

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, The Johannine Epistles,

Session 3 – 3 John: Notes to a Trusted Friend, Gaius

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide Questions, 4) FAQs

Abstract:

This document contains **Dr. Robert Yarbrough's** teaching notes for the third session of his lecture series, "Balancing Life in Christ," focusing on **3 John**. He introduces the letter as **notes from John to his trusted friend Gaius**, placing it within the larger structure of the Bible's narrative from preparation to consummation. Yarbrough outlines his simple **two-step interpretive method** for the letter: first, **seeing the historical context**, and second, **stating faithful conclusions for today**. The notes then examine key sections of 3 John, including **the greeting to Gaius**, praising his hospitality to traveling ministers, a section on **dealing with Diotrephes**, a leader in the church who rejected apostolic authority and caused division, and concluding with **counsel and commendation of Demetrius**, a trusted individual. Yarbrough extracts observations from the text about **love, prayer, integrity, the missionary task, and the importance of discerning character by one's actions**, contrasting Diotrephes with Gaius and Demetrius as examples of evil versus good.

Briefing Document: Here is a detailed briefing document reviewing the main themes and most important ideas or facts from the provided source, "Yarbrough_JohannineEp03_English.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Yarbrough on 3 John

Source: Excerpts from "Yarbrough_JohannineEp03_English.pdf" - Dr. Robert Yarbrough, The Johannine Epistles, Session 3 – 3 John: Notes to a Trusted Friend, Gaius.

Date: October 26, 2023

Subject: Review of Dr. Yarbrough's lecture on 3 John, focusing on key themes, ideas, and factual observations.

I. Overview of 3 John within the Biblical Canon

Dr. Robert Yarbrough introduces 3 John as a small but significant book within the 27 books of the New Testament and the larger 66 books of the Bible. To place 3 John in its broader context, he uses the acronym P-M-E-E-C to summarize the entire Bible:

- **Preparation (Old Testament):** Preparing for the Gospel.
- **Manifestation (Gospels):** Showing forth the coming and work of Christ.
- **Expansion (Acts):** The spread of the Gospel after Christ's ascension.
- **Epistles (Letters):** Explaining how the Gospel is lived out in various contexts. 3 John is part of this section.
- **Consummation (Revelation):** Tells about past, present, and future events related to the Gospel.

Yarbrough emphasizes the importance of the epistles, stating, "If you just had the Gospels and Acts, it might be hard to envision. How did this play out in various cities in the Roman world? But with the help of the epistles, we see some of the issues that arose... we see how different apostolic leaders or the associates of apostolic leaders taught the Gospel, how it was lived out, received, opposed, and so forth."

He asserts that every word of God, including the seemingly "enigmatic message" of 3 John, is "flawless" and that God "is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

II. Method of Interpretation

Dr. Yarbrough outlines a two-step approach to interpreting 3 John, beginning with the letter 'F':

1. **See (Observe):** Understand the "then and there" context of the letter, including the author, recipient, time, and occasion. This involves reading the text carefully.
2. **Say (State Conclusions):** Draw conclusions that are "faithful to the then and there for the here and now." This involves applying the observations to contemporary life.

III. Structure and Key Observations of 3 John

The lecture follows a simple outline of 3 John:

- Greeting to Gaius
- Commendation of Gaius
- Dealing with Diotrephes
- Concluding Counsel and Commendation of Demetrius

- Farewell

A. Greeting to Gaius (Verses 1-4)

- **Author's Self-Designation:** John refers to himself simply as "The elder." Yarbrough notes that apostles, like Peter, also used this term. This indicates that John "did not exalt himself," despite potentially having status or being the "beloved disciple."
- **Emphasis on Love and Prayer:** The frequent use of "beloved" and the opening prayer for Gaius's well-being highlight love and prayer as "calling cards of believers." Yarbrough describes this as an "agape force field," demonstrating a deep relational network. He notes that while prayer and love can be challenging for Christians, 3 John exemplifies their importance, stemming from God's love for His people.
- **Holistic Concern:** John prays for Gaius's physical health ("that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health") *as well as* his spiritual health ("as it goes well with your soul"). Yarbrough cautions against building a "gospel of physical health" solely on this verse, emphasizing that John's concern is holistic, recognizing the fragile nature of life in the ancient world.
- **Delight in the Integrity of Others:** John expresses "great joy" upon hearing reports from brothers who "testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth." This points to delight in the faithfulness and integrity of fellow believers, contrasting with potential "pious self-indulgences" of focusing only on one's own spiritual state. Yarbrough sees this as mirroring Christ's focus on serving others.
- **Legacy of Faithful Discipleship:** John's statement, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth," reflects his fulfillment in seeing those he has discipled or influenced living faithfully. Yarbrough connects this to the idea that faithful discipleship, which involves encouraging others in their walk with Christ, is a call for all Christians, not just ministers. He shares a personal anecdote about his grandfather to illustrate the growing sweetness of the Christian faith with age and faithfulness, emphasizing that this "legacy of faithfulness" brings "the deepest gratification that the human soul can experience on this earth."

