**3 John Commentary**

**3 John Chapter 1**

3Jo 1:2

**“I pray.”** The Greek is *euchomai* (#2172 εὔχομαι) and expresses a prayer or a wish. Here it describes a wish or perhaps even more accurately, a desire. That desire is voiced in a prayer, so “pray” is a good translation, “wish” being too weak to properly communicate the emotion in this verse.

**“all.”** The Greek phrase is *peri pantōn* (περὶ πάντων), and most literally means, “concerning all” [thus, “concerning everything,” or “in respect to everything”]. It properly goes with the first infinitive verb, “go well with you,” and not the second, “be in health.” Thus, “Beloved, I pray that you do well in respect to everything,” would be very literal, but more difficult to read. “I pray that in all respects you are doing well” catches the sense very nicely and is easy to read.

**“doing well...soul is doing well.”** “doing well,” and “is doing well” are both from the Greek verb, *euodoō* (#2137 εὐοδόω), which is a compound word from the noun *hodos*, “road,” and the prefix *eu*, “good.” Often translated “to prosper,” this word literally means to “have a good road,” i.e., have an easy, successful path ahead of you. Although it can apply to financial prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2), it is not restricted to such; the term is much broader than that. It is used in Romans 1:10 in the context of things working out well, so the apostle Paul could visit the Romans. Here in 3 John, “prosper” is too often thought to speak of money alone; the meaning is that John hopes things are going well for Gaius in every category of his life.

**“good health.”** The word *hygiainō* (#5198 ὑγιαίνω) has the basic meaning “to be whole, sound, free from error”; accordingly, when applied to the human body, it means “to be in good physical health, be healthy.”[[1]](#footnote-29963)

**“soul.”** The Greek word often translated “soul” is *psuchē* (#5590 ψυχή, pronounced psoo-'kay), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; and attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here *psuchē* is used broadly and includes the core of one’s life, both physically and mentally, and includes one’s attitudes, feelings, and emotions.

In this case, the “life force” does not prosper, but rather the person prospers in the seat of his personality and being. The way to have things go well in our innermost person and personality is to be in a correct [truthful] relationship with God and the Lord Jesus, and humble and honest about ourselves. Our “soul” will not do well if we are lying to ourselves or if our beliefs are based on falsehoods, even if we believe them correct. Truth, both doctrinal and relational, must be the basis of a soul that is prospering. Many people seem to be doing fairly well on the outside, but their “soul,” the core of their life, is not well at all, and being whole in our “soul” is vital to a wonderful life.

[For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Word Study: “Psuchē.”]

3Jo 1:3

**“brothers and sisters came.”** People came and testified about Gaius, as is mentioned in 3 John 1:5-6.

3Jo 1:11

**“The one who does what is good is *born* of God.”** This is somewhat parallel to 1 John 4:7 that everyone who loves is born of God.

3Jo 1:15

Some Greek texts combine 3 John 14-15, and so do not have a verse 15. We included it, following the Nestle-Aland Greek text and versions such as the ESV, NET, and NRSV.

1. BDAG, s.v. “ὑγιαίνω.” [↑](#footnote-ref-29963)