



November 29 — Partners in the Truth

Weekly Reading: 1 John 3–3 John

Life Group Passage: 3 John 1–8

Main Point

We walk in the truth when our faithfulness and generosity help others carry the gospel forward.

Key Verse

“Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.”

3 John 8

Life Group — The Flow

- 15 minutes — Conversation and relationship-building
- 5 minutes — Looking Back
- 5 minutes — Introduction, Background, and Christ Connection
- 30 minutes — Study and Apply
- 5–7 minutes — Application Exercise
- 10 minutes — Pray Through the Passage and Prayer Requests
- 5 minutes — Conclusion

If Time Is Limited...

Focus on:

- Main Point and Key Verse
- Background and Christ Connection
- Read 3 John 1–4
- Passage 1 questions 1 and 3
- Read 3 John 5–8

- Passage 2 questions 1 and 4
- Application Exercise
- Pray Through the Passage
- Final Takeaway

Looking Back — 5 Minutes

Last week, John reminded us that God is light and that His people walk honestly before Him—confessing sin rather than hiding it and trusting the cleansing Jesus provides.

Discuss one or more:

- Where did God’s Word bring something into clearer light for you this week?
- Did you take a concrete step of confession, repentance, or obedience?
- How did remembering Christ’s cleansing grace affect the way you responded to conviction?

Transition to Introduction

“Walking in the light means living truthfully before God. In 3 John, we see that walking in truth also becomes visible in the way believers use their lives and resources to help the gospel move forward.”

Introduction — 5 Minutes

Ask

- Think about a time someone’s hospitality or generosity made you feel genuinely welcomed. What did they do that made the difference?

Follow-Up

- Why can practical support sometimes communicate partnership more powerfully than simply saying, “I support what you’re doing”?

Say

“Hospitality can sound like an optional personality trait—something naturally outgoing people enjoy and everyone else can leave to them. In the New Testament, however, hospitality was often part of how the mission of the church actually moved forward.”

“Third John introduces us to Gaius, a believer whose faithfulness was visible in the way he welcomed and supported Christian workers he did not even know personally. John says that kind of support makes ordinary believers ‘coworkers with the truth.’”

Transition to Background

“This short letter gives us a window into the practical network of relationships that helped the gospel travel from place to place in the early church.”

Background

Third John is a personal letter from “the elder” to a believer named Gaius. John speaks warmly of Gaius and rejoices in reports that he is “walking in the truth.”

Travel in the first-century world could be difficult, and traveling Christian teachers often depended on the hospitality of fellow believers. Gaius had welcomed faithful workers even though they were strangers to him.

John therefore connects truth with far more than correct ideas. Gaius believed the truth, walked in the truth, loved other believers, and used what he had to help gospel workers continue their ministry.

Transition to Christ Connection

“At the center of their partnership was not hospitality itself, but “the Name” for which these workers had gone out.”

Christ Connection

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s Son who came for sinners, gave Himself for us, rose from the dead, and sends His people to make Him known.

Some believers are called to cross cultures, travel, preach, plant, or serve in vocational ministry. Others make that work possible through prayer, generosity, encouragement, housing, meals, friendship, and practical support.

Third John dignifies that quieter work. When Christians faithfully support those who carry the gospel, they do not stand on the sidelines of the mission. John says they become “coworkers with the truth.”

Transition to Study and Apply

“John begins by showing us that faithful gospel partnership grows from a life that is already walking in the truth.”

Study and Apply — 30 Minutes

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and how we can apply it in our lives this week.

Passage 1 — 3 John 1–4

Walk in the Truth

Read the Passage – Have a volunteer read 3 John 1–4.

Read aloud from your preferred Bible translation.

Commentary

Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, summarize the key insights rather than reading everything word-for-word.

Verses 1–2. John identifies himself simply as “the elder” and addresses Gaius as someone he loves “in the truth.” Truth is not merely a doctrine they both affirm; it is the shared reality of the gospel that binds their relationship together.

John prays that Gaius will prosper physically even as his spiritual life is prospering. He clearly values the whole person, but his deepest joy is tied to spiritual faithfulness.

Verse 3. Other believers had reported that Gaius was “faithful to the truth” and was “walking in truth.” His faith had a visible track record. What he believed about Christ was shaping the way he lived.