B. Commendation of Gaius (Verses 5-8)

- **Hospitality and Support for Missionaries:** John commends Gaius for his "efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are." These brothers, who have reported favorably on Gaius to John, are likely "itinerant gospel servants" or missionaries. Gaius has shown them hospitality.

- **"Worthy of God" Support:** John encourages Gaius to "send them on their way in a manner worthy of God." Yarbrough explains that the Greek word *propempe* implies providing necessary provisions for their journey and work, not just seeing them off.
- **Support for the "Name":** The missionaries "have gone out for the sake of the name," referring to the name of Christ. They have accepted "nothing from the Gentiles" (non-believers), highlighting their reliance on support from fellow believers.
- **Shared Missionary Task:** John's commendation leads to the conclusion that the "missionary task is shared by all believers." While not everyone can physically "go," all can participate by praying for, supporting, or even going themselves. Supporting those on mission makes believers "fellow workers for the truth."
- **Discerning Whom to Support:** Yarbrough notes that Gaius's support is commended because the missionaries are genuine ("the real deal"), emphasizing the need to be discerning about whom one supports in Christian work.

C. Dealing with Diotrephes (Verses 9-10)

- **Opposition to Apostolic Authority:** A central issue is the presence of Diotrephes in the church, a figure who "likes to put himself first" and "does not acknowledge our authority," referring to John's apostolic authority. Yarbrough highlights this as an "ancient problem."
- **Motivations for Opposition:** Diotrephes is described as one who "loves being first" or "loves prominence." Yarbrough suggests that this desire for influence or power is the driving force. He speculates on potential reasons for Diotrephes's influence, such as wealth, leadership gifts, or speaking ability, noting that impressive individuals can attract followers even if their actions or beliefs are questionable.
- **Actions of Diotrephes:** Diotrephes is actively disrupting the church:
 - Talking "wicked nonsense" against John and others.
 - Refusing to welcome the "brothers" (loyal to the apostolic message).
 - Stopping others who wish to welcome them.
 - Putting people "out of the church."
- **The Need for Church Discipline:** John's intention to address Diotrephes ("if I come, I will bring up what he's doing") points to the necessity of church discipline. Yarbrough defines this as "some kind of enforcement of the terms of the relationship with God and with each other," often outlined in membership pledges and doctrinal

statements. Leaders have a responsibility to ensure the true gospel is preached and to address "irregular lives."

- **Rivals Hamper the Dominical Mission:** Yarbrough strongly rejects interpretations that view the conflict as a "petty squabble." He argues that individuals like Diotrephes, who oppose apostolic authority and disrupt the fellowship, directly hinder the "dominical mission" - the mission of Jesus (the *Dominus* or Lord) to make disciples and spread His message. He laments modern interpretations that portray John as "brittle" and Diotrephes as "fun-loving," asserting that this misunderstands the gravity of opposing Christ's authority and mission. "That mission can't go on when somebody like Diotrephes arises."

D. Concluding Counsel and Commendation of Demetrius (Verses 11-12)

- **Warning Against Imitating Evil:** John advises, "do not imitate evil but imitate good." Yarbrough suggests this warning is likely aimed at the example of Diotrephes and those who support him. It emphasizes the importance of being discerning about influences.
- **Knowing by Their Fruits:** John reiterates a principle also taught by Jesus: "Whoever does good is from God. Whoever does evil has not seen God." Yarbrough connects this to Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, "by their fruits you shall know them." He stresses that while words and appearance can be deceiving, actions reveal the true nature of a person's relationship with God.
- **The Importance of Testimony:** John commends Demetrius, stating he "has received a good testimony from everyone and from the truth itself." John adds his own testimony, which is known to be "true." Yarbrough explains that "testimony" here refers not just to what one says about themselves (which can be egotistical or self-deceptive) but to the *record of one's Christian life* as affirmed by others and "from the truth itself" (living in accordance with the gospel). He highlights that those who know us best, like family members, are often the most accurate judges of our true character and testimony. Growing in godliness requires attending to how others, especially godly friends, perceive and affirm our lives.

