

A PROSPEROUS LIFE

3 John 1:2 ... “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”

You rarely hear sermons from the third letter of John, but I often share obscure Biblical teachings with you because I want you to understand that the **WHOLE** of God’s Word is vital food for your soul. The entire book of Third John is only 14 verses long. It is the Apostle John’s short letter to Gaius, a leader of the Christian church in the city of Ephesus.

We recently shared several devotionals from Romans chapter 8 in which we pointed out that much of what God wants to do for us, requires action on our part. Today’s verse 2, is similar in nature. It offers us hope for our lives, in the **SAME** measure that we grow spiritually. Where it reads: “that you may prosper in all things and be in health,” is an apparent reference to the basics of life; your income, your ability to eat and have a home that is dry when it rains, plus good health. But those blessings are given, according to the Apostle, in the same measure that you live according to the teachings of Christ and continually mature in your faith: “just as your soul prospers.” If you neglect your spiritual growth (Bible study, prayer, worship, service and fellowship with believers), you may find the basic needs of your life to be less than what you need.

Many people get caught up in the idea that prosperity is only about money. But God’s Word does not limit it to money or land or things. Throughout the Bible we read that prosperity includes, among other things, God’s grace, adequate income, health, career success, hopefulness, and more. The writer of Proverbs chapter 30 understood that prosperity may be more than what you have, and less than what others have. If you are poor and God blesses you with a job that allows you to feed your family, that is wealth to you.

Proverbs 30:8 reads: “Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches—feed me with the food allotted to me.” For this wise man, his basic needs represented the only prosperity he wanted. And for that, he was willing to live honestly. If you are stuck on the idea that God owes you something, or that wealth will bless you, or that life is unfair because God blesses others more than he blesses you, you need to evaluate your spiritual condition. Those thoughts are not from God. They are from a heart of greed. If you feel stuck in poverty, search the Holy Spirit for guidance in how to improve your spiritual condition. You may not be blessed with prosperity until you grow in your faith and commitment to Christ.

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