



# *Third Epistle of John*

## *3 John 1:9-15 - Conflict in the Church*

- Summary of *3 John 1-8 - Salutation / & Missionary Support*
  - *3 John* teaches that fellowship/hospitality is absolutely encouraged if it's with **truth**.
  - The missionary is one who is a true minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not a deceiver/apostate/antichrist.
  - Warm hospitality to ministers of the gospel is encouraged.
- ***3 John 1:9 - I wrote to the church, but Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.***
  - *Diotrophes*, who was the elder/or self-appointed leader of an unnamed assembly, perhaps where Gaius was?
    - Of interest, *loves to have the preeminence* is one Greek verb – *philoprōteuō* which means the desire to be first, and is used only here in the NT.
      - » *Phil 2:3-4 - Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look*



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*but not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

- Perhaps an indication of this personality relates to what follows.
  - He apparently lacked hospitality – he *does not receive us*, again only NT use of this term.
    - »Matt 10:40 – “*He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.*”
- ***3 John 1:10 - Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.***
  - So here, John raises the uncertainty of a visit (*verse 14*) and states if he comes, he *will call to mind (remember) his (Diotrophes’) deeds which he does (is actively doing)*. How should we interpret *prating against us*?
    - Strong - to utter nonsense, talk idly, bring forward idle accusations, make empty charges, accuse one falsely and here with *malicious (evil) words*



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- *And not (being) content with that* there are other signs of his misdirected leadership:
  - *He does not receive the brethren*
    - *receive* relates to hospitality
    - *brethren* - likely missionaries on their journey
      - » ‘Neander thinks that the missionaries were Jews by birth, whence it is said in their praise they *took nothing from* the Gentiles: in contrast to other Jewish missionaries who abused ministers’ right of maintenance elsewhere as Paul described. Now in the Gentile churches there existed an ultra-Pauline party of anti-Jewish tendency, the forerunners of Marcion: Diotrephes possibly stood at the head of this party, which fact, as well as this domineering spirit, may account for his hostility to the missionaries, and to the apostle John, who had, by the power of love, tried to harmonize the various elements in the Asiatic churches.’
  - *He forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.*
    - How might we imagine this today?
- ***3 John 1:11 - Beloved, do not imitate (follow) what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, he who does evil has not seen God.***
  - *Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.*



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- *imitate* or *follow not* - this is imperative.
  - Different Greek words with a similar root (*imitator*), *imitate* (*mimētēs*) is translated here as *follow* (*mimeomai*); can they be interpreted the same?
  - Is our life one of *imitation* or *follow* only?
    - » 1 Cor 11:1 - **Imitate** (*mimētēs*) **me, just as I also Christ.**
    - » 2 Thess 2:7,9 - **For you yourselves know how you ought to follow** (*mimeomai*) **us, for we were not disorderly among you; not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.**
- *evil vs. good* – specific to the example here or more general?
  - As John so often portrays the contrast, i.e., is this ‘black and white’?
    - » Rom 12:21 - **Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.**
    - » 1 John 3:6 - **Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.**
    - » 1 John 3:9 - **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**
- *He who does good is of God, he who does evil has not seen God.*
  - What does *not seen God* mean?
    - spiritually, not literally.
  - Don’t neglect our position in putting what we do (or who we are) into perspective.



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- *3 John 1:12 - Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.*
  - What does *Demetrius* exemplify to us here?
    - *a good testimony (perfect passive indicative) from all,*
      - *all* - many were witnesses.
    - *and from the truth itself.*
      - » *John 3:21 - “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*
  - *And we also bear witness, and you know (eidō) that our testimony is true.*
    - And are we not always in a position of judging *testimonies* and their source?
- *3 John 1:13-15 - I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to*



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*you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.*

- In the NKJV, the chapter ends the same but *verse 15* is collapsed into *verse 14*.
- As in his first epistle, John had *many things to write and* didn't really want to *write them but come*.
  - » *1 John 1:12 - Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.*
- And then there's his parting testimony in his Gospel.
  - » *John 21:25 - And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that \*would be written.*
- *but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face (literally mouth to mouth).*
  - Think of our means of fellowship today!
    - Written letters, email, videoconferencing (Zoom), face to face – which is best?
- *Peace to you (eirene soi) – like the Jewish greeting shalom.*