E. Farewell (Verses 13-14)

- **Letters as Deviations of Larger Concerns:** John expresses a desire to speak "face to face" rather than writing more extensively, stating, "I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink." Yarbrough notes that New Testament letters often serve as condensed communications addressing immediate issues within a broader context of ongoing relationship and concerns. He cites the example

of Jude. Limitations of ancient writing technology (scrolls, difficulty of dictation) likely played a role.

- **Gospel Creates Attraction and Connection:** The farewell highlights the relational bonds fostered by the Gospel:
- Using the affectionate term "friends" for fellow believers.
- Expressing desire for "peace" (God's blessing, *shalom*).
- Sending greetings from "the friends" where John is to "the friends" where Gaius is, specifically "each by name."
- **Antidote to Loneliness and Anxiety:** Yarbrough concludes by drawing a parallel between the "interpersonal connections" nourished by Christ's presence in the early church and the modern struggles with "anxiety and loneliness," especially among younger people linked to social media use. He argues that the "presence of Christ nourishes interpersonal connections" and offers "the deepest gratification that the human soul can experience on this earth," serving as an antidote to such modern issues.

IV. Key Themes and Most Important Ideas/Facts:

- **The Value of Even Small Biblical Books:** 3 John, despite its brevity, is part of God's "flawless" word and holds significant lessons for believers.
- **The Importance of Relationships in the Gospel:** Love, prayer, hospitality, and mutual support are essential "calling cards" and form a vital network among believers, rooted in God's love.
- **The Shared Nature of the Missionary Task:** All believers have a role in the Great Commission, whether by going, praying, or supporting those who go. Discerning whom to support is crucial.
- **The Reality of Opposition and Conflict in the Church:** From the beginning, individuals like Diotrephes have arisen, challenging apostolic authority, causing division, and hindering the church's mission.
- **The Necessity of Discerning "Fruits":** True faith is demonstrated not just by words or appearance but by actions. Imitating good examples and avoiding evil ones is vital. Our true "testimony" is seen in how we live and how others, especially those closest to us, perceive our faithfulness.

- **The Importance of Church Discipline:** Addressing false teaching and disruptive behavior is necessary to protect the truth of the gospel and the health of the church.
- **The Gospel as a Source of Connection and Flourishing:** Christ's presence among believers fosters deep interpersonal relationships that provide peace, support, and fulfillment, serving as an antidote to isolation.
- **Faithfulness Grows Sweeter with Age:** A lifelong commitment to walking with the Lord builds a legacy of faithfulness that brings increasing joy and gratitude.

This briefing document summarizes the key points and insights presented by Dr. Robert Yarbrough in his lecture on 3 John, emphasizing its relevance for understanding early church challenges and applying its principles to contemporary Christian life.

Study Guide: Study Guide: Third John - Notes to a Trusted Friend, Gaius (Based on Dr. Robert Yarbrough's Lecture)

Outline of Third John

- Greeting to Gaius
- Commendation of Gaius
- Dealing with Diotrephes
- Concluding Counsel and Commendation of Demetrius
- Farewell

Key Concepts and Observations

- **Placing Third John within the Bible:** Dr. Yarbrough uses the acronym P-M-E-E-C to summarize the Bible:
- **Preparation** (Old Testament)
- **Manifestation** (Gospels)
- **Expansion** (Acts)
- **Explanation** (Epistles, where 3 John is found)
- **Consummation** (Revelation) Third John, though brief, is considered part of the "flawless word of God."

