

Imitate What Is Good

Text: 3 John 11

Introduction

1. John's admonition for Gaius to imitate what is good not what is evil is applicable for us today.
2. In this short epistle we have examples of both the good and the evil.

I. Imitate What Is Good: Gaius (vv. 1-8)

- A. John prayed that Gaius might prosper and be in health even as his soul was—that his physical welfare would be commensurate with his spiritual welfare.
 1. Unless our spiritual prosperity is at least equal to our temporal prosperity, material prosperity ceases to be a blessing.
 - a. There is no profit if one gains the whole world but loses his soul. (Mark 8:36)
 - b. The parable of the rich fool. (Luke 12:16-21)
 - c. Riches will ruin a person if his soul is not right.
 - 1) Consider 1 Timothy 6:9-10.
 - 2) On the other hand, if the prosperity of one's soul is equal with his health and wealth then he can do much good.
 2. How different the world would be if this prayer of John were realized in all people.
 - a. Many of the wealthy would become poverty stricken.
 - b. Many of the poor would become wealthy.
 - c. Many now in good health would die in their weakened condition.
 - d. Many diseased, crippled and unhealthy people would become a picture of health.
 3. What if this prayer were realized in us?
 - a. Would we die of starvation because we so seldom feed our souls? (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 10:25)
 - b. Would we become physically weak even as we are spiritually weak because of a lack of spiritual exercise? (Heb. 5:13-14)
 - c. Others might suppose us to be physically dead inasmuch as we sometimes seem to be spiritually lifeless. (1 Cor. 11:30; Eph. 5:14)
- B. Characteristics of Gaius which we should imitate.
 1. He appropriated truth in his mind and heart. (v. 3)
 - a. He believed the truth. (John 17:17)

- b. He did not believe the false teaching of his time concerning the person and work of Christ (Gnosticism).
 - 1) Some doubted the deity of Christ, His preexistence and incarnation because He suffered indignity and anguish. (cf. John 1:1, 14)
 - 2) Some doubted His manhood saying that Deity was above such suffering so they taught that His body was merely an illusion. (1 John 1:1-2)
 - 2. The truth was manifested in his life and conduct. (v. 3)
 - a. His practical life was in harmony with his professed teaching—not hypocritical.
 - b. The truth that he believed was a living force in his conduct.
 - 1) Consider verse 11.
 - 2) Consider 1 John 3:7-10.
 - 3. He was hospitable. (vv. 5-6; cf. Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2)
 - 4. He supported the preaching and teaching of the truth. (v. 8)

II. Do Not Imitate What Is Evil: Diotrophes (vv. 9-11)

- A. He loved to have the preeminence. He wanted to be first and foremost.
 - 1. One is not to think more highly of himself than he ought. (Rom. 12:3)
 - 2. Greatness comes from serving (Matt. 23:10-12)
 - 3. The proper attitude the Christian is to have toward other Christians is seen in Philippians 2:1-4.
- B. He rejected the authority of John, an apostle of Christ.
 - 1. Reject an apostle, reject Christ. (Luke 10:16)
 - 2. Reject the teaching of an apostle, reject God. (1 Thes. 4:8)
- C. He was prating (Footnote NKJV: “talking nonsense”) against John with wicked words (idle, foolish and unprofitable talk directed with a malicious intent). (See Eph. 5:3-4)
- D. He would not show hospitality to the brethren nor allow the rest of the church to do their duty toward those worthy ones needing help. (v. 10)
- E. John forecast the punishment of this wicked one.

Conclusion

- 1. Which is seen in your life? Which do you imitate?
- 2. The destiny of your soul depends on your answer and actions.
 - a. Are you of God?
 - b. Have you not seen God?