

A Good Testimony

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INTRODUCTION

- We are looking once again at John's third epistle
- Please take God's Word and turn to 3 John
- Today we are looking at the third man mentioned in this letter
- His name is Demetrius
- He is mentioned in verse 12
- We are also considering the final verses in verses 13-15
- John says...

3 John 12–15 NASB95

¹² Demetrius has received a *good* testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³ I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write *them* to you with pen and ink;

¹⁴ but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

¹⁵ Peace *be* to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

- How important is a good testimony?
- I'm not talking about the one you have about your coming to Christ
- I'm talking about what others say about you?
- John tells us that Demetrius "has received a good testimony"
- This is the opposite of Diotrephes
- What others said about him was not good
- He loved to be first
- He didn't accept what John said when he sent a letter to the church
- He unjustly accused John and his colleagues with wicked words

- And he did not receive the brethren but put those who did out of the church
- John said what he was doing was pure “evil” (v.11)
- John also didn’t want anyone imitating his evil behavior
- Demetrius, on the other hand, was “good” and demonstrated he was “of God” (v.11)
- The Proverbs mentions how important a good name is
- In fact, it says it is “more desired than great wealth” ([Prov.22:1](#))
- Did you hear that?
- A good name is better than all the money in the world!
- Now before I say more, I need to tell you that I am not literally talking about your name or my name
- I am talking about what your name implies
- When people hear your name mentioned, what do they immediately think about you?
- A good name is talking about your reputation and your character
- It identifies who you are from a moral and ethical standpoint
- Essentially it is what you are all about
- Solomon further added in [Ecclesiastes 7:1](#) that “a good name is better than a good ointment, and the day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth”

• In the words of Rabbi Simon who said...

Illustrations for Biblical Preaching Reputation

Rabbi Simon said, “There are three crowns: the crown of [the study of] the Law, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty, but the crown of a good name surpasses them all” (Mishnah Avoth 4.13).

- Just like [Proverbs 22:1](#), it is greater than all the wealth in the world
- So your name has reference to your character and reputation
- Someone said, “Good character = good name; bad character = bad name” (<https://www.preaching.com/common-lectionary/the-value-of-a-good-name>)
- All of us remember Jacob
- The Bible tells us his name meant “supplanter” or “deceiver”
- His name fit his character well because in the beginning he was a trickster ([Gen.27](#))
- He tricked Esau out of his birth right and deceived his father out of Esau’s blessing

- But God later changed him and renamed him Israel because he had “striven with God and with men, and [had] prevailed” ([Gen.32:22-32](#))
- Another name we all know is “Judas”
- What does his name mean?
- No, not traitor but “praised, let Him (God) be praised”
- It comes from the Hebrew word yada which means “to praise”
- But there was no praise from his heart or lips
- It was rather deceit, deception, lies, and hate, for he was a traitor to the Lord Jesus betraying Him with just “thirty pieces of silver.”
- The thirty pieces of silver is mentioned in [Matthew 26:15](#), Judas asked, “What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?” And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.”
- Thomas Shepherd says “The parallel passage in Zechariah (11:12, 13) appears to point, however, to *shekels* [which] was equivalent to four drachma, or about sixty cents” (Westminster Bible Dictionary)
- Lenski agrees and says, the “30 shekels, or 60 drachmas or denarii, [would be] about \$10.”

· John MacArthur says...

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 11

The Jews of Jesus’ day who offered that amount were saying He was worth no more than a common slave.

· Albert Barnes says this sum was fixed...

Matthew & Mark Chapter 26

to show their contempt of Jesus, and that they regarded him as of little value.

- You can see from these two examples, that names are important because they are attached to reputation and character
- On the other hand, the Greek word dokeo, which is translated “an opinion” refers to “someone or something” [and] was used as a term of great esteem or regard (Chandler)
- This was used to speak of Gamaliel in [Acts 5:34](#), “But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.”
- It was also used of the Jerusalem apostles in [Galatians 2:2](#), “It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.”
- It was also used to speak of Epaphroditus in [Philippians 2:29](#), “Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard.”

- We get the idea of a good reputation also from verse 11 where John says, “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.”
- What others think can be important
- It can affect your livelihood
- It can affect where you live
- It can also affect your ability to lead the church
- [1 Timothy 3:7](#) says elders “must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”
- It can also affect our decision when including others in a ministry other than pastoral
- Before Timothy became the pastor at Ephesus, [Acts 16:2](#), said Timothy was “well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.”
- As we begin our look at [3 John 12](#), we hear John mention 3 testimonies in this verse
- All three have to do with a good name or reputation
- John said they came from others, from the truth, and from John and his colleagues about Demetrius

· Let’s notice the first testimony about Demetrius

· John says...

LESSON

I. He Has Received a Good Testimony From Others (v.12a)

“Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone”

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 1

Like Gaius, Demetrius’ reputation was well known in the region.

The word “testimony” (martureo, perf.pass.ind.) generally means “to testify” (Mounce) or “to bear witness” (BDAG), It also means “to speak well of” (Louw-Nida). It carries that meaning here with the thought of being “approvingly testified of” (BWS)

When people spoke Demetrius’ name, they spoke well of him

But what made Demetrius receive such a good testimony from others?

He was a godly man and “an example of one [who was] loyal to the gospel and [one] who does good” (LCC NT) Because of this, he “can be followed with confidence” (WBC Vol.51)

1, 2, 3 John 4. Consistency of Demetrius's Testimony (vv. 11–12)

The verb “well spoken” (memarturētai) is in the perfect tense and “implies that the testimony to Demetrius had been given over a period of time, and it was still effective.”

As a preacher, he fulfilled what [1 Timothy 3:7](#) said: “And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

· Before we look further at Demetrius, let's ask a second question:

What makes a good reputation? How does one get a good reputation?