Verse 4. John says, “I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in truth.” For a spiritual leader, few things are more encouraging than seeing people continue faithfully with Christ.

Walking in truth includes believing what is true, but it cannot be reduced to possessing accurate information. In this letter, truth becomes visible through love, hospitality, faithfulness, and support of gospel work.

Guide Discussion

You do not need to cover every question. Use those that best help your group engage with the passage.

1. **Good for Students.** What seems to matter most to John as he talks about Gaius in verses 1–4?
2. **Discuss.** What is the difference between knowing Christian truth and “walking in the truth”?
3. **Deeper Dive.** Why do you think another person’s ongoing faithfulness can bring such deep joy to someone who has discipled, taught, or invested in them?
4. **Reflective — Index Card.** Who has invested spiritually in you, and what evidence of continued faithfulness would likely encourage them today?

Teaching Insight

Say

“Truth is meant to be walked, not merely stored. Gaius’s life gave credibility to what he confessed because the gospel had shaped the way he related to people and participated in Christ’s mission.”

Transition to Passage 2

“John now gives us a specific example of what walking in truth looked like in Gaius’s life: he made room in his life and resources for people carrying the gospel.”

Passage 2 — 3 John 5–8

Partner with the Truth

Read the Passage – Have a volunteer read 3 John 5–8.

Read aloud from your preferred Bible translation.

Commentary

Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, summarize the key insights rather than reading everything word-for-word.

Verses 5–6. John commends Gaius for acting faithfully toward “the brothers and sisters, especially when they are strangers.” Gaius was not simply helping close friends. He extended Christian love to gospel workers whom he had not known beforehand.

Those workers had testified to Gaius’s love before the church. John urges him to continue sending them on their journey “in a manner worthy of God.” Hospitality therefore included more than offering a bed for a night. It meant helping provide what was needed for the next stage of ministry.

Verse 7. The workers had gone out “for the sake of the Name”—a reverent way of referring to Jesus. Their mission centered on making Christ known.

John notes that they were not depending on those outside the faith to fund the mission. That increased the responsibility and privilege of fellow believers to support them.

Verse 8. John reaches the central conclusion: “Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.”

Not every Christian occupies the same ministry role, but every Christian can participate in the advance of the gospel. Giving, hosting, praying, encouraging, supplying, and sending are not secondary to mission. They are real forms of partnership in the truth.

The phrase “coworkers with the truth” also protects support from becoming personality-driven. We are not ultimately supporting a celebrity, organization, or personal friend. We partner with people because they faithfully serve the truth of Christ.

Consider This — Holding the Ropes

When William Carey prepared to leave England for missionary work in India in the 1790s, his friend Andrew Fuller later recalled the mission with the picture of descending into a deep mine. Carey was willing to go down, he said, if his friends would “hold the rope.”

Fuller and other Baptist friends stayed behind, raised support, prayed, advocated, and helped sustain the missionary work from a distance. Carey went, but he did not go alone. The people who held the ropes became real partners in the mission.

You do not have to be the person who goes the farthest to be deeply involved in the gospel’s advance. Faithful rope-holders are coworkers with the truth.

Guide Discussion

You do not need to cover every question. Use those that best help your group engage with the passage.

1. **Good for Students.** What specifically did Gaius do that caused John to describe him as faithful?
2. **Discuss.** How does verse 8 expand the way we normally think about who is “doing missions” or “doing ministry”?
3. **Deeper Dive.** What is the difference between supporting a person because we like them and supporting gospel work because it is “for the sake of the Name”?
4. **Reflective — Index Card.** Where might God be inviting you to move from appreciating someone else’s ministry to actively partnering with it?

Teaching Insight

Say

“The New Testament does not divide the church into people who do the mission and people who merely watch. Some go, some send, some host, some give, some pray—but when those actions faithfully support the gospel, John says we become coworkers with the truth.”

Transition to Application Exercise

“Let’s identify one gospel work we can move toward more intentionally instead of simply appreciating it from a distance.”

Application Exercise — 5–7 Minutes

See • Support • Send

Supplies: Index cards and pens

Ask members to think of one person, ministry, missionary, church planter, or gospel effort they can intentionally strengthen.

