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## **As Your Soul Prospers**

3 John 2

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**I wish above all things that you prosper and be in health, as your soul prospers (3 John 2)**

**We must believe that what's inside us – not  
circumstances outside us – controls our lives**

### **As Our Soul Prospers, Our Life Prospers**

The apostle John was an old man when he wrote one of the last letters to be included in the canon of Scripture. He had walked with Jesus since he was a young man. His revelations in the gospel of John cause us to realize the depth of his relationship and understanding of the Lord. It was after many years as a devout follower of Christ that John wrote this letter.

John realized that the prosperity of our whole lives, including the health of our bodies, hinged on the condition of our souls. John understood that what is in us controls what comes out of us and ultimately produces life's experiences. He is telling us that as our soul prospers, our life prospers.

So many Christians wonder about God's will when it comes to prosperity and health. It should be obvious to anyone who believes the Bible that John wouldn't pray a prayer that was contrary to the will of God. Neither would he have said that he prayed this prayer above every other prayer if it weren't so. If it weren't God's will for His people to prosper and live in health, the Holy Spirit would never have inspired John to believe it or record it as a part of holy Scripture.

The key to John's prayer in 3 John 2 is the soul. Theologians refer to the soul as the mind, emotions and will. Your soul controls, to a great degree, how you experience life. You will prosper and live in health even as your soul prospers, or you will struggle and be weak, even as your soul is weak.

### **God Wills For Us To Be Prosperous and Well**

3 John 2 is a great truth and provides great insight into the heart of God, who inspired it. God does want us to be prosperous and well. Notice that this prosperity happens as our souls prosper. We can't really prosper outwardly if we aren't prospering inwardly. Our spirits are already perfect (2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 10:10, 14, and 12:23), but our souls only prosper as we renew our minds (part of the soul) to what we already have in Christ (in our born-again spirits).

When people are born again, they become totally new creations in their spirits. Their spiritual salvation is complete. They don't need any more faith, joy, or power. They are complete in Him (Colossians 2:9-10).

However, it is not God's will that we only be changed on the inside. He wants to manifest this salvation in our physical lives also. That takes place through renewing our minds and prospering our souls according to God's Word.

We each have a spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). As born-again believers, our spirits are as perfect as they will ever be in heaven (Romans 8:18). If we will change our thinking so that we believe what God says in His Word about who we are and what we have, then this agreement between our spirit and soul forms a majority, and our flesh will experience the life of God that has been deposited in our spirits.

If we fail to renew our minds and thereby prosper our souls, we can live our entire time on this earth without experiencing the abundant life that Jesus provided for us (John 10:10).

The apostle John wrote 3 John 2 by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The word “wish” here means that it is His will. God's will is for us to be prosperous and well. Once we see His will revealed plainly like this in His Word, there's no reason for us to pray "if it be Your will" any longer.

### **God's Truth, Not Tradition**

The apostle John had walked with Jesus since he was a young man. For months he followed Jesus in the flesh and was a part of the Lord's most intimate experiences. He saw Jesus transformed on the mount with Moses and Elijah. He laid his head on the Lord's bosom during the Last Supper. And he went with the Lord into the Garden of Gethsemane. So I'm sure you would agree that this old apostle knew the Lord and His ways on a very special level.

Looking again at how in 3 John 2, John starts his letter by sharing a prayer that he prayed above every other: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

This introduction and prayer of John's establishes several very important truths for the Christian. As stated before, we know that John wouldn't pray something that was contrary to the will of God. And even if he would have, the Holy Spirit wouldn't have it recorded and placed it in the canon of Scripture.

So by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John prays that we may prosper and live in health. This is God's truth, not tradition, so we must realize it as God's will for His people before we will actively search it out.

By misunderstanding the words of the apostle John and many other passages of Scripture, the church world has preached doctrines of sickness, poverty and defeat that have enabled the world to dominate the Church. These doctrines have discouraged many from entering the kingdom of God. But that's not God's will! We must accept God's Word as the highest and the final authority.

### **Poverty and Sickness Are Not God's Will**

John explains how God's beloved are to prosper and live in health: just as your soul prospers.

All success in the Christian life starts on the inside of the person and flows out. Jesus said in Matthew 12:35, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart [the spirit and soul] brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”

**When our souls prosper, we have good treasure, which we can bring forth.  
But when our souls are poor, or full of negative thoughts, attitudes and beliefs,  
we have evil treasure which will bring forth defeat, despair and problems.**

When we buy into the lie that the things outside of us are controlling the outcome of our lives, we enter into bondage. So many people really believe that if the government were different, if their workers' union would do something or if their company would make a new policy, their lives would be successful. The fact is, although those outer things may have some minor influence on life, what is in you controls the kind of life you experience.

Outer circumstances may bring certain difficulties our way, so we must choose how to deal with those things. It is up to each individual either to rise above his circumstances or be defeated by them.

**When you have the truths of God's Word embedded in your soul,  
you will bring them forth and see them manifested in every area of life.**

### **The Truth is God's Word**

In 3 John 3-4, John says, “For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just

as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

So the apostle tells us here that the foundation of having a prosperous soul is to walk in truth. He gave us the example of a group of Christians—the truth was in them, and they walked in it. There is a twofold insight here that I believe is very important for us to see.

The first insight is this: Truth is God’s Word. Remember, Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “If you continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

In John 17:17 He said, “Your word is truth.”

We must accept God’s Word as the highest and the final authority. It is higher than religious traditions, church decrees, family and cultural traditions and every other order of life. God has exalted His Word even above His name. (Ps. 138:2.) Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God will stand forever.

**Only when we have heard, received and renewed our minds to the Word of God is the truth in us. This is the foundation for a prosperous soul.**