· First...

- It is based on integrity
 - This is being blameless and upright in heart

The basic meaning of “integrity” in the OT is “soundness of character and adherence to moral principle,” i.e., uprightness and honesty (ISBC), “sincerity, purity of heart and purity of motive” (NNIBD), “upright in character” (PDE)

When you hear the phrase “to walk in integrity,” it is indicating an habitual manner of life” (ISBC) that is upright, honest, pure and sincere

› Listen to what...

- God said to Satan about Job in [Job 2:3](#), “...“Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.””
- Earlier in [Job 1:1](#), it described Job as a man that was “blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

· Being blameless and upright in heart also leads to...

- This is being trusted and commended by others
 - [2 Cor.8:18-24](#), “18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; 19 and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, 20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.”

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 8

This man is unnamed because he was so well known, prominent and unimpeachable. He was a distinguished preacher, and he was able to add credibility to the enterprise of taking the collection to Jerusalem.

- [Nehemiah 13:13](#), “In charge of the storehouses I appointed Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and in addition to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered reliable, and it was their task to distribute to their kinsmen.”
- [Daniel 6:4](#), “Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.”

· A good reputation is based on integrity and...

- It reveals genuine heart-felt ministry ([Acts 6](#))
 - Verse 3 says, “of good reputation” (martureo) refers to “men of integrity” (Barnes)

› Charles Colson said...

| The three most important ingredients in Christian work are integrity, integrity, integrity.

- To have a good reputation was essential for these seven, since they would be entrusted with large sums of money to purchase the food to be distributed (MacArthur)
- [Acts 16:2](#), says Timothy "well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.”
- [Acts 22:12](#), “A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there”

· The reason Demetrius was well spoken of as a person of integrity is because he also...

II. He Has Received a Good Testimony from the Truth Itself (v.12b)

“and from the truth itself”

· F. B. Hole said...

Believer’s Bible Commentary IV. Devout Demetrius (v. 12)

Note, it is not that he bore witness to the truth, but that the truth bore witness to him. Demetrius was not the standard by which truth was tested. The truth was the standard by which he was tested; and having been so tested, he stood approved.

· This is why Charles Spurgeon said...

| To walk in the truth, imports a life of integrity, holiness, faithfulness, and simplicity—the natural product of those principles of truth which the gospel teaches, and which the Spirit of

| God enables us to receive.

- He practiced it by being obedient to it
 - [John 3:21](#), “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.””
 - › **Unbelievers do not practice the truth...**
 - [1 John 1:6](#), “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.””

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 1

Demetrius was an excellent role model preeminently because he practiced the truth of God’s Word in his life.

• He also...

- He proclaimed it calling for obedience to it
 - As a preacher He preached the truth of the Gospel
 - Like David in [Psalm 40:10](#), He did not hide “...Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation.””

› Charles Spurgeon again says...

| The backbone of the preaching of Christ is a conviction of the Truth of Christ.

| Paul, The Ready, *Volume 38, Sermon #2285* - [Romans 1:15](#)

- Demetrius believed this because He believed the Word of God

› Athanasius of Alexandria said...

| The holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient of themselves for the preaching of the Truth.

- [Proverbs 12:17](#), “He who speaks truth tells what is right, But a false witness, deceit.””

• Last and third...

III. He Has Received a Good Testimony from John (v.12c)

“and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.”

- John and his colleagues “add our testimony” about Demetrius

1, 2, 3 John 4. Consistency of Demetrius’s Testimony (vv. 11–12)

Given this sterling recommendation, Gaius would have more than adequate motivation to receive Demetrius and extend to him the gracious hospitality for which he was so well

known.

- Their “testimony is true”
 - John shows us what is true and what is false
 - John said in [1 John 4:5-6](#), “5 They (the false prophets) are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
 - Diotrephes “does not accept what we say” (v.9) nor did he accept Gaius or Demetrius
 - He put those out of the church who showed hospitality
 - This was pure evil and revealed the true nature of his heart
 - Verse 11 says, “the one who does evil has not seen God”

CONCLUSION

1, 2, 3 John 4. Consistency of Demetrius’s Testimony (vv. 11–12)

Given this sterling recommendation, Gaius would have more than adequate motivation to receive Demetrius and extend to him the gracious hospitality for which he was so well known.

- John ends his letter in the same way he ended 2 John
- John “had many things to write” about but he didn’t want to do this, he wanted to “see [them] shortly...[and] speak face to face” (v.14)
- The final benediction is in verse 15 with “peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”
- What an encouragement and a contrast to what John wrote as the main message of this letter

• **Warren Wiersbe draws this contrast between 2nd and 3rd John. He says...**

The Bible Exposition Commentary Chapter One: It’s the Truth (3 John)

It is interesting to contrast these two little letters and to see the balance of truth that John presented. Second John was written to a godly woman about her family, while 3 John was written to a godly man about his church. John warned “the elect lady” about false teachers from the outside, but he warned Gaius about dictatorial leaders inside the fellowship. The false teachers in 2 John would appeal to love so that they might deny truth, while Diotrephes would appeal to truth as, in a most unloving way, he would attack the brethren.

- Beloved, how we treat other Christians reveals whether we truly are followers of Jesus Christ
- John said in [1 John 3:17-18](#), “17 But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

- Here John questions the legitimacy of one's salvation for their lack of compassion for a "brother in need" and you "closing your heart against him"
- Our love is to be like Gaius' and Demetrius
- This, again, is what it means to walk in the truth
- When you live and practice the truth, you have "a good testimony" before all
- To have that kind of testimony to the truth, you must know the truth
- To know the truth is to receive Jesus Christ
- Jesus said in [John 14:6](#), "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
- Do you know Him?
- Come to Him now as we pray
- Let's pray