



BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Book Of
3 JOHN

Modern Narrative Project

A Contemporary Rendering, Context,

Meaning & Commentary

Based on the King James Version

ROOT-TO-FRUIT

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BIBLE:ESSENCE

Bible Study Project

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This publication is intended for educational, devotional, and study purposes. Readers are encouraged to consult additional biblical translations and scholarly resources when conducting biblical research and study.

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DEDICATED TO GOD AND MY SON
... MY SON, MAY YOUR HEART FIND THE LORD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

GEMMA, for opening the door so I could see.

PASTOR PHIL, for acknowledging and encouraging me to believe big and be fearless - giving clarity to the path I was seeing.

PREFACE

First, thanks for picking up this book. If there is anything good in these pages, give credit to God; anything weak or flawed, that’s on me. I wrote this out of gratitude—a small way to give back, hoping maybe it lights the path for someone else, just like Scripture has done for me:

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

My journey to faith wasn’t in a moment of crisis, in despair, or some dramatic story. No lightning bolts, no instant conversion. Honestly, it was more like water slowly carving its path over time.

Back at University, nearly 40 years ago, my friends were genuinely fired up about their faith and invited me along. They, and their invitation for me to believe there is a God, are the reason I got baptised. It wasn’t about church pressure; I just knew I wanted what they had, even if I didn’t truly understand what it was. But one thing was becoming clear to me: I was experiencing something I came to understand as the work of the Holy Spirit.

After University, the real world arrived. For years, my faith stayed quiet and private. I said the Lord’s Prayer every day. I tried to live with an open hand and hoped God had a plan for me, especially when life made no sense. I tried never to judge others too quickly, because I could never know the whole story or what was in another person's heart. God alone sees all things and judges perfectly.

Still, I rarely set foot in church. My life was busy, and I worked most Sundays. I also hardly knew anyone who talked about their faith openly.

I tried reading the Bible, but wrestling with the King James Version just felt impossible. When I was baptised, there wasn’t the choice of Bibles we have today. Sure, I believed there was something bright and life-giving in its words. I wasn't rejecting the King James Bible. I simply couldn't understand much of its language.

Then, a couple of years ago, everything shifted.

I lost my job in a way that wasn’t fair. My father passed away—not long after celebrating sixty years with my mother. My son was also close to a breakdown—he had been working too hard. Soon after that, I moved into my mother’s home so that I could care for her.

I believe Scripture calls us to care for our own (1 Timothy 5:8), and there are times when that responsibility has to come before my ability to attend church. Leaving my mother to attend church is not always safe, and that has made regular attendance difficult.

This has never been a rejection of the Church or of Christian fellowship. Quite the opposite. My heart is entirely with God, and I genuinely believe that caring for my mother is where God wants me to be. She is slowly losing her hearing and vision, with Alzheimer’s taking away more of who she is each day.

It is a hard season, and it continues to be. But I don't resent where I am. With all my heart, I believe this is where I am meant to be, and where I want to be.

The quick succession, timing and intensity of these events in my life began to feel like part of God’s plan for me.

It was then that I found solace in the Bible, just as life felt cracked wide open. And yet, in that brokenness, I noticed what I’d missed before—God actually draws close to people whose hearts are shattered (Psalm 34:18). When I ran out of my own strength, I learned how much I could lean on His:

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Bible became more than something I was trying to understand. It became something I needed, even a passion. I honestly cannot imagine where I would be now without it.

Caring for my mother meant I couldn’t run from thing to thing anymore, and I like to be busy. It also meant that I didn’t have as much time or access to friends, especially as I now lived in a new area. Life slowed down, and income dropped to just enough to cover bare necessities.

But in that quiet, a new door opened.

I started volunteering as a driver—just helping elderly and vulnerable people who simply needed a lift—and, in many cases, a lift in more ways than one. I also started sharing my faith. It’s a small thing, but it felt right—my passengers lifted me as much as I lifted them, and I felt comfortable sharing my faith.

James reminds us that caring for those in need is an important expression of faith (James 1:27).

That volunteering drew me back to church, and—probably for the first time ever—I found myself having real conversations with God. Not just polite, thank-you prayers that I had always done, but honest ones where I was asking for help. I no longer felt guilty about asking God for help, as though doing so somehow meant I didn't trust the path God had given me.

I was forming a relationship with God.

And something shifted. I started to realise that God doesn't just help; He guides us, and I was beginning to learn to listen (Proverbs 3:5–6). I also started seeing the Bible not simply as a set of instructions, but as a guide for how to live.

