

# 3 John

Diotrephes and Demetrius (3 John 1:9-12)

## Read: Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)

**9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 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.**

**11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.**

**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.**

## Explain: Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Are there any repeated words?

As a reminder, the following words show up more than three times in **3 John**:  
 \_\_\_\_/your (14), do/does (10), I (10), beloved/\_\_\_\_/loves (7), not (6), \_\_\_\_\_ (6),  
 us/we (6)

What do the words mean?

**9 I wrote** [aorist active indicative; to “grave”, especially to write; figuratively, to describe: describe, write(-ing, -ten)] **to the church** [*ekklesia*; a calling out, i.e., (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): assembly, church], **but Diotrephes** [Jove-nourished], **who loves to have the preeminence** [*philoproteuon*; present active participle (i.e., repeatedly loves); to be fond of being \_\_\_\_\_, i.e., ambitious of distinction: love to have the preeminence; **Stott: The root of the problem was sin. Diotrephes . . . loves to be first or (RSV) ‘likes to put himself first’ (*philoproteuon*). He did not share the Father’s purpose that in all things Christ should have the supremacy (Colossians 1:18, *proteuon*).<sup>11</sup>** **among them, does not receive** [present active or middle or passive

<sup>11</sup> *The Letters of John*, John R. W. Stott (1988), page 234

deponent indicative; to admit (as a guest or (figuratively) teacher): receive] **us** [Marshall: Diotrophes is a standing warning against the danger of confusing personal ambition with zeal for the cause of the gospel.<sup>12</sup>. **10 Therefore, if I come** [second aorist active subjunctive; to come or go (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively): accompany, appear, bring, come, enter, fall out, go, grow, pass, resort, be set], **I will call to mind** [future active indicative; to remind \_\_\_\_\_, i.e., suggest to the (middle voice, one's own) memory: put in mind, remember, bring to (put in) remembrance] **his deeds** [*ergon*; toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication, an act: deed, doing, labor, work] **which he does** [present active indicative; to make or do (in a very wide application, more or less direct): abide, agree, appoint, band together, be, bear, betray, bring (forth), cast out, cause, commit, content, continue, deal, without any delay, (would) do(-ing), execute, exercise, fulfil, gain, give, have, hold, keep, lay wait, lighten the ship, make, mean, none of these things move me, observe, ordain, perform, provide, have purged, purpose, put, raising up, shew, shoot out, spend, take, tarry, transgress the law, work, yield; **Guzik: In rebuking an individual by name, the apostle of love is not acting outside of love . . . he is following the clear command of . . . Romans 16:17.**<sup>13</sup>], **prating against** [present active participle (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_ prates against); to be a babbler or trifler, i.e., (by implication) to berate idly or mischievously: prate against] **us with malicious** [hurtful, i.e., evil (properly, in effect or influence); figuratively, calamitous; also (passively) ill, i.e., diseased; but especially (morally) culpable, i.e., derelict, vicious, facinorous; neuter (singular) mischief, malice, or (plural) guilt; masculine (singular) the devil, or (plural) sinners: bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness)] **words** [*logos*; something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specially, (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e., Christ): account, cause, communication, doctrine, fame, intent, matter, mouth, preaching, question, reason, reckon, remove, say(-ing), shew, speech, talk, thing, none of these things move me, tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work]. **And not content** [present passive participle (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_ is not content); properly, to ward off, i.e., (by implication) to avail (figuratively, be satisfactory): be content, be \_\_\_\_\_, suffice, be sufficient] **with that, he himself does not receive** [present middle or passive deponent indicative; to admit (as a guest or (figuratively) teacher): receive] **the brethren** [*adelphos*; from G1 (as a connective particle) and *delphys* (the womb); a brother (literally or figuratively) near or remote (much like G1): brother], **and forbids**

<sup>12</sup> *The Epistles of John*, I. Howard Marshall (1978), page 90

<sup>13</sup> *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary*, David Guzik (2013)

