

# Gaius Walked in the Truth

(Lesser Known Characters)

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## 3 John 1-8

One of the existing features of Google maps is that you can zoom in to a particular address. You can see the general map of the continent, the country, the city, the street, and finally the house at a particular address.

The letters of John have a similar order. The first letter is addressed to any church, most likely to the western part of ancient Asia Minor, today's Turkey. In the second letter, it is clear that John is writing to a particular church. Even though he does not mention the name of the church, yet it seems he has met them. He is writing to the leadership of the church and **congratulating them for walking in the truth** (2 John 4). Then John zooms in by writing his third letter to a particular person, namely Gaius.<sup>1</sup>

We don't know much about this man. We don't know which church he comes from. We read about his life only in the first eight verses of this third letter. **One thing we know- Gaius walks in the truth.**

Gaius is quite a common name. It is possibly derived from Latin *gaudere* "to rejoice". The most famous bearers being Gaius Julius Caesar, the great leader of the Roman Republic, and his adopted son Gaius Octavius (later known as Augustus), the first Roman emperor.<sup>2</sup>

Let me tell you that the name Gaius appears elsewhere in the Bible, three times.

- There was Gaius the Macedonian along with Paul at the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:29).
- There was Gaius of Debre, who was the delegate of his church to transfer the collection for the poor believers of Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).
- There was Gaius of Corinth who had been Paul's host. He was such a hospitable person that he could be called the host of the whole church (Romans 16:23). Paul personally baptized him (1 Corinthians 1;14).<sup>3</sup>

There is no reason to identify this one with any of the above-mentioned people. “We do not know who he was. It is clear, however, from the terms in which John writes, that he occupied a position of responsibility and leadership in the local church.”<sup>4</sup> Gaius in this letter: we can see important biblical principles.

What can we learn from this man?

## 1. Gaius walked in the truth

**The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.**

**Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

**Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.**

The author John writes this letter and uses the word “truth” five times in this short passage. “...whom I love in truth...testified to your truth... as indeed you are walking in the truth...my children are walking in the truth...that we may be fellow workers for the truth.”

John explains in the second letter that **the church was walking in the truth.**

**I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father. (2 John 4 ESV)**

In this letter, John emphasis that **this man Gaius was walking in the truth.**

Questions: Why all this emphasis on the truth? What is the truth?

**Truth *alēthea*** according to the lexicon (definition):

- A. what is true in any matter under consideration: truth, fact, reality...
- B. what is true in things appertaining to God and the duties of man, moral and religious truth.
- C. the truth as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of his purposes through Christ, and respecting the duties of man, opposing alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians.<sup>5</sup>

**Truth in my words is something does not change. It is always true, certain, reliable, and trustworthy.**

-Gravity is a reality on this planet. Anything you drop will always fall.

-Death is a reality. It is true.

**-Christ is the truth.** He said: **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."** (John 14:6)

John is delighted that Gaius is walking in the truth. Some brothers came to him and testified that this man was walking in the truth. Walking in love (v6)

Walking in Truth here means two things: Life of integrity and the truth in Christ.

Life of integrity, something we miss these days. Gaius was a balanced Christian. He held the truth in love (cf. Eph. 4:15). He also loved in truth. (Tyndale)

**Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (Eph 4:15)**

**He held the truth in love. He also loved in truth.**<sup>6</sup>

This man had integrity. What kind of integrity, an integrity that is based on the TRUTH. What kind of truth? This is not just any truth; Gaius is walking in Christ. Gaius is acting in integrity which **"embodies the truth of the gospel itself.** We can take it that this involves not just correct doctrine and proper outward behavior, but that love for God and for one's fellow believers which, for John, is the sign

that **the truth of the gospel** has really been grasped, not as **an abstract** idea but as what it is, the very life of God himself at work in his people.”<sup>7</sup>

When Christ is one’s truth, it will reflect in that person’s behavior and personality.

## **2. As result of the truth, Gaius loved hospitality.**

**Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. (3 John 1:5-6 ESV)**

Traveling missionaries did not stay at inns. Christians opened their homes for people. To show hospitality is a biblical command (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9) and particularly to widows (1 Tim. 5:10) and presbyter-bishops (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). In fact, when we show hospitality we are inviting Jesus to our home. (Matt. 10:40–42)

I was raised that way, and I keep that lifestyle in my household.

*How far we are today from this lifestyle? Our individualism and comfort have become very important. We do not bother each other. One time, I was invited to a church to preach out of California. I told them fine with me if I stay with a family. They insisted to put us in hotel. My intention is to be in relationship with the people. These days we have become too professional in the work of God. Some speakers we invited asked us to put us certain hotels with certain rooms with a particular view. Really?*

Sevan and I have witnessed people’s hospitality. People have always opened their homes to us. People have given us their beds. People have shared their meals with us. People have driven us around when we needed a ride. People have opened their hearts to us and we have become part of their families.

*Two ears ago, we were invited to Kansas to share about Syria. The hosts could easily put us in a hotel. They opened their home to us. We had a great time in listening to each other. We had time to pray for each other. We happened to witness a family issue just when they needed our support.*

Walking in the truth was not just an abstract concept. Gaius demonstrated that in his life. Because he loved Jesus and because he walked in the truth, he was hospitable.

Let me open here another point concerning hospitality. Hospitality can become a dangerous idol if we do not know why we are practicing it. Truth should be our motivation. Christ is our motivation. Without Christ, your hospitality can turn to a source of pride and self-glorification. Hospitality without Christ can be a source of bitterness as well. Why? One is seeking recognition, and without it you can become tired, bitter and angry. You start blaming others who do not do the same. Watch out, why are you serving others? Who is your model? And watch out for overdoing; it can burn you out.

### **Application on Gaius:**

1. Am I walking in the truth? Am I really walking in Christ who is reflected in my moral behavior? Sometimes the best place people hide their sins is the church itself.
2. Do we hold the truth in love? And do we also love in truth?
3. What does it mean to support a ministry? How can you practice Christian hospitality?

Let me finish with NT Wright:

Truth, as always in John, is not simply a fact or a quality. It is an energy, a power, the living and dynamic quality that transforms people, communities and ultimately the world. We are privileged to be caught up in the work of Truth, turning our misguided and often wicked world into a place where once again the creator God is honored and glorified. And this collaboration in the work of the Truth comes right down to the practical details of a meal, a bed for the night, and a good start in the morning.<sup>8</sup>

How can you apply the Truth in your daily life?

1. N.T. Wright, The Early Christian Letters. p 184
2. <https://www.behindthename.com/name/gaius>
3. William Barclay The Daily Study Bible (John and Jude) p148

4. Tyndale Bible Commentary (3 John)

5. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G225&t=KJV>

6. Tyndale bible commentary To *walk in the truth* is means to apply it to one's behavior. Whoever 'walks in the truth' is an integrated believer in whom there is no dichotomy between profession and practice. On the contrary, there is in him an exact correspondence between creed and conduct.

7. N.T. Wright, The Early Christian Letters p 185

8. *ibid* p185