- **Interpreting Third John:** A simple two-step method is suggested:
 1. **See (Observe):** Understand the "then and there" context (author, time, occasion).
 2. **Say (State Conclusions):** Draw faithful conclusions for the "here and now."
- **The Elder and Love:** The author identifies himself as "the elder," emphasizing humility rather than highlighting his status as an apostle or the beloved disciple. The repeated use of "beloved" highlights the importance of love and prayer as "calling cards" of believers. This love has both a horizontal (relational) and vertical (rooted in God's love) dimension, forming an "agape force field."
- **Holistic Concern:** John prays for Gaius's physical health as well as his spiritual well-being, demonstrating a holistic concern, though this should not be the basis for a "gospel of physical health."
- **Delight in Other Believers' Integrity:** A calling card of the gospel is finding joy in the integrity and faithful walk of other Christians, as John does in Gaius. This is a Christ-like characteristic of putting others first.
- **Legacy of Faithfulness:** John refers to believers as his "children," illustrating the joy and significance of discipling and encouraging others in their faith, which builds a legacy of faithfulness over time. This journey becomes "sweeter" with age and deeper commitment.
- **Commendation of Gaius (Missionary Context):** Gaius is commended for showing hospitality and supporting traveling "brothers" who are doing missionary work ("gone out for the sake of the name"). This highlights the shared nature of the missionary task for all believers, whether through going, praying, or supporting. Christians ought to support those on mission for Christ to be "fellow workers for the truth." Care must be taken to support legitimate workers and not impostors.
- **Dealing with Diotrephes:** Diotrephes is identified as a "bad guy" who "likes to put himself first" and does not acknowledge apostolic authority. He refuses to welcome legitimate Christian travelers and expels those who do. This demonstrates that opposition to apostolic authority and truth is an ancient problem in the church, often stemming from a desire for prominence, power, or material gain rather than genuine heart change.
- **Church Discipline:** The situation with Diotrephes underscores the need for church discipline (enforcement of the terms of relationship with God and each other) and submission to established leadership and doctrinal statements. John's planned confrontation with Diotrephes is not a "petty squabble" but a necessary action to

protect the "dominical mission" (Jesus' mission) of the church, which is hampered by rivals to apostolic authority.

- **Concluding Counsel and Demetrius:** The counsel "do not imitate evil but imitate good" is implicitly contrasted with Diotrephes' behavior. The criterion for discerning good from evil is their "fruits" or actions, aligning with Jesus' teaching. Demetrius is commended based on the good testimony he has received from everyone, from "the truth itself" (his life aligning with the gospel), and from John himself. This highlights the importance of a believer's testimony being affirmed by others and their walk in truth, not just their self-description. Trustworthiness is crucial in a sometimes-perilous environment.
- **Farewell and Relational Connections:** John's desire for face-to-face interaction highlights that New Testament letters are part of a larger, ongoing context. The farewell emphasizes the relational aspect of the Christian community, referring to believers as "friends" and emphasizing "peace" (God's blessing or *shalom*). Christ's presence in believers nourishes interpersonal connections, serving as an antidote to modern issues like anxiety and loneliness often associated with electronic communication. These connections are for God's glory and offer deep gratification.

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Yarbrough's summary, what is the role of the Epistles (like 3 John) within the overall scope of the Bible (P-M-E-E-C)?
2. What is the simple two-step method Dr. Yarbrough suggests for interpreting Third John?
3. What does the author's self-designation as "the elder" suggest about his perspective or attitude?
4. What two characteristics does Dr. Yarbrough identify as "calling cards" of believers based on the greeting in Third John?
5. What does John's prayer for Gaius's health and soul indicate about the nature of his concern?
6. Why is Gaius commended in the letter?
7. According to Dr. Yarbrough, how is the missionary task shared by all believers, even if they don't physically "go"?
8. Who is Diotrephes, and what is his primary characteristic that John criticizes?

9. What does the situation with Diotrephes illustrate about the early church and the importance of church discipline?
10. What is the significance of Demetrius receiving a good testimony not only from others but also "from the truth itself"?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Epistles explain the Gospel by showing how it was lived out in various contexts, the issues that arose, and how apostolic leaders taught and applied the Gospel.
2. The two steps are "See" (observe the "then and there" context) and "Say" (state faithful conclusions for the "here and now").
3. It suggests humility, as he could have used designations like "apostle" or "beloved disciple" to highlight his status, but instead numbers himself among others in the church leadership.
4. Love and prayer are identified as the calling cards of believers.
5. It indicates a holistic concern for Gaius's well-being, encompassing both his physical and spiritual health.
6. Gaius is commended for showing hospitality to traveling Christian brothers and for supporting their missionary efforts.
7. Even if believers don't physically go, they can participate by praying for those who go, supporting them financially or with provisions, or potentially going themselves.
8. Diotrephes is a person in the church who "likes to put himself first," meaning he seeks prominence and power, and does not acknowledge John's apostolic authority.
9. It illustrates that problems like opposition to apostolic authority are ancient in the church, and it underscores the need for church discipline to maintain the integrity of the faith and mission.
10. Receiving a good testimony from "the truth itself" implies that Demetrius's life and actions were consistent with the gospel message and the character of Christ, providing objective confirmation of his trustworthiness.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the author identifying himself as "the elder" in Third John and how this relates to Dr. Yarbrough's comments on humility and apostolic authority within the early church.