I also began to see something about Christian fellowship that I hadn't really considered before.

Human beings naturally form communities. We make friends, find people we are comfortable with, and over time those friendships become established. There is nothing wrong with that. But Scripture calls us to something beyond simply gathering with the people we already know.

My own circumstances have sometimes left me on the edge of those established friendships. Even when I am able to attend church or volunteer, I often have responsibilities waiting for me at home. Sometimes I have to leave as soon as I can. At other times, I stay longer than I should because there is work that needs doing before I can return home.

I don't want that to be mistaken for being unfriendly or uninterested. Quite the opposite. I want fellowship. I want friendship. I want to feel that I belong.

This experience has taught me to be cautious about judging what I see in another person. I may see someone who does not stay, does not talk much, or seems distant, but I cannot know the circumstances behind what I see. God sees the whole story; I see only a small part of it.

That does not mean we should never exercise discernment. There are times when we need to recognise what is right and wrong, protect ourselves or others, and act when something is clearly harmful. But I believe we should be very slow to turn an observation into an assumption, an assumption into a judgement, and a judgement into exclusion. This has become clearer, while studying the Bible.

There may be someone standing on the edge of a church who desperately wants to belong. There may be someone carrying a burden that nobody else knows about. There may be someone searching for God who is quietly watching how Christians treat one another.

And that matters.

There are already enough barriers between people and God without Christians unintentionally creating more.

Jesus gives us a powerful picture of this in the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine sheep, but when one goes astray, he goes looking for it. The ninety-nine are not unimportant. But neither is the one.

That image has stayed with me.

If someone is struggling to understand Scripture, perhaps we should not simply assume that they will eventually find their way. If someone is standing on the edge of a Christian community, perhaps we should not simply accept that they are outside it. If someone appears distant, perhaps we should remember that we do not know their whole story.

Sometimes all that is needed is for someone to notice them, make room for them, and make sure they are not quietly left on the outside.

I don't say any of this as a criticism of the Church, and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers. I say it because Scripture has made me increasingly aware that following Christ changes not only our relationship with God, but also the way we see and treat other people.

Perhaps that is one of the things God has been teaching me through this season:

I cannot know another person's whole story, but I can choose not to become another barrier in their way.

So, I decided to really read the Bible, cover to cover.

My memory has always been atrocious, so I started typing out every verse, hoping the hands-on effort would help me absorb the words more effectively. Next to each King James verse, I wrote out what I thought it meant in plain English and started researching to gain more clarity.

Partly, I did it because I'd missed years of church teaching, and because I had put down the Bible in the past because of the frustration of not understanding more clearly the words that I read. But mostly, I did it for my son—he's autistic, he's exhausted, and as his father, I wanted to understand Scripture well enough to explain it to him. So, I decided to tackle my frustration with the Bible head-on.

Breaking it down for him became my main reason for all this—a way to do what Deuteronomy 6:6–7 calls us to:

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...”

After I finished the first chunk, I showed it to my pastor because I wanted to be sure I hadn't missed the mark. He encouraged me greatly and told me to keep going.

So, I did.

Book by book, it grew, and I kept one thing front and centre:

“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

“Let me be clear about what this is, and what it's not.”

This is not a rewrite of the Bible, or any sort of replacement for it. Scripture is the foundation:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

I haven't altered the Scripture itself. Every King James verse is there in full, so you can clearly see what is Scripture and what is my attempt to explain it. What I have written alongside it is simply plain-English meaning and explanation—for people who are new to the Bible, even the young, to help them move towards understanding what is being said.

“Call it a companion, not a substitute. I call it Bible:Essence Project as it is simply that, the essence of the Bible.”

That line matters to me. I’ve tried to make the language simpler, not shrink the meaning. Where a verse is difficult to put into plain English, or where faithful Christians have understood it in more than one way, I try to say so rather than pretend there is only one possible interpretation.

This isn’t a new idea. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Levites read God's law and then explained it so everyone could understand. When Philip came across the Ethiopian man in Acts 8, that man admitted he couldn't understand Scripture without help. And Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

“Unless you speak words that are easy to understand, how will anyone know what you’re saying?” (1 Corinthians 14:9).

Helping people understand Scripture has always been part of the life of God's people. I'm simply trying, in a very small way, to do the same.

There are many Bible studies and guides written by people who have a passion for God and a desire to share what they have learned. I make no claim to be different in that respect. I am simply another person who has found something in Scripture that I want others to have the opportunity to discover.

