Journey CHURCH
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Session 8 Leader Guide

3 John - Imitate What Is Good

BIG IDEA: 3 John gives us two very different examples of how to respond to God's truth. Gaius models love, hospitality, and faithfulness. Diotrephes models pride, control, and self-centeredness. John's challenge is simple: do not imitate what is evil, but imitate what is good.

OPEN — SHOW ME HOW

Opening Question: Think about something you learned by watching someone else do it. **Why was seeing an example more helpful than just hearing instructions?**

Read: 3 John

- Sometimes the clearest way to understand truth is to see it lived out.
- Gaius gives us a picture of someone putting God's truth into practice.
- Diotrephes shows what happens when pride and self-interest take over.
- John calls believers to **imitate what is good**.

1. GAIUS LIVED THE TRUTH

Read: 3 John 1–8

John commends Gaius for the way he cared for other believers, even people he did not personally know.

- He welcomed fellow believers.
- He showed hospitality to strangers.
- He helped support those serving Christ.

- He treated God's people in a way that honored God.

Gaius didn't just believe the truth. **He lived it.**

His faith showed up in the way he treated people.

Truth should change the way we love and serve others.

2. DIOTREPHES PUT HIMSELF FIRST

Read: 3 John 9–10

Diotrephes gives us the opposite example.

Tony describes him as the first **"Tyrant of the Church."**

His problem was not simply disagreement. At the heart of his behavior was **self-centeredness**.

- He wanted control.
- He rejected John's authority.
- He spoke against others.
- He refused to welcome fellow believers.
- He opposed people who tried to show hospitality.

His ambition led him away from truth and into harmful behavior.

Pride always asks, "What do I want?" Love asks, "What is best for others?"

3. WATCH OUT FOR SELF-CENTERED FAITH

Diotrephes shows how easy it is for church life to become about ourselves.

We can begin thinking:

- I'm too busy.
- That's not my responsibility.
- Someone else can help.
- I don't want to be inconvenienced.
- What am I getting out of this?

But following Jesus means learning to put the needs of others ahead of our own comfort.

Serving others will often cost us something—time, convenience, attention, or resources.

4. IMITATE WHAT IS GOOD

Read: 3 John 11

"Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good." — 3 John 11

We are constantly learning from the people around us.

John reminds Gaius to be careful which examples he follows.

- Don't imitate pride.
- Don't imitate selfishness.
- Don't imitate people who tear others down.
- Imitate people whose lives reflect God's truth and love.

The people we imitate help shape the people we become.

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5. DO SOMETHING WITH WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

John's letters have repeatedly called believers to:

- Walk in the light.
- Confess sin.
- Love God's people.
- Resist the world.
- Listen to the Holy Spirit.
- Hold tightly to truth.
- Trust Jesus.
- Serve others.

The final question is not simply, **"What have you learned?"**

It is:

"What will you do with what you've learned?"

Knowing truth matters. But truth is meant to be **lived**.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Imitating what is good means:

- Let truth shape the way you live.
- Put people ahead of your own convenience.
- Reject pride and self-centeredness.
- Choose examples worth following.
- Turn what you've learned into action.

Don't just know what is good. Imitate it.

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GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Who is someone whose faith you respect because you can actually see it in the way they live? What do they do that stands out to you?

2. Gaius showed love to people he didn't even know. What are some practical ways we can show hospitality or care to people we might normally overlook?

3. Diotrephes wanted to be first and stay in control. Where do pride and the desire for control most often show up in our own lives?

4. What are some excuses we use when helping or serving someone would inconvenience us? Which one are you most tempted to use?

5. John says, “Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.” How do the people we spend time with influence the kind of person we're becoming?

6. Looking back over 1, 2, and 3 John, what truth from this study has challenged you or affected you the most? Why?

7. If someone watched the way you live this week, what is one change you could make so they would see more clearly what following Jesus looks like?