

FROM 1 JOHN, 2 JOHN & 3 JOHN

WITNESSING TO THE TRUTH

BIG IDEA: Our witness either helps the truth or hinders it.

DATE: Sunday, August 3, 2025

SCRIPTURE: 3 John 1-12

OPENING QUESTION

What behaviors or habits have you seen in Christians that either strengthened or weakened your view of the faith? How do you think a nonbeliever would answer this question?

THE SETTING

This little letter (the shortest New Testament epistle in the original Greek) gives us a glimpse into an early assembly, its people, and its problems. As you read this brief letter, you find yourself saying, "Times have not changed very much!" We have similar people and problems today! One of the key words in this letter is *witness*. It means not only the words that we say but also the lives that we live. Each Christian is the witness, either a good one or a bad one. We are either helping the truth (3 John 8) or hindering it.

SCRIPTURE READING: 3 JOHN 1-12 (NIV)

¹The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. ²Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. ³It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. ⁷It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. ⁸We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

⁹I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. ¹⁰So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. ¹² Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

DISCUSSION

Today we will consider the three men involved in this letter and note the kinds of Christian witness they were.

Gaius – A Beloved Believer

READ: 3 John 1-8

- What does it mean to be spiritually healthy as Gaius was? How can we be spiritually healthy?
- How did Gaius practically support God's servants?
- Why should Christians support and help God's servants?
- In what practical ways can Christians support God's servants?

Diotrephes – A Proud Believer

READ: 3 John 9-10

- Would you like to serve on a team with Diotrephes? Why or why not?
- How can Satan use a proud or selfish member (or a group of them) to destroy a church?
- Have you ever acted a little like Diotrephes? What kind of attitude do you want to have toward your church?

Demetrius – An Exemplary Believer

READ: 3 John 11-12

- Who has modeled a consistent faith to you? What habits or attitudes did you notice about them? Who are you modeling consistent faith to?
- We are all called to be disciples who make disciples. We are never too old or too young to do this. Who are you intentionally pouring into? Who is pouring into you?

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Go around the room or around your table and take turns telling each other how they have encouraged your faith! How have they been a good witness for the faith?

RESPONSE

What kind of Christian witness are you? Encouraging and beloved? Proud and bossy? Worthy of imitation? Our witness will either help or hinder the truth and the work of the church. Take some time to reflect on what other Christians would say about you. This concludes our study through John's letters. Have you passed these tests of truth? Are you walking in love, light and truth? There is more to being a Christian than a set of beliefs – it's how you walk worthy of your faith in your everyday life.