I didn’t write this as a scholar, and I don’t expect you to read it as though you’re taking a course. I’m simply an ordinary person whose faith deepened later in life, who still gets stuck on difficult passages, and who wanted to find a way into Scripture—for myself, for my son, and perhaps for you too.

Perhaps coming to a deeper understanding later in life has given me a perspective that can help someone else who is only just beginning that journey.

I’m not claiming to have all the answers, and I certainly don’t want you to take my explanations as a substitute for Scripture. Please check what I’ve written against the Scripture alongside it, and where something is difficult or open to more than one interpretation, I will try to say so.

My hope is not that you take my word for anything, but that my efforts might help you engage with God's Word for yourself.

If you already know the Bible well, I hope you'll forgive the simplicity of some of the explanations. They aren't written because I think Scripture is simple, but because I remember what it felt like when it wasn't.

And if you find that I've misunderstood something, I hope you'll test my words against Scripture, as I have tried to do myself.

I’m not looking for money or recognition. Most of these last few years, I’ve been caring for my mother and using whatever spare time I could find to chip away at this project. In a strange way, the two have gone hand in hand.

My prayer is that these efforts, offered to God, will do the quiet work in your heart that His Word began in mine.

I’m trusting, as Isaiah says, that God's word never returns empty—it always does what He intends (Isaiah 55:11).

Honestly, my hope is simple:

“That these pages help you move from feeling stuck with the text to beginning to understand it—and that, somewhere along that journey, you encounter God, as I did.

I hope you come to feel the love of the Bible as I do, and feel blessed by the wisdom of God’s Word as it shines through its pages.

I am continually in awe of the Bible. Although it was written more than 2,000 years ago, the wisdom it contains is just as relevant today as it has ever been—and, perhaps more than ever, that wisdom is needed now in our world.”

And if that happens for even one person, then all the time and effort that went into these pages will have been worth it.

Don’t worry if you struggle like me to remember Bible verses. Be assured that as you read, the verses will enter your heart, soul — and even your bones!

May God bless you, and may His Word do in your heart what it has done in mine. **Amen.**

Methodology Declaration:

The research for this Bible Study was conducted using a variety of sources, including Bible study plans available through YouVersion, other Bible study books, websites, and AI tools.

AI was used as a research and reference tool, rather than as a means of generating the Bible Study itself. Where AI was used, I used a platform that allowed me to submit the same prompts to multiple AI models and compare their responses. I then analysed and cross-referenced the information provided, with the aim of identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or potential AI “hallucinations.”

The research from these various sources, including the AI-assisted research, helped me to develop my understanding of the subjects discussed and influenced some of my thinking. However, the content and wording presented in this Bible Study were written by me, based on my own understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the research.

If you’ve enjoyed what this Bible study has revealed to you, why not visit my website, where you’ll find many more resources that reveal the wonder and awe of the Bible? www.root-to-fruit.faith

Book Summary: 3 John

The Third Letter of John is a brief, personal message written by "the elder" (likely the Apostle John) to a respected Christian leader named Gaius. Its main purpose is to commend Gaius for his exemplary faithfulness and his generous hospitality towards travelling Christian missionaries, encouraging him to continue supporting those who spread God's truth. The letter also sharply contrasts Gaius's good conduct with the disruptive behaviour of a man named Diotrephes, who is criticised for his proud ambition, his refusal to acknowledge the elder's authority, his malicious gossip, and his unwelcoming attitude towards fellow believers and missionaries. In addition, the elder praises another individual, Demetrius, for his excellent reputation. The overall theme emphasises the importance of practical love and support for Christian workers, warning against pride and divisiveness within the church community.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter Summary: 3 John 1

This single chapter begins with a heartfelt greeting from "the elder" to his dear friend Gaius, expressing a deep wish for his physical well-being to match his strong spiritual life. The elder shares his immense joy in hearing how faithfully Gaius lives according to God's truth and consistently shows kindness and hospitality to fellow believers, especially travelling missionaries who share the Gospel without seeking help from non-believers. The letter then introduces a significant problem: a man named Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge, rejects the elder's instructions, spreads harmful gossip, refuses to welcome missionaries, and even casts out those who do. The elder strongly urges Gaius not to imitate such evil but to continue doing good, reminding him that good actions reflect a connection with God. The chapter concludes with a commendation for Demetrius, whose excellent character and truthfulness are widely known and affirmed by the elder.

