

God's Fellowship (Series)

3 John

Lesson # 8 "Don't have the Nature of Diotrophes"

Scripture: 1 John 1:7 "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Introduction:

How would we define a person's nature?

- Prevailing tendency
- The way they react to situations
- Mood
- Inclinations
- Temperamental make-up
- Webster's Dictionary lends to the idea of Actions under pressure

A number of years ago I knew a man in the church who:

- Created a lot of problems
- He had the attitude that it was his way or the highway
- He was a know it all
- He never agreed with anything
- He talked about others behind their backs
- He planted dissention everywhere he went
- He had an angry spirit
- He drove people away from church
- To think of him makes me literally nauseous
- By the time this man moved away the church fell from a little over 100 people to 13 .

*Have you ever known someone like this?

*God wants his children to be kind hearted and loving.

*So God tells us a story about just such a man.....Diotrophes

Read: 3 John

“The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; 6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. 10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. 12 Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink; 14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

15 Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.”

Transitional Statement: We must be on guard against the nature of Diotrephes in our lives and in the church. This attitude is equalant to spiritual cancer.

Lesson:

I. Diotrephes love to be 1st (Verse 9)

- A. There is much to be said in this little statement
- B. This type of person is usually boldly arrogant

-He is on the me-first and look out for # 1 program

-You'll not catch him involved in service

-Matthew 23:6 “They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,”

*Oh but the first will be last (Matt 19:30)

C. Jesus refuted this type of nature

-Matthew 20:27 “and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;”

-Humility is the rule

-Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

D. Jesus is suppose to be 1st in our lives

-Colossians 1:18 “He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”

E. True greatness comes in denying self

-Matthew 16:24 “...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

F. Maybe at the root of this thing is an over inflated view of ourselves.

-We need to check our pressure and deflate ourselves if needed.

-A man willing to let some of his own air out is always looked on with honor but a man that is puffed up is a disgrace.

-1 Corinthians 8:1 “....Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

II. Diotrefes rejects God’s way (Verse 9)

A. His heart was hardened much like Pharaoh’s hear. He was stubborn and rejecting God’s messengers and God’s word. He i.e. became a law unto himself....a bad law. Unwilling to listen to God leaves any person in the ditch.

III. Diotrefes liked division (Verse 10)

A. Division is a conquering tactic.....have you ever heard divide and conquer?

B. Division makes God sick.

-Proverbs 6:19

C. A divisive spirit is grounds to separate paths Titus 3:10

IV. Diotrephes was a control freak (Verse 10)

- A. He was a self appointed leader
- B. This guy was a person who liked to be in control. He would probably prefer that people just call him boss-man
 - No body is going to tell me what to do
- C. He was power hungry
- D. And His faith in God to manage the situation was very small.

VI. Diotrephes was injurious to the church

- A. Here is an example of misdirected zeal gone bad
- B. He was single handedly casting people out of the church
- C. A strong will is an asset but a hateful nature is a liability
- * Can you imagine Diotrephes as a greeter?

VII. Diotrephes had a following

- A. He had a cohort to follow and support him.
 - We must never be found following any person or be found backing human ideas.....I am of Appollos, I am of Cephas.....No we are called to be followers of God's word. Many churches have spiritually exploded due to this type of nature.

Conclusion:

The unity of the church is precious and the Lord makes no bones about it.

Ephesians 4:1-4

“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;”

Diotrephes is the kind of member that destroys churches. Eager for power and authority he tramples the truth, ignores the bible, grieves the Holy Spirit, and scatters the flock.

***Preventive measures**

- 3 John 11 **“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.**