**Lessons from a Lockdown**

**Volume II**

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**Day 89**

**3 John 1:6-10**

They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. How have I helped missionaries in the past? How can I help them now?

2. Do I love to be first? Why?

3. Do I struggle with gossiping about people? How about sharing negative things about people om social media?

4. Would God approve of the things I share in social media? Why?

5. Why would God allow people like Diotrephes in the church?

***Insight:***

John's words suggest that Gaius may have helped Christians from another city. Perhaps he left him stay in his home or perhaps he gave them money, food or other provisions. John told them to send them on their way so they were headed somewhere. Perhaps they were missionaries or messengers or simply travelers. We are not sure who they were or how Gaius helped them. But we do know that Gaius helped them.

We should try to help the Christians we encounter whenever we can. Most of the time we get to help the Christians in our ministry. It's easier to help them because we know them. Perhaps we too have been helped by other Christians in our group. But it is not as easy to help Christians not from our area or Christians we do not know. But we should imitate Gaius' heart. He was hospitable and helpful. John says that when we do this, we "work together for the truth." This instruction is particularly needed in the case of the missionary. Most missionaries would need to give up their homes and jobs for the sake of the gospel. If they are not paid ministers, they would have to look for a new place to stay and new jobs. Considering that they are there for the sake of God's work, all the more we should support them.

Diotrephes loved to be first. What does this mean? Perhaps it means he wanted to get his way or to be in charge all the time. Do we struggle with following other people? Do we often think our way is better? Perhaps he wanted all the attention to be on him or be the center of attention always. Do we struggle with sharing the lime light? Perhaps he did not want John or any other leader to overshadow him. Perhaps he preferred being served rather than serving. Whatever wanting to be first meant, Diotrephes did not want to welcome them. He refused to welcome other believers and stop those who want to do so. He also spread malicious nonsense about John and other Christians. It's hard to imagine how a person can be Christian and yet do all of these things. To top it off, it seems Diotrephes was a leader because he could put Christians outside of the church. If the early church had these kinds of problems we should not be surprised if we have the same kind of problems today. There are Christians who are not acting like Christians. A few might even abuse their authority. But this should not affect our faith in God or in his church. But why would God allow such people in the church? Perhaps it's because God knows that we can deal with the issue righteously. Just like John, our role is to call attention to what such people are doing. We should not remain silent but speak up against what seems to be unchristlike behavior by our brothers and sisters. But when we do speak up, let's make sure we speak the truth in love.

Spreading malicious nonsense is sinful. Traditionally, we do this when we gossip about people. It is malicious because our purpose is not to help. Technology and modern culture have given us more ways to do this. One popular way is through social media. When we share posts without first checking if the information is true then we may be spreading nonsense. We may also be leading other people astray. Even if the information is true, spreading it when the intention is not to help is malicious. Anything that we do that contributes to the ruin of a person's reputation is malicious. Even if the person already has a bad reputation, adding on to it still wrong. There is already too much hatred going around in media today. As Christians, we should not contribute to the hate.

Perhaps Diotrephes wanted to undermine the authority of John. We should be wary of church members who have a tendency to be speak negatively of leadership. By nature, we are already suspicious of leadership because what we experience in the world. It doesn't usually take much for us to believe negative statements about leaders. We should always guard our hearts against bitterness and lack of trust. One way to do this always giving the person criticized an opportunity to share his side.

Let's be like Gaius and not Diotrephes.