



Daily Devotionals

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3 JOHN 9-14 LIVING IN CHRIST'S GLORY

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.

¹¹ Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. 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.

Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

There is no place for self-elevating egos in the life of the Church and certainly they are counterproductive when displayed by those in positions of leadership. We are called to be in unity with one another and even with our brothers and sisters beyond the immediate worshiping community and in the worldwide Church. When we elevate ourselves above our neighbors we are not only disobeying Jesus' command to love one another, we are also stepping away from the leadership path of Jesus who came to serve and not to be served (Matthew 20:28). To seek exclusive authority is at its core a desire to dominate others and to usurp the place of God. Since it is self-centered and disobedient to God it is a grievous evil. Such a person should not be followed for he will only draw us away from Christ and eternal reconciliation with God. We are to look to those who do what is good, that is who live in obedience to God and whose lives are a witness to God. Such people may not appear to have the trappings of power, but neither did Jesus. Yet in the will of God those who submit themselves to God and lead others by serving them are the greatest in the kingdom.

While self-centeredness is a major obstacle to our relationship with God, self-giving is the path of obedience and reconciliation. If we know that God is gracious and loving, therefore self-giving, but we refuse to live up to our purpose to be his image in the world, then we simply do not really know God. To live a life that denies God's revealed nature demonstrates that you are not a member of the Church, the outpost of his kingdom on earth, even if you are an authorized leader in the institutional church.

In the old Westerns on TV and in the movies, the cowboys and other patrons of the saloons were often told to check their guns at the door. When it comes to being a member of the Church, we would do well to check our egos at the baptismal font. Jesus said:

¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you (John 13:13-15).

So St. John wrote in his Gospel:

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 256)

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