**Just As Your Soul Prospers**

*3 John 2-4*

**Introduction**

1. John’s prayer for Gaius provides a sobering test for us to administer ourselves – how well are we doing spiritually?
2. Do we have such a reputation? Can we say our soul prospers? Is our focus where it should be?
3. The Prayer – Physical Prosperity
4. ***“prosper in all things”*** – physical
	1. Prosper – “to help on one’s way” (eu, “well,” hodos, “a way or journey”), is used in the passive voice signifying “to have a prosperous journey,” (VINE)
	2. **Romans 1:10** – Paul wanting to find a “way” (things working out well for him to come) to the Romans. (“prosperous journey,” YLT; “I may succeed in coming,” NASB).
	3. **1 Corinthians 16:2** – Prospering financially.
5. ***“and be in health”*** – bodily
	1. Health – hygiainō – denotes “to be healthy, sound, in good health” (Eng., “hygiene”) (VINE)
	2. ***“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Luke 5:31).***
	3. **Titus 2:1** – “sound doctrine”
6. God Cares About Our Physical State
	1. God’s commands throughout the Bible for His people shows He is concerned – **Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 25:34-40**
	2. **Matthew 6:25, 31-32** – God knows that we need these things, and takes care to provide for us.
		1. He blesses us w/ physical necessities – **Acts 14:17** (Idolaters in Lystra); **17:25, 28** (Idolaters in Athens)
7. We Should Pray for Each Other’s Physical Well-Being
	1. John prayed for the physical prosperity and health of Gaius.
	2. We should pray for each other’s physical well-being as well – **James 5:13-15**
	3. It should be our concern, and we should pray and act to aid each other in any way we can – **1 John 3:16-18**
8. The Parallel – Spiritual Prosperity
9. A Sobering Request
	1. Usual focus in salutary greeting concerns the spiritual – ***“Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (2 John 3)****.*
	2. Prayer for spiritual growth – **Ephesians 1:16-18; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10**
	3. John prays for Gaius’ physical prosperity and health:
		1. Priorities not mixed – see the spiritual side later.
		2. Spiritual prosperity taken for granted – knows Gaius’ reputation – **3 John 3-6a** – walking in truth, showing hospitality/support to those laboring in word.
		3. Usually – “I hope you’re doing as well spiritually as you are physically” – John – “I hope you prosper physically as much as you are spiritually.”
	4. Would we even dare to offer such a prayer?
10. What if the request was granted?
	1. Bankruptcy?
		1. Church in Laodicea – **Revelation 3:17-19**
			1. Contrast w/ Paul’s perspective – **2 Corinthians 6:10**
			2. Too many can’t see their poverty due to their prosperity.
		2. Perspective to have – **James 1:9-11; 2:5** – whatever we have physically is truly nothing, but what is spiritual is lasting (**cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-7**)
		3. **Luke 12:20-21** – our focus needs to be on the heavenly treasure lest we miss it all to gain very little for a short while.
	2. Malnourishment?
		1. No appetite? – **Matthew 5:6; 1 Peter 2:2** – are we truly hungry for spiritual sustenance?
		2. Is our physical appetite greater than our spiritual? – **John 6:26-27**
		3. **1 Corinthians 3:1-4** – have we remained carnal (babes)? Are we able to digest solid food?
			1. **(v. 1) – Carnal** – *sarkinos* – “’consisting’ or ‘composed of flesh,’ ‘fleshy’” (BDAG)
				1. FLESHY; *Inos* – made of; ***“men of flesh” (NASB)***
			2. **(v. 3) – Carnal** – *sarkikos* – “’belonging to [flesh],’ ‘having the nature and characteristics of [flesh],’ fleshly’” (BDAG).
				1. FLESHLY; *Ikos* – characterized by; ***“fleshly” (NASB)***
			3. Are we developing spiritually to grow out of immaturity (fleshiness), or are we more in tune with the world, and thus unable to digest spiritual meat without destroying ourselves (fleshliness)? (**cf. 2 Peter 3:16**)
	3. Heart failure?
		1. Discouraged? – **2 Corinthians 4:16; Galatians 6:9** – this is something we are to control.
			1. Paul is refusing to lose heart. Are you?
		2. Lacking persistence in prayer? – **Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**
		3. Desensitized to sin? – **Ephesians 4:17-19** – ***“hardness of their heart” (NASB)***
			1. A heart not filled and trained by the gospel will be opposed to it, and unaffected by what the gospel offers, but also the shameful matters of the world.
	4. Deafness and Blindness?
		1. **Matthew 13:13-15** – how well are you hearing the truth? Are you hearing only what you want to hear?
			1. Reason for speaking in parables – ***“because”*** (**Mat. 13:13)**; ***“so that”*** (**Mark 4:12**) – they already don’t want to see/hear, so Jesus gives it in a way that they will be unable to (in that current state).
			2. If we’re only listening or looking to hear or see what we want to, and not the whole truth, then we’ll never see the whole truth.
		2. Are we shortsighted? **– 2 Peter 1:9**
			1. Forgotten cleansing, thus, lost sight of goal – **(v. 4)** – partakers of divine nature.
			2. Cleansed from sins to be transformed into Christ’s image – **(vv. 2-3)** – ***“knowledge of Him.”***
			3. ***“Lacks these things”*** – **(vv. 5-8)** – things to grow in, bear fruit.
			4. **(vv. 10-11)** – these are the things that prepare us for heaven.
11. The Priority – Spiritual Service
12. The Prayer had a Greater Spiritual Objective
	1. John’s prayer was for the physical good of Gaius – **3 John 2**
		1. News of his spiritual work prompted the prayer – **3 John 3-6a**
			1. **(vv. 3-4)** – Joy at the news from others of Gaius’ faithfulness.
			2. **(vv. 5-6a)** – specific work Gaius is involved in – caring for brethren he does not know – ministers of the gospel – lodging, hospitality, supplies, etc.
		2. His prayer ultimately was that Gaius would be equipped to continue this good/important work.
	2. John’s prayer for Gaius’ physical good included the aim that he would be able to continue carrying out his spiritual work – **3 John 6b-8**
		1. **(vv. 6b-7)** – future tense – ***“you will do well”***
			1. ***“send them forward…because they went forth…taking nothing”*** – idea seems to include a financial responsibility on Gaius’ part to aid these brethren in their preaching.
			2. They refused money from Gentiles – not wanting to hinder the gospel effort – not as some false teachers seeking gain
		2. **(v. 8)** – in his use of his good health, and financial ability he was contributing to the spread of truth.
13. God’s Blessings Equip Us for His Service
	1. Bodies – **1 Corinthians 6:13, 19-20** – for glorifying the Lord – **Romans 6:12-13** – presenting to righteousness.
		1. ***“to live is Christ”*** – **Philippians 1:21**
	2. Physical blessings – **2 Corinthians 9:8-11** – blessed for liberality.
		1. **1 Timothy 6:17-19** – not trusting in riches, but putting them to good use in God’s service, and storing up spiritual treasure.
	3. Everything should be viewed in this way – time, energy, resources, talents, relationships, etc. – Looking for ways and opportunities to further the Lord’s cause.

**Conclusion**

1. God is concerned about our physical well-being, but more so about our spiritual state, and ensuring our ability to continue to be effective in His kingdom.
2. We should give time to reflection on our spiritual wellness. Is it as good as our physical? Better? Worse?
3. Our constant thought should concern what we can and must do for the Lord. Are we seeking opportunities? Are we bearing fruit to his glory?