

HEALTHY, WHOLE, AND HOLY



STUDY 1

A Genuine Holiness (3 JOHN 5-11)

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” 1 John 3:1-3 NIV

Because we live in the lavishing love of our Father, we are able to live healthy, whole, and holy lives, becoming more like Christ as we receive his love. This is an inner process that results in external change, a transformation that we cannot be produced by our own efforts. (1 John 1:7, Philippians 2:12-13)

What a joy is ours to be able to love others with the love we have received from God. We are no longer bound by the chains of sin, or of people pleasing, power plays, and performance pressures etc. We are free to live in genuine holiness.

Explore & Share

In 3 John, verses 9-11, we see a stark contrast to the thoughts above. Diotrephes enjoyed wielding power and was not prone to acquiesce to others, even to John. In addition to not honouring the requests of John, he refused hospitality to people of God and scorned those who did offer hospitality. This was a direct contradiction to kingdom of heaven living (Romans 12:13). Diotrephes had defied the leadership of John, an apostle tasked with oversight of many churches. It makes sense, therefore, that John would address this issue directly, even though we don't fully know the relationship between Gaius and Diotrephes.

1. The root of the problem (3 John 9-10) The amazing truth in this passage is that Diotrephes' problem was not an error in theology but an error in character. The Expositor's Bible Commentary (2004) makes this remark: “Diotrephes is more interested in furthering his own position than in furthering the work of God. ... Diotrephes was called out not because he violated sound teaching regarding the person and nature of Jesus Christ but because his "life" was a contradiction to the truth of the Gospel.”

Discuss: *What is the link between character and holiness? What can we do to safeguard our pursuit of holiness? (Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:2)*

2. Honouring others (3 John 5-6) Even though they were strangers to him, Gaius showed hospitality to brothers and sisters in Christ. This is shown in direct contrast to the response from Diotrephes. John commended Gaius for it. He encouraged him to continue in this level of care in verse 6, “please send them on their way in a manner that honors God.” NIV (see James 2:15-16.)

Discuss: *How do we have genuine care for strangers? Share examples of a time a stranger reached out to help you, or you took a chance (or stepped out of your comfort zone) by offering help to a stranger.*

3. Imitating others (3 John 11) The Greek word for ‘imitate’ is focused on authentic following, modelling or emulating a mentor, “imitating what is good”.

Discuss: *In what ways are we impacted, both negatively and positively by what we regularly see? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 15:33.) How can we place ourselves in environments that encourage us to follow what is fitting for the kingdom of heaven? Pray for each other — for the ability to discern evil and good, for the will to follow what is good, and for joy in surrender to the Holy Spirit.*