1:1 **(KJV)** *The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*
(B:E Project) This letter is from "the elder" — an older, respected leader — to his good friend Gaius, someone he genuinely and sincerely loves because of the shared truth they both live by.

Context: This opens the whole letter: the elder (traditionally the apostle John, writing in old age) addresses a private note to a trusted friend, Gaius, rather than to a wider church.

Meaning: Real friendship here isn't casual — it's built on something both people actually stand for, not just shared history or convenience. That's worth noticing: the strongest relationships in your life are usually the ones where you and the other person are pulling in the same direction, aiming at the same kind of honesty and goodness.

Lesson: I love it when love and truth aren't two separate things — when you care about someone because of who they genuinely are, not despite it. Look for friends like that, and be one.

See Also: 2 John 1:1 opens with almost identical wording ("the elder unto the elect lady... whom I love in the truth"), showing this is the same author writing a companion letter around the same time.

1:2 **(KJV)** *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

(B:E Project) The elder tells Gaius that, more than anything else, he hopes Gaius is doing well and staying healthy — matching how well things are going in his inner life, his character and convictions.

Context: This is the second line of the personal greeting, right after the opening address, before the elder explains why he's so pleased with Gaius.

Meaning: This verse gets quoted a lot as a promise that faith guarantees wealth and health, but that's stretching it — it's simply a warm, natural greeting, like wishing a friend well, phrased around the one thing the elder actually knew for certain: that Gaius's character was thriving. It's worth reading it for what it is — genuine affection, not a formula — because good character and outward circumstances don't always move together, and treating this as a guarantee sets people up for disappointment or false guilt.

Lesson: I care about the whole of you — your body, your circumstances, your inner life — but I never promised that loving me buys you an easy road. What I do promise is that a healthy soul, however life goes, is the one thing worth wishing for above everything else.

See Also: 3 John 1:4 echoes the same priority — the elder's greatest joy is spiritual health, not material success; compare also 1 Timothy 6:6-8 on contentment regardless of circumstance.

1:3 *(KJV) For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.*

(B:E Project) The elder was overjoyed when some travelling believers arrived and told him first-hand how Gaius genuinely lives by the truth — his sincerity, not just what he claims to believe.

Context: This explains the source of the elder's confidence in verse 2: eyewitness reports from people who had actually met Gaius and seen his life up close.

Meaning: There's something powerful in the idea that character is proven by what other people observe, not by what you say about yourself. Gaius's reputation wasn't built on his own claims — it came from travellers who'd stayed with him and watched how he actually behaved, which is a much harder thing to fake.

Lesson: The people who know you best, who've eaten at your table and seen your ordinary days, are the ones whose testimony about your character actually means something. Live in a way that holds up under that kind of close, honest witness.

See Also: 3 John 1:12 uses the same pattern of testimony for Demetrius; compare James 2:18, where genuine faith is shown by visible actions, not just words.

1:4 *(KJV) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

(B:E Project) The elder says nothing brings him greater happiness than hearing that the people he cares for — like a father with his own children — are living according to truth.

Context: This closes the opening section, generalising the personal joy over Gaius into the elder's overall life-purpose as a spiritual mentor.

Meaning: "My children" here reflects the deep, almost parental bond a mentor or teacher can feel toward people they've guided — their success isn't measured in money or status, but in whether those people turned out to be genuinely good, honest people. It's a reminder that the deepest satisfaction often comes not from your own achievements, but from watching someone you invested in thrive.

Lesson: There's no joy like watching someone you've poured love and guidance into choose honesty and goodness for themselves. If you mentor, parent, or simply care for anyone, let their integrity — not their success by the world's measures — be what makes you proudest.

See Also: 2 John 1:4 says almost the same thing about "thy children" walking in truth; compare 1 Corinthians 4:15, Paul describing spiritual children in the faith.

1:5 *(KJV) Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;*

(B:E Project) The elder tells Gaius he's doing a genuinely good and reliable thing in how he treats fellow believers — and even people he's never met before, complete strangers.

Context: This is where the letter's main topic begins: after the warm greeting, the elder starts specifically praising Gaius's hospitality.

Meaning: The standout detail here is "strangers" — Gaius wasn't just kind to people he already knew and trusted, he extended real generosity to people arriving unannounced, with no track record. That's a much harder, more admirable kind of kindness than looking after your existing circle.

Lesson: Anyone can be generous to people who already love them back. I'm asking for something braver: open your door, your time, and your resources to people who are still strangers to you — that's where real character shows.

