

Good Testimony

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.”

(1 John 1:1-4, ESV)

When the Apostle John wrote his letters and his gospel, he was adding his personal testimony to that delivered to the churches. John's testimony confirmed the truth of the message they received. The idea of confirming the truth did not originate with John, nor did it end with him. The Law of Moses required two or three witnesses to testify to any fact of conviction (Deut. 17:6; 19:5; Heb. 10:28); two or three eunuchs were all it took to drop Jezebel out of the window (2 Ki. 9:32); two or three berries remaining showed the reapers the judgment of the Lord (Isa. 17:6); two or three cities searching for water were enough to show that the drought announced by Amos came from Yahweh (Amo. 4:8). Paul relied heavily on this principle in personal judgment (2 Cor. 13:1)

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Mat. 18:20). Notice that Jesus was not saying he is not with the individual believer. Indeed, Jesus is with both the individual believer and the group. As Paul added his presence to matters of the group (1 Cor. 5:3-4), thus did Jesus. Both Christ and his apostles emphasize the importance for the church gathered in Christ's name to discern the truth and give their approval in these matters. Thus, the truth in any matter does not rest with just one witness but is confirmed with at least two. This does not make the individual witness of little use; on the contrary, it confirms the need for the individual witness.

Let us always realize our importance--as individuals and members of the collective church: There would be no two or three (or thousand) without the individual you and me who make up the number. Let us repeat John's testimony: Jesus actually lived, breathed, talked, walked, and dwelt among his people. John adds his words to those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, James, etc. because they all testify to the same truth. Let us each strive to show the same courtesy and concern to visitors when they visit with us. Lord willing, perhaps our visitors will see our affection and attention and realize the testimony we all proclaim is true: Jesus is Lord.