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Doctrinal Studies Bible Church  
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Series: Book of 3rd John

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## **The Book of 3<sup>rd</sup> John (07)** **(Love of Preeminence)**

The book of 3rd John was written as a personal letter from the Apostle John to Gaius a prominent member of an unnamed church in Asia Minor. In today's lesson text, we are told of another official letter sent earlier by John to this church requesting the church's participation in providing grace hospitality to those travelling missionaries recommended by John.

We will examine today's lesson text by the following four homiletic points.

- **Official letter from John (9a)**
  - "I wrote (grapho / a.a.ind.1ps) to the church (ekklesia)."
- **Official authority rejected by pastor of church (9b)**
  - "But Diotrephes, who loves to have preeminence."
- **Official details attacked by pastor (9b-10)**
  - "He does not accept what we say. 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."
- **Official doctrinal principle of imitation was given to Gaius (11)**
  - "Beloved, do not **imitate (mimeomai / p.m.impv.2ps)** what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God."

**This lesson will study four aspects of the danger of the Love of Preeminence to the unity of the local church.**

### **1. Diotrephes (nurtured by Zeus) was apparently a Greek convert trained and appointed as pastor of an unnamed church in Asia Minor.**

Paul was the main Apostolic Missionary of Asia Minor (Acts 19:10; 20:17-21, 27-35).

After Paul's death, John took over this Apostolic Mission work. Some theologians believe Diotrephes may have been appointed pastor by the Pauline team, but did not accept the Apostolic Authority of John.

### **2. Not only did Diotrephes reject the Apostolic Authority but attacked the content of John's request regarding the church providing grace hospitality to those travelling missionaries recommended by John.**

John listed four actions of Diotrephes that John considered **evil** (3 John 10).

- He gossiped maliciously against John.
- He rejected the request for grace hospitality.
- He forbade any member of the church to support it.
- He threatened to put that member out of the church.

**3. John described the behavior of this pastor as philoproteuo (p.a.ptc.nsm) [one who loves preeminence] (3 John 9).**

Philoproteuo is a sin of the power lust trend of the Old Sin Nature (OSN), a product of an Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus (OMCD) worldly thinking life style. If you are interested in this subject check out our [Spiritual Life Dynamics](#) series.

Diotrephes was putting himself on equal footing with the authority of Apostle John. John told Gaius that he would deal with the deeds of Diotrephes when he visits the church (3 John 10).

John warned Gaius to not get caught up in the evil but rather than in the good of God (3 John 11).

In fact, John commanded Gaius to imitate (mimeomai / p.m.impv.2ps) the Divine Good of God and not to imitate the evil of Diotrephes (3 John 11).

**Only Jesus Christ is PREEMINENT of the Church**

(Col.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.**”

**4. When Jesus’ aunt, Salome, came to request seats of privilege (right and left sides of Jesus) in His kingdom for her two sons (James and John), she was also operating from philoproteuo (love of preeminence) (Matt.20:20-23).**

She was an over-protecting and interfering mother of two adult independent sons.

She was operating from several false premises.

- **1 st** - She believes promotions in life for believers come from who you know and favors. We don’t change the eternal plan of God. **It changes us!**
  - (Matt.20:23) “My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”
- **2 nd** - She is not making a distinction between First and Second Comings by asking for sons to sit on right and left. Therefore she is not able to distinguish between soteriology and eschatology.
- **3 rd** - She does not realize that you bear a cross before you can wear a crown.

**Jesus gets to the root of the problem:**

(Matt.20:22) “You do not know what you are asking? Are you able to drink the up that I am about to drink?”

**Let’s think and talk it out doctrinally - What is the Will of God for your two sons – and you as their mother?**

**Jesus was asking if she was requesting that her sons were to take the right and left crosses with Him.** Even if it were possible, she might want to ask them first!