2. Analyze the concept of "agape force field" as described by Dr. Yarbrough, explaining its horizontal and vertical dimensions and how it is evidenced in the relationship between John and Gaius.
3. Explain how the commendation of Gaius for his support of traveling missionaries illustrates the shared nature of the Christian mission and the importance of discernment in supporting Christian work today.
4. Examine the conflict with Diotrephes in Third John, discussing what it reveals about the challenges faced by the early church and the reasons Dr. Yarbrough emphasizes that this is not a "petty squabble" but an issue impacting the "dominical mission."
5. Discuss the various aspects of "testimony" presented in the lecture regarding Demetrius and how they challenge believers to consider the authenticity of their own faith walk.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Agape:** The Greek word for love, often used in the New Testament to describe divine love or selfless, sacrificial love. Dr. Yarbrough uses "agape force field" to describe the network of love within the Christian community rooted in God's love.
- **Apostolic Authority:** The authority derived from the apostles, those chosen by Jesus to spread his message and establish the early church. In Third John, Diotrephes is criticized for not acknowledging this authority.
- **Calling Cards of Believers:** Characteristics or practices that identify genuine Christians. Dr. Yarbrough identifies love and prayer as calling cards based on John's greeting to Gaius.
- **Christian Canon:** The collection of 66 books (39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament) recognized as the inspired word of God by the Christian church. Third John is part of this canon.
- **Church Discipline:** The process within a church to address sin and doctrinal error among its members, often involving admonition, correction, and in severe cases, exclusion, to maintain the health and purity of the congregation.
- **Consummation (of the Gospel):** The final stage of God's plan as revealed in Revelation, bringing the good news to its ultimate conclusion in the future and eternity.

- **Diotrephes:** A person mentioned in Third John who opposes John, seeks prominence, refuses hospitality to traveling Christians, and expels those who support them. Presented as an example of evil imitation.
- **Dominical Mission:** The mission given by Jesus (Dominus in Latin, Kurios in Greek, meaning Lord) to his followers, primarily summarized as making disciples of all nations.
- **Elder:** A term used for a leader in the early church. John uses this self-designation in Third John. Peter also uses this term.
- **Epistles:** Letters written by apostles or their associates to churches or individuals, found in the New Testament, which explain how the Gospel is to be lived out.
- **Expansion (of the Gospel):** The spread of the Christian message after Jesus' ascension, as chronicled in the book of Acts.
- **Explanation (of the Gospel):** The detailed teaching and application of the Gospel found in the Epistles.
- **Flawless Word of God:** The belief that the Bible is without error and perfect, as stated in the lecture regarding even a small book like Third John.
- **Fruits:** A term used by Jesus (and echoed by John implicitly regarding Demetrius vs. Diotrephes) to describe the actions and character of a person, which reveal the true nature of their heart or relationship with God.
- **Gaius:** The recipient of the letter of Third John, commended by John for his hospitality and support of traveling Christians.
- **Hospitality:** The act of welcoming and providing for guests, especially traveling Christian workers, as commended in Third John regarding Gaius.
- **Integrity (of other believers):** The uprightness and faithfulness of a Christian's life and walk, which brings joy to other believers, as seen in John's rejoicing over Gaius.
- **Itinerant Gospel Servants:** People who traveled from place to place spreading the Christian message and doing missionary work in the early church.
- **Johannine Epistles:** The letters attributed to the Apostle John: 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John.
- **Legacy of Faithfulness:** The lasting impact of a believer's consistent commitment to following Christ and discipling others over the course of their life.

- **Manifestation (of the Gospel):** The showing forth of Christ's coming and saving work, as recorded in the four Gospels.
- **Preparation (for the Gospel):** The role of the Old Testament in anticipating and setting the stage for the coming of Jesus Christ and his work.
- **Propempo:** A Greek word occurring in Third John, translated as "send them on their way" or "send them on their journey," often implying providing necessary provisions for travel and ministry.
- **Shalom:** A Hebrew word meaning peace, wholeness, and well-being, often used as a greeting or blessing, reflecting God's blessing and benefit. John uses the Greek equivalent in his farewell ("Peace be to you").
- **Testimony:** In a Christian context, often refers to a personal account of conversion or Christian experience. More broadly, as discussed in the lecture, it refers to the record of a believer's life and character, ideally affirmed by others and by their consistent walk in truth.
- **Trusted Friend:** A description of Gaius, highlighting the close relational connection between him and John.
- **Walking in the Truth:** Living one's life consistently with the teachings and reality of the Christian faith. Gaius is commended for this.