See Also: Hebrews 13:2 urges believers not to neglect hospitality to strangers, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"; compare Matthew 25:35, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

1:6 *(KJV) Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:*

(B:E Project) These travelling believers told the whole church about Gaius's generosity, and the elder tells him he'll do well to help them continue their journey in a way that honours God — properly equipped and provisioned.

Context: This continues the commendation of verse 5, adding that Gaius's kindness became publicly known and encouraging him to keep supporting travellers practically.

Meaning: "Bring forward on their journey" meant something concrete in the ancient world — supplying food, money, and safe onward travel for people who depended on the hospitality of others to keep working. It shows that real support isn't just a warm welcome for a night, it's practical follow-through that helps someone keep going.

Lesson: Kindness that stops at a kind word isn't finished yet. When you can, back your goodwill with practical help that actually lets someone keep moving forward — that's the difference between a nice gesture and a real gift.

See Also: Titus 3:13 gives a similar instruction to help travelling teachers on their way; compare Romans 15:24, Paul hoping to be helped onward on his journey by the Roman believers.

1:7 *(KJV) Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.*

(B:E Project) These travellers had gone out specifically to spread the message about Jesus, and they deliberately accepted no money or support from non-believers, relying instead on fellow believers.

Context: This explains why Gaius's hospitality mattered so much — it directly funded the mission, since these teachers refused outside support on principle.

Meaning: Refusing money from outsiders protected the integrity of their message — nobody could accuse them of preaching for profit or being beholden to people outside their own community. That principle meant their entire livelihood depended on people like Gaius stepping up.

Lesson: When people commit to something out of pure conviction and won't compromise it for money, that's exactly when they need the people who share their values to show up for them. Support the people doing good work for the right reasons — don't leave integrity unfunded.

See Also: 1 Corinthians 9:12-15, Paul describing forgoing his own right to financial support for the sake of the gospel's credibility; compare 3 Kings' pattern in Matthew 10:8-10, Jesus sending disciples out to depend on hospitality rather than payment.

1:8 *(KJV) We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.*

(B:E Project) Because of this, the elder says believers like Gaius have a duty to welcome and support such people — doing so makes them active partners working alongside the truth itself.

Context: This draws the direct conclusion from verse 7: since the travellers took nothing from outsiders, hosting them is how ordinary believers actively join the mission.

Meaning: You don't have to be the one doing the travelling, teaching, or public work to be genuinely part of something meaningful — supporting the people who do that work makes you a real partner in it, not just a bystander. It's a good reminder that behind-the-scenes generosity is just as valuable as visible action.

Lesson: You don't need a platform or a spotlight to matter. Quietly making someone else's good work possible — feeding them, housing them, backing them — makes you every bit as much a part of that good as they are.

See Also: Philippians 4:15-18, Paul describing the Philippians' financial partnership in his ministry as a genuine "fellowship"; compare Galatians 6:6, sharing good things with those who teach.

1:9 *(KJV) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

(B:E Project) The elder mentions he wrote to the church already, but a man named Diotrephes, who loves being the one in charge and having top status, won't accept the elder's authority or even acknowledge him.

Context: This is the pivot point of the letter: after praising Gaius, the elder now introduces the problem figure, Diotrephes, and his refusal to cooperate.

Meaning: This is a sharply drawn character sketch: someone whose defining trait is the craving for status and control, to the point of rejecting even a respected, trusted authority simply because it threatens his own position. It's a very recognisable pattern — people who resist good counsel not because it's wrong, but because accepting it would mean not being the one in charge.

Lesson: Watch for this in yourself as much as in others: when you find yourself resisting good advice purely because you don't want to feel less important, that's pride talking, not wisdom. Real strength is being able to accept correction without your sense of worth collapsing.

See Also: Matthew 20:25-27, Jesus contrasting worldly rulers who "lord it over" others with true greatness found in serving; compare 3 John 1:11, the direct exhortation not to imitate this kind of behaviour.

1:10 *(KJV) Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he*

himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

(B:E Project) The elder warns that if he visits, he'll address Diotrephes's behaviour publicly — spreading malicious gossip about the elder, refusing to welcome travelling believers himself, stopping others who want to, and even throwing people out of the church for helping them.

Context: This is the low point of the letter, cataloguing exactly how destructive Diotrephes's need for control has become — a direct contrast to everything just praised in Gaius.

