

# Lessons From III John

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## Imitating That Which Is Good

(III Jn 11-12)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
  - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From III John."
  - a. Last Sunday we discussed Diotrephes and the characteristics that followed him.
    - i. How he always put himself first.
    - ii. How he rejected apostolic authority.
    - iii. How he spoke evil about the brethren.
    - iv. How he even abused church discipline.
  - b. Today we are going to focus on how John expected Gaius to "not imitate what is evil."
    - i. This was to be done by "Imitating That Which Is Good."
3. Have you ever wondered why John felt it necessary to tell Gaius to imitate Demetrius?
  - a. Didn't we see...
    - i. That Gaius was a man whose soul was prosperous?
    - ii. That he was walking in the truth?
    - iii. That he was commended for his hospitality?
  - b. Wouldn't that mean that Gaius was one worthy of imitation?
    - i. The short answer is yes, but what does that tell us?
4. It tells us that...
  - a. We all are to strive to live lives so that other "can" imitate us.
  - b. We all are in need of righteous people to look to as good role models the we can imitate.
5. Let us examine what it takes to imitate that which is good, but first we must understand that...

### I. We Are All Naturally Imitators

- A. Children imitate their parents
  1. This is never more true than in their early years.
    - i. They want to be "just like mommy or daddy."
  2. They quickly pick up their parents mannerisms.
    - i. The way we talk, walk...
  3. It is simply something they naturally do.
- B. Teenagers imitate their peers and popular idols
  1. When kids get older they do always seek to imitate their parents anymore but are still imitating others.
  2. As one brother put it, "For better or worse (usually worse), they seek to emulate those in their peer group, or those whom they hold in high regard (athletes, musicians, etc.)" (Sermon: Imitating The Good by Copeland, Mark)
    - i. Even though they say they "are their own person" you can usually easily tell what that have been watching or listening to.

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- C. Christians imitate those they hold in high regard
  - 1. I, like you, have no doubt seen many brethren who have imitated the attitudes, dispositions, and conduct of those preachers, elders, or other member they have great respect for.
    - i. I put myself in this category also trying to imitate those I have great respect for.
  - 2. This can be a good thing and a bad thing.
    - i. For those that brethren hold in high regard that are worthy of such this is a good thing.
    - ii. For those that brethren hold in high regard that are not worthy of such this is a bad thing.
      - a. How many people have "followed" a preacher or elders down the path of destruction, it's too many to count.
      - b. Look at all those that try and imitate people like...
        - 1. Max Lucado
        - 2. Rich Atchley
        - 3. Billy Graham
        - 4. Joel Osteen
- D. Thus people are natural imitators
  - 1. Being aware of this fact we should therefore make decisions with this understanding and appreciate John's exhortation to Gaius and thus to us that...

### II. We Should Imitate That Which Is Good

- A. Why is this so important
  - 1. John gives us the answer.
    - i. **III Jn 11b** "...Whoever does good is from God..."<sup>1</sup>
  - 2. Thus the one doing good bears the marks or fruit that they are "from God."
    - i. **I Jn 5:18** "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."
- B. Why is this so important
  - 1. John gives us the second part to the answer.
    - i. **III Jn 11c** "...whoever does evil has not seen God."
  - 2. Thus the one doing evil bears the mark or fruit that they "have not seen God" and in actuality are a child of the devil instead.
    - i. **I Jn 3:6** "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him."
    - ii. **I Jn 3:10** "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- C. Why is this so important
  - 1. Because we become those we imitate.
    - i. Remember we are natural imitators.
  - 2. Who is the better role model then?
    - i. The righteous!!!!

### III. We Have Many Good Examples To Imitate

- A. Since we are natural imitators we need to be selective who we imitate
  - 1. Thankfully the Bible is full of people to imitate.
- B. We should imitate God
  - 1. Jesus encouraged us to do so.
    - i. **Mt 5:43-48** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
  - 2. Paul instructs us to do so.
    - i. **Ep 5:1-2** "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."
- C. We should imitate New Testament people
  - 1. As long as they are imitating God.
    - i. **I Co 11:1** "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."
  - 2. Examples of N.T. Christians that we can look up to.
    - i. For marriage couples there is Aquila and Priscilla.
      - a. **Ro 16:3-4** "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well."
    - ii. For those blessed by God with material riches there is the example of Philemon.
      - a. **Pl 4-7** "I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, 6 and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. 7 For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you."

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- iii. For young men we find Timothy.
  - a. **Ph 2:19-22** "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. 20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel."
- iv. For women we find Phoebe.
  - a. **Ro 16:1-2** "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well."
- 3. This is not to suggest there aren't those in the O.T. to imitate because there are.
  - i. Joseph, Daniel, Barzillai the Gileadite...
- D. We should imitate many of our fellow Christians today
  - 1. Paul encourage this need.
    - i. **Ph 3:17** "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us."
  - 2. We need to be careful because not everyone who professes to Christ-like behaves in such a manner.
    - i. Thus the need we have for us to "know" the Scriptures so that we can recognize those that are "of God" or those that "have not seen God."

### CONCLUSION

- 1. Brethren we are those that will indeed imitate someone or something let us make sure that that someone or something is pure righteous and upright.
  - a. **Ph 4:8** "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
- 2. Question: Is he or she that you imitate one that you should be imitating?
  - a. If so encourage that one all the more and thus yourself to stay strong fighting the good fight of faith.
  - b. If not remember that you will imitate that one and thus change, find and follow one that is worthy of imitation.
- 3. Invitation
  - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
    - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
- i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
  - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
  - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
  - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
  - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
  - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**