

HEALTHY, WHOLE, AND HOLY



STUDY 3

A Trustworthy Testimony (3 John 1-14)

“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.” 3 John 12 NIV

“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” 1 Peter 2:12 NIV

In 1 Peter 2:12, the Greek word translated “see” indicates a careful watching over a long period of time. Both John and Peter remind their audiences that integrity matters. As representatives of the King of kings, as followers of Jesus — our health, wholeness, and holiness impact much more than just ourselves. Certainly, we benefit from healthy life choices. Yet, as winsome witnesses of the Good News, others are drawn to Jesus because of our healthy living.

Explore & Share

Maybe much more than today, in the time of the early church, someone’s reputation — how others spoke of them — mattered. Of course, in that era, no one was able to find online records, tweets, or recordings of another person. One’s testimony/reputation depended on others’ testimonies/witness about them. In this short epistle we have seen that the reputation of Gaius was well backed by the testimonies of those who had interacted with him. The same is true for Demetrius.

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1. Well known (3 John 12) Though we know little of him, Demetrius was well respected by those who did know him. What great role models these two men, Gaius and Demetrius, can be! Regarding Demetrius, Tom Wright says he is, “one of those in whom ‘the truth of the gospel’ has made its way into the bloodstream of his thinking, his believing, his acting, his whole personality. There is an integrity about him which shines out for all to see. ...The best index of reliability is not the heaping up of oaths, but the power of a life known to have integrity through and through.”

Discuss: *There are, seemingly, two ways to interpret the phrase “well known” — when the “known” is widespread (known far and wide) or when the “well” is widespread (known for being well/whole). Which “well known” would you prefer for yourself and others in your Connect? Why? Share examples in your own experience of the impact another person’s life has had on you because they lived a life of spiritual, mental, emotional, and relational integrity.*

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2. Living to please God (3 John 1-14) Some of you might be uncomfortable with all this focus on personal reputation. After all, many scriptures warn us to not be people pleasers. Here is but one example “Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts” 1 Thessalonians 2:4 NLT.

Discuss: How does concern about our reputation differ from living to please others? How can we remain holy in our motivations to live holy lives before God and people?

3. Opening and closing words (3 John 3,14) John wraps up his short letter with greetings of peace. Tom Wright explains that this peace is, “not the easy peace that comes from ignoring the problems, but the deeper peace that comes from confronting them in the knowledge that truth and love are the two arms with which God in Jesus now enfolds both church and world in one embrace.” This reference to peace links back to some of John's opening words when he commended Gaius for “walking in the truth” which Wright describes as, “behaving with that integrity that both reflects and embodies the truth of the gospel itself.”

Discuss: In what ways does our ability to be people of peace, both with fellow followers and with people in our worlds, require us to be healthy people of integrity? Pray in groups of two for one another, specifically focusing on your inner and outer lives of integrity. You might consider becoming prayer partners for a block of time (40 days, perhaps?) — praying for each other daily and praying together weekly!