

“Postcard: 3 John”

Series: Postcards

(Part 4 of 4)

Open: List differences in the way: a parent confronts a child, an employer confronts an employee, and a coach confronts a player.

Explore: Read Galatians 2:11-16.

God used Peter to help break the stronghold of following Jewish traditions and customs in the church (see Acts 11:1-8). This opened the door for non-Jews to be saved. Unfortunately, Peter fell back into his Jewish roots and Paul had to confront Peter about the issue.

1. For what reason, did Paul make the decision to confront Peter (vs. 11-12)? Who or what caused Peter to separate himself from Gentile believers?
2. What impact did Peter’s actions have on other believers (vs. 13)?
3. How did Paul choose to confront Peter (vs. 14)? Do you think this method of confrontation was necessary? Why or why not?
4. The matter of legalism in the church provided Paul with the opportunity to spell out the doctrine of justification by faith vs. works (vs. 15-16). What does this incident say to us about the importance of accountability among believers?

Reflect: Review key points from the lesson before answering the questions.

1. According to the lesson, Diotrephes was a malicious gossip in the church. Why do you believe John chose to confront this issue publicly – through a letter? What are the pros and cons of confronting Diotrephes in this manner?
2. What would you say to someone who dismisses Christianity based on the charge that “the church is full of hypocrites?”
3. In spite of some bad examples in the church, there are a lot of people we can follow. Share one example of someone you look up to spiritually and explain why you picked them.
4. Read 1 Timothy 4:12. In which area, do you set a good example for others to follow? In which area would you like to improve?
5. When it comes to being the right example, how important is it to have people in your life who will speak the truth in love to you?

Apply: Live it.

As a CARE Group: Share ways group members have set an example of faithfulness to you. Discuss specific ways you can increase accountability in the group.

As an individual: In what area of your life, do you struggle to be an example to others? How will you work on this area in the weeks ahead?

Listening Guide Notes

The story behind the postcard...

^[9] “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. ^[10] So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.”

–3 John 9-10 (NIV)

When it comes to examples...

1. Christians aren’t always what they should be.

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

–1 John 4:1 (NIV)

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” –Acts 17:11 (NIV)

2. It’s important to follow the right example.

^[12] “Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true. ^[13] I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. ^[14] I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.” –3 John 12-14 (NIV)

3. It’s important to follow the right example.

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

–John 13:15 (NIV)

“...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

–1 Peter 5:3 (NIV)

“...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” –1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)