

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

3 John 9

Diotrephes: "loveth to have the preeminence among them..."

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

He... "loves to have the preeminence."

- The word "preeminence" in the Greek is "philoproteuo"
 - It means to be fond of being first – ambitious of distinction; love to have the preeminence.
- It was his love of being first (a sin in itself) that led to other sins that he committed. **Mt. 18:1-6; Lk. 14:8-11; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Pet. 2:1**

2

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

He... "loves to have the preeminence."

- Prov. 8:13** "Pride and arrogancy... do I hate."
11:2 "When pride cometh then cometh shame."
16:5 "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord."
21:4 "A high look and a proud heart, is sin."
28:25 "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife."

3

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

The Scriptures Teach...

- Not a new problem. **Mt. 18:1; 20:20ff**
- Jesus spoke out against the scribes and Pharisees. **Mt. 23:6-12**
- Paul taught that in matters of honor we should give preference to one another. **Rom. 12:3, 10**
- We must be humble – servitude found in the mind of Christ - **cf. Phil. 2:2-8**

4

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

Rejected Apostolic Authority

- "but Diotrephes,... receiveth us not."

5

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The Scriptures Teach... chain of authority.

- As Creator, God inherently has all authority. **Ps. 22:27-28; 103:19**
- However, the Father has delegated all authority to His Son – **Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22**

6

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- Jesus delegated authority to His apostles. – Jno. 13:20
 - He sent the Holy Spirit to assist them and guide them into all the truth. – Jno. 14:26; 16:12-13
 - Thus they could speak and write with the authority of God behind them. – cf. 1 Cor. 14:37-38; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:15
- This is why we find that the early church “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine...” – Acts 2:42

7

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

Spoke evil of his brethren... 3 John 10

- “Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words” ASV
- “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words” KJV

8

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- “Prating” ASV (*fluoo*), “to boil up,” “throw up bubbles,” of water; and since bubbles are hollow and useless things, “to indulge in empty and foolish talk” (Thayer)
 - It means to be a babbler or trifler.
 - By implication it means to berate idly or mischievously.
- The word “wicked or malicious (KJV)” is “poneros” and means “hurtful, evil”
 - “*tina logos poneerois,*” to accuse one falsely with malicious words, 3 John 10 (Thayer)
- Diotrephes gave little concern, about how he spoke with evil and hurtful words concerning his brethren!

9

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The Scriptures Teach

- We will be judged for the idle words that we use. – Mt. 12:36-37
- We are commanded not to speak evil of one another. – Jms. 4:11-12; Cf. Jms. 3:5ff
 - To do so is to speak evil of the law of God!

10

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- The Scriptures Teach

The Old Testament addressed this subject many times.

 1. “The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver” (Prov. 10:20).
 2. David prayed, “Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3). We must be careful to weigh well what we say.

11

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3. “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles” (Prov. 21:23).
4. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in network of silver” (Prov. 25:11).
5. “In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression; but he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely” (Prov. 10:19).

12

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

6. "He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. 13:3).
7. "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov. 29:20).

13

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

8. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but a grievous word stireth up anger" (Prov. 15:1).
9. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21).

Jms. 1:19-21 "Ye know (this), my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

14

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

- While it may be necessary at times to "rebuke" our brethren (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2)...
 - We are given the proper tools (i.e., the Scriptures themselves) - 2 Tim. 3:16
 - We are instructed how to approach those in error - 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Gal. 6:1

15

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

Abused church discipline.

- "Neither doth he himself receive the brethren"
- "Them that would he forbiddeth and casteth (them) out of the church."
- In two ways, then, he was abusing church discipline...
 - Refusing to associate with those worthy of association.
 - Using it as a weapon to manipulate others to do what he wanted.

Cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; 2 Thess 3:6-15

16

The Mistakes Of Diotrephes

- Desiring preeminence
- Rejecting apostolic authority
- Speaking evil of brethren
- Abusing church discipline
- **REMEMBER: With all the mistakes of Diotrephes, somebody let it happen!!!**

Diotrephes Had A Choice...

- One must not have all four of these to be guilty of sin...
 - Any one is an abomination before God!
 - Any one can destroy brotherly relations!

You Have A Choice ... Don't Make The Same Mistakes as Diotrephes !

- If YOU would gain the favor of God, He must be first in your life – NOT SELF!
- *Mt. 6:33 "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*
- May John's description of the mistakes of Diotrephes serve as a warning for us!