

— 3 John —
Lesson #4 Chapter 1:9-15

As you come to this last lesson, ask the Lord to pull things together for you in your heart. May you be blessed as you dig into this passage!

1. In verse 9 John relates something rather shocking. What is it (verse 9)? What apparently happened to John's letter according to verse 9?
2. What do we learn about Diotrephes from verse 9?
3. Galatians 5:19 tells us the deeds of the flesh are evident, and that's certainly true in this little description about Diotrephes. As you think about Diotrephes, what sins are on display in verse 9?
4. How should Diotrephes have responded to the letter from John? See Matthew 23:11-12; John 13:12-17; Romans 12:10, 16; Philippians 2:3-5; 1 Peter 5:1-3.
5. It can be so easy to distance ourselves from the sins on display in verse 9, yet they can show up in us as well. Sometimes the seed-versions of those sins are renamed so they sound less...well...sinful. Descriptions like *strong*, *independent*, *opinionated*, *proactive*, *sassy*, *competitive* and more can keep us from dealing with the sin of our own hearts. Take some time to talk with the Lord about any areas where you might notice your own version of Diotrephes' sins, like the love of being noticed and enjoying preeminence or not cultivating a teachable and humble spirit regarding the Word of God and church leadership. Remember and apply the counsel from Psalm 139:23-24; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 5:24-25.

6. But wait! Diotrephes' sin only gets worse! What further sins has he committed according to verse 10?

7. How does John intend to deal with Diotrephes according to verse 10?

8. Why is this public calling out of Diotrephes necessary? See Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:11-13; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:14-18; 3:1-5; 4:15; Titus 1:10-11; 3:9-11.

Kenneth Wuest relates this story in his commentary, "Robertson, in connection with his discussion of this man's character, says that he wrote an article for a denominational paper on Diotrephes, and the editor told him that twenty-five deacons stopped the paper to show their resentment against being personally attacked."¹ Diotrephes' story is all too common and shameful.

9. What is John's counsel for Gaius according to the beginning of verse 11?
 - a. Why would John feel the need to remind Gaius of this admonition?

 - b. How might Gaius be tempted to respond to Diotrephes?

¹ Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

- c. What truths should we remember when we are dealing with a situation like this? See Psalm 37:1-11; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 10:13 to get you started. Feel free to add to this list.
10. In the second half of verse 11, what wise reminder is given that helps us look at situations like these with clarity and insight?
11. John spoke similarly in his other letters: John 10:27; 1 John 1:6-7; 2:4, 29; 3:6-10; 5:18-20. Again, how do these clear and defining statements help us when we're dealing with "people situations" within the church?
12. In contrast to Diotrephes, John points out the example of Demetrius. What do we learn about this brother in the Lord from verse 12?
13. What do you learn about the word *testimony* [Strong's #3140 (NIV *well spoken of*)] from verse 12?
14. The reason isn't given outright in the text as to why Demetrius is introduced at this juncture in John's letter to Gaius, yet the context clearly reveals why John mentions him. Based on what we've been studying, why does John mention Demetrius?

15. In God's Kingdom, God blesses those who devote themselves to Him. What do you learn from the following Scriptures about how to do that, why you should, and anything else you notice? See John 21:20-22; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Philippians 1:20; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:10-11.

16. John closes his letter as he did previously in 2 John. What does he desire to do according to verses 13-14?

17. What final blessing does John give in verse 14? What is conveyed in that little statement? See John 20:19, 21, 26; Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 6:23; 1 Peter 5:14.

18. *The Believer's Bible Commentary* ends this letter saying, "We are indebted to him [John] for these Letters, giving us an insight into life in the early days of Christianity, and setting forth timeless instruction for the people of God. Soon we shall speak face to face in heaven, and then we shall understand more fully the occasional obscurities of divine revelation."² What truths from our studies in John's letters have made an impact on your life and thinking?

19. What verse(s) have you grown to appreciate or appreciate even more during your study of this book?

20. Commentator David Jackman perceptively writes, "As we have looked at these three very different, and yet representative, church members around whom the letter revolves, we

² MacDonald, William. 1995. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Edited by Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

cannot fail to be challenged concerning our own discipleship. *The ultimate proof of the truth we profess to believe and the love we profess to exercise will be seen neither in words nor in feelings but in the progressive transformation of our character, and therefore of our lifestyle, into the image of Christ.*"

He goes on to say, "The challenge to us now is how much are we really prepared to let Jesus Christ change us. Is it to be my will or His? On this will depend the ultimate verdict, whether we proved to be frauds or followers. Who is at the centre of our lives? Is it 'self' with its longing to be first, to be number one? Or is it Christ, enabling us to keep faithful and to continue walking in the truth? There is still no issue with greater or more far-reaching implications for the church or for the Christian."³ *Dear friends, how much are we really prepared to let Jesus Christ change us?*

Peace be to you.

³ Jackman, David. 1988. *The Message of John's Letters: Living in the Love of God*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.