

III John – Good vs. Evil III Jn. 9-12

Introduction:

In this passage, John is comparing two men: Diotrephes and Demetrius. These men are completely different. One has a great record of faithfulness; the other is stopping the spread of Christianity. Today, we will notice the example of these two men and notice what John says about the example we are to follow.

I. John discusses Diotrephes (III Jn. 9-10).

- A. Diotrephes was a dictator in the church.
 - 1. Notice the words that John uses to describe Diotrephes.
 - a. Diotrephes “loves to have the preeminence among them.”
 - b. Diotrephes “does not receive us.”
 - c. Diotrephes is “prating against us with malicious words.”
 - d. Diotrephes “does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.”
 - 2. Diotrephes had several problems.
 - a. Diotrephes was a dictator in the church.
 - 1) He wanted to be in charge of everything.
 - 2) Diotrephes had forgotten that God’s plan was that shepherds lead the church.
 - a) **Acts 20:28** - Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.
 - b) **Titus 1:5** - For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.
 - c) **I Pet. 5:1-4** - The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: {2} Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; {3} nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; {4} and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.
 - b. Diotrephes had an inflated opinion of himself.
 - 1) He thought more of himself than he should have.
 - 2) **Gal. 6:3** - For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
 - 3) **Rom. 12:3** - For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more

highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

c. Diotrephes wanted power.

- 1) He did not want to follow anyone.
- 2) Mk. 10:42-44 - But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. {43} Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. {44} And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.”

B. Because of all these things, John “will call to mind his deeds which he does” (III Jn. 10).

1. John is not going to sit idly by and watch Diotrephes destroy the church.
2. John is going to remind him of this evil that he has done.
3. John was not afraid of Diotrephes.
4. Diotrephes was out of control and needed to be stopped.

C. We also must be willing to take a stand against people like Diotrephes.

1. We have to stand up against those who are dividing the church.
2. We are to avoid those that are against the word of God.
 - a. Rom. 16:17-18 - Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. {18} For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.
 - b. II Thes. 3:6 - But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.
 - c. II Thes. 3:14 - And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

II. John also discusses Demetrius (III Jn. 12).

A. There were three witnesses to the faithfulness of Demetrius.

1. A good report of all men.
 - a. Demetrius had a good reputation among all.
 - b. Demetrius understood the value of a good name.
 - 1) Pr. 22:1 - A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.
 - 2) Ecc. 7:1 - A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth;
 - c. A good reputation has always been important to God.

- 1) **Acts 6:3** - Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;
- 2) **I Tim. 3:7** - Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

2. The truth

- a. Demetrius was faithful to the truths of God.
- b. To be good we must live by the truth, just as Demetrius did.
- c. Demetrius understood the purpose of the truth.
 - 1) **Jn. 8:32** - **And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**
 - 2) **Ps. 119:105** - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- d. Demetrius understood the value of living by the truth.
 - 1) **Ps. 1:1-3** - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; {2} But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. {3} He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.
 - 2) **II Tim. 3:16-17** - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, {17} that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- e. We should all have a desire to know that truth.
 - 1) **II Tim. 2:15** - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
 - 2) **I Pet. 2:1-3** - Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, {2} as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, {3} if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

3. The apostle John

- a. Even John had heard of the faithfulness of Demetrius.
- b. Others could look at that life of Demetrius and know that he was following Christ.

B. Demetrius had the qualities that we should all strive to obtain.

1. It was because he possessed these qualities that John could write of him in this manner.
2. We can all learn from Demetrius and the example that he has set.

III. The key is knowing which example to follow (III Jn. 11).

- A. John commands us to imitate what is good.
1. We are all faced with choices as to what kind of example we will follow.
 - a. Here in III John, we read of three examples: Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius.
 - b. John encourages us to choose the good example that is set before us.
 2. We are often told to imitate that which is good.
 - a. **I Cor. 11:1** - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
 - b. **Eph. 5:1** - Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
 3. Jesus tells us the importance of a good influence.
 - a. **Mt. 5:13-16** - You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. {14} You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. {15} Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. {16} Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
 - b. When we follow a good example, we are also setting a good example for others.
- B. John also says that “he who does good is of God.”
1. There is evil around us today.
 - a. **I Jn. 2:15-17** - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - b. “He who does evil has not seen God” (III Jn. 11).
 2. However, even with the evil around us, it is possible to live a righteous life.
 - a. Gaius and Demetrius lived a righteous life even in a wicked world.
 - b. Remember the example of Noah in **Gen. 6**.
 - c. God was ready to destroy the entire world; but He saved Noah because of his faithfulness.

Conclusion:

Which would you rather be, Diotrephes or Demetrius? In reality, we are each either good or evil.