1. See

- Who is faithfully carrying the gospel whom you may normally appreciate from a distance?
- a missionary or mission partner
- a church planter

- a pastor or ministry leader
- someone discipling students or children
- a believer serving a hard-to-reach group
- someone sharing Christ faithfully in your own community

2. Support

- **What practical support could genuinely strengthen that person or ministry?**
- prayer
- a note or call of encouragement
- financial generosity
- a meal or hospitality
- help with a practical need
- consistent follow-up rather than one-time interest

3. Send

- **What will you actually do this week to help them continue “in a manner worthy of God”?**

Say

“Partnership becomes real when encouragement turns into action. Choose one concrete way to hold the rope for someone carrying the gospel, and follow through this week.”

Transition to Pray Through the Passage

“John’s letter is filled with gratitude for people walking in truth and a call to participate in the mission. Let’s thank God for the gospel and ask Him to make us faithful partners in it.”

Pray Through the Passage — 10 Minutes

Led by the Prayer Champion

Read each verse and prayer prompt aloud. Allow a few moments between prompts for personal reflection and prayer.

If time is limited, use one or two prompts rather than all four. The goal is meaningful prayer through the passage, not completing every prompt.

Prompt 1 — Adoration (have people pray this prompt out loud)

Who God Is

3 John 3 — Gaius's faithfulness was rooted in "the truth."

- Praise God because He is true and trustworthy. The gospel we carry is not our invention; it rests on the character and truth of God Himself.

Prompt 2 — Confession (can be silent)

Where We Need Him

3 John 5 — Gaius acted faithfully even toward believers who were strangers.

- Confess where comfort, self-focus, indifference, or a desire to keep your resources for yourself has kept you from supporting others faithfully.

Prompt 3 — Gratitude (have people pray this prompt out loud)

What He Has Done

3 John 4 — "I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in truth."

- Thank God for the people who taught, disciplined, encouraged, supported, or welcomed you so that you could continue walking in the truth.

Prompt 4 — Response / Obedience (have people pray this prompt out loud)

How We Will Obey

3 John 8 — "We ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth."

- Ask God to help you faithfully support the person or ministry you identified and commit to the specific action you will take this week.

Prayer Requests, Praises, and Follow-Up

- Ask the group for updates from the previous week's prayer requests and celebrate answered prayers.
- Invite members to share honestly at whatever level they are comfortable so the group can support one another through prayer and practical care.

- Ask whether there are missionaries, ministry partners, church planters, or local gospel workers the group can specifically pray for and encourage together.
- Record requests and praises, share them with the group during the week, and follow up at the next gathering.

Transition to Conclusion

“Gaius probably never preached every sermon or traveled to every place he helped reach. Yet through faithful generosity, he shared in the work. God still gives His people that privilege.”

Conclusion — 5 Minutes

Final Takeaway

Walking in the truth includes helping the truth move forward. When we faithfully support people who carry the gospel, ordinary generosity becomes genuine partnership in Christ’s mission.

This Week’s Challenge

Respond — What Will I Do?

Return to your “See • Support • Send” card and make your action concrete before the week gets crowded.

- Pray specifically for the person or ministry you identified.
- Take the support step you wrote down.
- Consider how this could become a regular rhythm rather than a one-time gesture.

Reflect — What Is God Showing Me?

Consider:

- Do I tend to think of mission mainly as something other Christians do?
- Who helped “hold the rope” for me during an important season of faithfulness?
- Where has convenience limited my hospitality or generosity?

- What would it look like for gospel partnership to become a normal part of my life rather than an occasional project?

Review — How Will I Keep God’s Word Before Me?

Review 3 John 8 throughout the week:

“Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.”

When you hear about faithful gospel work, ask a second question beyond “Isn’t that great?” Ask: How can I help?

Read — How Will I Prepare for Next Week?

Continue with the church’s Year of Prayer New Testament Reading Plan.

Next Week’s Reading: [Jude–Revelation 4](#)

As you read, notice the repeated calls to contend for the faith, remain faithful to Christ, worship Him rightly, and listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Closing Prayer

“Father, thank You for the truth of the gospel and for the people You have used to carry it to us. Thank You for those who taught us, welcomed us, prayed for us, gave generously, and helped us keep walking with Christ. Forgive us when we treat Your mission as someone else’s responsibility. Make us faithful with our homes, resources, prayers, encouragement, and opportunities. Show us how to hold the ropes for those who go, and let our partnership help the truth of Jesus move forward. In His name, amen.”