Meaning: This is a textbook description of toxic leadership: gossip to undermine rivals, refusing generosity himself, blocking others from being generous, and punishing anyone who defies him. It's strikingly modern — anyone who has dealt with a controlling boss, community leader, or family figure will recognise this exact pattern of behaviour.

Lesson: When someone in a position of trust starts controlling who's allowed to be kind and punishing people for showing compassion, that's not leadership, it's fear dressed up as authority. Never let anyone talk you out of welcoming, helping, or including someone simply because it threatens their control.

See Also: 3 John 1:9 introduces Diotrephes's character; compare 2 Corinthians 12:20, Paul listing gossip, strife and swellings of pride as dangers within a community; and Luke 22:25-26 on rejecting domineering leadership.

1:11 *(KJV)* Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

(B:E Project) The elder urges Gaius, as someone he loves, not to imitate the bad behaviour he's just described but to keep doing what's good — because doing good reflects a real connection with God, while doing evil shows someone who hasn't truly known him.

Context: This is the letter's central, quotable exhortation, directly following the description of Diotrephes and drawing the clear moral line for Gaius to stay on the right side of.

Meaning: This is one of the simplest, sharpest tests in the whole letter: don't judge someone's spiritual claims by what they say, judge by whether their actions are actually good or actually harmful. It's a practical filter for evaluating anyone's character, including your own, cutting straight through excuses and titles.

Lesson: Don't let a bad example, even from someone with power or status, become your excuse to lower your own standard. Keep choosing what's good — that choice, repeated daily, is what actually connects you to me, far more than any words ever could.

See Also: 1 John 3:6-10, the same author's earlier letter making an almost identical point about doing righteousness as evidence of knowing God; compare Romans 12:9, "abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

1:12 *(KJV)* Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

(B:E Project) Demetrius, by contrast, has an excellent reputation with everyone who knows him, and even truth itself backs him up; the elder adds his own endorsement too, and Gaius already knows it can be trusted.

Context: After the warning about Diotrephes, the elder introduces a third figure, Demetrius, likely the letter-carrier, offering him as a positive example and probably a recommendation for Gaius to welcome him.

Meaning: This is a formal character reference, stacking up multiple independent sources — public opinion, the evident truth of his life, and the elder's own testimony — to vouch for someone. It shows a wise way to build trust: not one person's word alone, but a consistent pattern confirmed from several angles.

Lesson: Trust is best built the way Demetrius earned his: consistently, visibly, across many witnesses, over time — not through a single grand claim. Live in a way that would hold up if several honest people were asked to describe you.

See Also: 3 John 1:3 shows the same pattern of trustworthy testimony applied to Gaius; compare 1 Timothy 3:7, the requirement that a leader have "a good report of them which are without."

1:13 *(KJV)* I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: **(B:E Project)** The elder says he had much more he wanted to say, but he doesn't want to write it all down with pen and ink.

Context: This begins the letter's brief closing, signalling that the elder is choosing to end the written part of his message despite having more to share.

Meaning: There's an honest limitation being named here: written words, however useful, can't carry everything — tone, nuance, and relationship come through better face to face. It's a small but relatable admission that some things simply communicate better in person than on a page or a screen.

Lesson: Don't let every important conversation happen through text or writing — some things need your voice, your presence, your face. Make the effort to actually be with the people who matter, especially when there's more at stake than a quick message can hold.

See Also: 2 John 1:12 uses almost identical wording, the same author preferring to speak "face to face" rather than write everything with "paper and ink."

1:14 *(KJV) But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.*

(B:E Project) The elder says he hopes to see Gaius very soon so they can talk in person; he wishes him peace, sends greetings from friends there, and asks Gaius to personally greet their friends by name.

Context: This is the final verse of the letter and of the whole book, closing with a hope for a future visit and warm, personal farewell greetings.

Meaning: The letter ends exactly as it began — personal, warm, and relational — closing not with doctrine but with the simple human details of friendship: a hoped-for reunion, a wish for peace, and greetings passed on by name rather than as a vague group. It's a fitting close to the Bible's shortest book, which throughout has been less about abstract teaching and more about how people actually treat each other.

Lesson: Notice how this whole letter ends on names, not abstractions — real people, greeted individually, valued as themselves. That's exactly how I want you to love: not humanity in general, but the specific person in front of you, by name.

See Also: 2 John 1:13 closes that companion letter in a similarly brief, personal way; compare Romans 16, where Paul closes a letter by greeting numerous individuals by name, showing the same value placed on personal relationship.