[present active indicative; to estop, i.e., prevent (by word or act): forbid, hinder, keep from, let, not suffer, withstand] **those who wish to, putting** [present active indicative; to \_\_\_\_\_ (literally or figuratively): bring forth, cast (forth, out), drive (out), expel, leave, pluck (pull, take, thrust) out, put forth (out), send away (forth, out)] **them out of the church** [*ekklesia*; a calling out, i.e., (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): assembly, church].  
**[Matthew Henry: Ambition will breed malice against those who oppose it.<sup>14</sup>]**

**11 Beloved** [*agapetos*; (dearly, well) beloved, dear], **do not imitate** [present middle or passive deponent \_\_\_\_\_; to imitate: follow] **what is evil** [worthless (intrinsically, such), i.e., (subjectively) depraved, or (objectively) injurious: bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked], **but what is good** ["good" (in any sense, often as noun): benefit, good(-s, things), well]. **He who does good** [present active participle (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_ does good); to be a well-doer (as a favor or a duty): (when) do good (well)] **is** [present indicative; he (she or it) is; also (with neuter plural) they are: are, be(-long), call, can(-not), come, consisteth, follow, (that) is (to say), make, meaneth, profit, remaineth, wrestle] **of God** [a deity, especially the supreme Divinity; figuratively, a magistrate; by Hebraism, very: God, god(-ly, -ward)], **but he who does evil** [present active participle (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_ does evil); to be a bad-doer, i.e., (objectively) to injure, or (genitive) to sin: do(ing) evil] **has not seen** [perfect active indicative; to stare at i.e., (by implication) to discern clearly (physically or mentally); by extension, to attend to; by Hebraism, to experience; passively, to appear: behold, perceive, see, take heed] **God** [a deity, especially the supreme Divinity; figuratively, a magistrate; by Hebraism, very: God, god(-ly, -ward)].

**12 Demetrius** [belonging to \_\_\_\_\_] **has a good testimony** [*martyreo*; perfect passive indicative; to be a witness, i.e., testify (literally or figuratively): charge, give (evidence), bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness] **from all, and from the truth** [*aletheia* (uh-LAY-thay-uh); true, truth, verity] **itself. And we also bear witness** [*martyreo*; present active indicative; to be a witness, i.e., testify (literally or figuratively): charge, give (evidence), bear record, have (obtain, of) good (honest) report, be well reported of, testify, give (have) testimony, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness], **and you know** [perfect active indicative; to see (literally or figuratively); by implication, (in the perfect tense only) to know: be aware, behold, consider, (have) know(-ledge), look (on), perceive, see, be sure, tell, understand, wish, wot] **that our testimony** [*martyria*; evidence given (judicially or genitive case):

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<sup>14</sup> *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Matthew Henry (1998), page 2,459

record, report, testimony, witness] **is** [present indicative; he (she or it) is; also (with neuter plural) they are: are, be(-long), call, can(-not), come, consisteth, follow, (that) is (to say), make, meaneth, profit, remaineth, wrestle] **true** [*alethes*; true (as not concealing): true, truly, truth].

## Apply (What is the point?)

1. Some in the church will be ambitious (those like Diotrephes)
2. Some in the church will be marginalized (those that wanted to receive the traveling missionaries)
3. Some in the church will be faithful (those like Demetrius)
4. Repeated action \_\_\_\_\_

## Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the ambitious
2. \_\_\_\_\_ to the marginalized
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the faithful
4. Compare behavior with the \_\_\_\_\_

## Next week: Farewell Greeting (1:13-14)

**13 I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; 14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.**

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

## Homework

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for help
2. Read next week's text (multiple times in multiple ways) (**3 John 1:13-14**)
3. Talk to someone about the text
4. Share ([fb.com/OurSundaySchool](https://www.facebook.com/OurSundaySchool)) insights and questions by Thursday
5. Invite a member or non-member

## Resources

*The Letters of John*, John R. W. Stott (1988)

*The Epistles of John*, I. Howard Marshall (1978)

*The Enduring Word Bible Commentary*, David Guzik (2013)

*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Matthew Henry (1998)