FAQs: How is 3 John significant within the broader context of the Bible?

- Although a short book, 3 John is part of the New Testament Epistles, which explain how the gospel is lived out in the early Christian communities. Like all of Scripture, 3 John is considered "flawless" and part of God's word, providing guidance and a shield for those who take refuge in Him. Understanding 3 John within the Bible's overall narrative—preparation (Old Testament), manifestation (Gospels), expansion (Acts), explanation (Epistles), and consummation (Revelation)—helps place its specific message in a larger, meaningful context.

What is the core message and structure of 3 John according to the provided source?

- The source suggests a simple two-step approach to interpreting 3 John: first, "seeing" or observing the historical context ("then and there"), and second, "saying" or drawing conclusions faithful to the original context for the present day ("here and now"). The structure of 3 John is outlined as a greeting to Gaius (with

commendation), dealing with Diotrephes, concluding counsel and commendation of Demetrius, and a farewell.

What are the key observations about the greeting in 3 John?

- The greeting reveals several important aspects. The author, referring to himself as "the elder," demonstrates humility rather than exalting himself as an apostle. The repeated use of "beloved" emphasizes the importance of love among believers, rooted in God's love. The author's prayer for Gaius's good health and well-being, alongside his spiritual health, shows a holistic concern. Furthermore, the author expresses great joy in hearing about Gaius's integrity and "walking in the truth," highlighting the value of living a life faithful to Christ. Finally, the author's reference to believers as "my children" underscores the legacy of faithful discipleship and the joy of seeing others grow in their faith.

How does 3 John encourage and describe the missionary task?

- 3 John commends Gaius for supporting itinerant gospel servants who travel for the sake of Christ's name and accept nothing from non-believers. The author encourages Gaius to continue supporting these missionaries "in a manner worthy of God," providing them with the necessary provisions. This highlights the shared responsibility of the missionary task among all believers, whether by going, praying, or supporting those who go.

Who is Diotrephes and what is his significance in 3 John?

- Diotrephes is presented as a negative example, a person in the church who "loves to put himself first" and does not acknowledge the author's apostolic authority. He actively hinders the apostolic mission by refusing to welcome loyal Christian brothers, stopping others from doing so, and even putting them out of the church. Diotrephes represents the ancient and ongoing problem of individuals rising in churches who oppose apostolic teaching and prioritize personal prominence or gain, even if they have appealing qualities like wealth, leadership skills, or speaking ability.

What does the situation with Diotrephes reveal about challenges in the early church and the importance of church discipline?

- The conflict with Diotrephes demonstrates that challenges and opposition to authentic Christian faith existed from the earliest days of the church, even among those seemingly within the community. It highlights the reality that not everyone in the church, even those in positions of influence, may be genuinely converted or

living according to gospel principles. This situation underscores the necessity of church discipline, which involves upholding doctrinal truth, ensuring faithful preaching, and addressing irregular living to maintain the integrity of the church and the effectiveness of its mission.

What concluding counsel is given in 3 John, particularly concerning imitation and testimony?

- 3 John offers the counsel, "Do not imitate evil but imitate good." Diotrephes is implicitly presented as an example of evil to be avoided. The source emphasizes that one can discern good from evil "by their fruits," echoing Jesus' teaching that actions reveal true character. The letter also commends Demetrius, who has a good testimony from everyone and "from the truth itself," meaning his life aligns with the gospel. This highlights the importance of a genuine, demonstrable testimony, which is ultimately validated by the lives we live and the affirmation of other godly people, not just our own claims.

What does the farewell in 3 John suggest about Christian fellowship and connection?

- The farewell expresses the author's desire for face-to-face interaction rather than solely relying on written communication, highlighting the value of personal relationships in the Christian community. The use of the word "friends" and the sending of greetings "each by name" emphasize the affection, shared purpose, and interpersonal connections fostered by the gospel message. This Christian fellowship is presented as an antidote to modern issues like anxiety and loneliness, demonstrating that Christ's presence nourishes these relationships for God's glory and offers deep gratification.