



“Imitation”

August 30, 2020

3 John 1-15 (ESV)

¹The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

²Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. ³For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, ⁶who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. ⁷For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.

⁹I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. ¹⁰So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

¹¹Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. ¹²Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

¹⁵Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

Introduction:

1. Understanding the imitation test

3 John 11

The Bible calls us to imitate God and people.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7)

We must be careful whom we imitate because a person's behaviour reveals their true spiritual condition.

3 John 11

The chief mark of a Christian—and therefore the chief mark we should look for in those whom we imitate—is consistent godly behavior in doing what is good.

3 John 11

2. Illustrating the imitation test

You can spot church dictators who are not worthy of imitation because

a) they are the kind of person who always has to be the boss

3 John 9

b) other godly leaders identify them as problem people

3 John 10

c) they slander other church leaders

3 John 10

d) they abuse power and people

3 John 10

You can spot Christians who are worthy of imitation because

3 John 12

a) they have a good reputation

b) their lives are consistent with the truth

c) godly church leaders commend them

3. Applying the imitation test

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12