

## News & Notes

Sunday, December , 2009

**Remember in Prayer:** Jaunita Akin; Arland Anderson; Mary Baily; Grady Gowdy; James Grogan; Dot Ketchum; Dallas King; John and Deliah Mann; Carl Perkins; Lowell Poff; Ann Ray; Curtis Ray; Katherine Shaw; Bill Taylor; Calvin Ursery; Joan Wilkerson; Alvie Williford;

**Sympathy** is extended the family of Dallas King.

**Pantry item** for the month of December is cooking oil.

Several weekly updates are made to the website. If you have internet access, check it out at [www.ashlandcoc.org](http://www.ashlandcoc.org).

If there are any concerns about **changing the meeting time of the Wednesday evening Bible class**, please see the elders.

**Ashland Events:** Today: Prayer meeting at 4:00 PM; Youth devotional following evening services at the Northrop's;

### Sermon in Preview:

AM: David's Mighty Men: Abishai (2Samuel 23:18-19-12)

PM: David's Mighty Men: Benaiah (2Samuel 23:20-23)

### For the Record (December 13, 2009):

Attendance: 56      Contribution: \$1080.00      Budget: \$1459.00

### *The Ashland Church of Christ*

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#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

#### Shepherds:

Barney King  
Jeff Roberson  
Carrol Street

# ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

*"Note Those Who So Walk"*

Philippians 3:17

2Thessalonians 3:14

## Diotrephes — Loving the Preeminence

Jeremy Northrop

Of the four times the word 'note' is used in the New Testament of the New King James version, two times it is used in the negative sense (Romans 16:17; 2Thessalonians 3:14). As Christians today note or mark different ones, they are to note both those who are doing well and those who are not behaving as they ought to behave. 3John 9-11 records some information about a man by the name of Diotrephes. What is recorded is not favorable toward him at all. The text says:

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

This passage teaches several things about the danger of the attitude which Diotrephes displayed. There are even several things which begin with the letter 'D' (four of the five major points are the work of brother Cliff Goodwin while the fifth is

added by the author).

First, one might consider the **desire** of Diotrephes. He was one who loved “to have the preeminence.” He desired first place. He wanted to be ‘number one,’ so to speak. He would promote himself because he wanted people to notice him. This kind of desire only did harm to the church. Notice, John initially wanted, even tried, to write to the church. Yet, the church never knew it because Diotrephes loved to have first place. Diotrephes loved to be above everyone else, or so he thought.

Today, there are those who do not want to humble themselves before God but want to be in first place. This sinful attitude is not only destructive to them but it is destructive to the whole church. John eventually had to write a letter to Gaius so the information could get to the church. In the letter to Gaius, he notes the evil work of Diotrephes.

In fact, the desire of Diotrephes was so great that one can easily see his **defiance**. Again, John wrote to the church but Diotrephes would not receive the letter. He was deceptive, withholding something from the church which belonged to the church. Verse 10 says Diotrephes was ‘prating’ against John and others. The idea of prating is to speak non-sense. This idea is seen in the verse because he was using ‘malicious words.’ He went as far as to speak things which were not true because he wanted so badly to have the preeminence. He went on to kick people out of the church not receiving the brethren.

Again today, there are those who are not interested in exalting Christ or glorifying God. They want only to exalt themselves. These people may even go as far as to speak untrue things about others because they do not wish for anyone else to get due credit. Interestingly, there is only one who can determine one’s status in the church — God. He informed man what they must do in order to be in the church.

Then, one might notice the **denunciation** of Diortrephes. His own quest for power accomplished the exact opposite of what he was seeking to accomplish! In his quest for preeminence, he was lowered to a place of no preeminence at all. This is the end of people who seek to exalt themselves and not God. In the end, people who desire self-proclamation are only hurting themselves.

If Christians today desire to be high or exalted, they must become low. James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” Peter said it this way: “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time....” (1Peter 5:6).

His desire and defiance which led to his denunciation shows his quest for **domination**. The attitude of putting self above all else leads to nothing less than a disrespect for God-given authority. The person who desires first place does not care about the authority given to elders in the church. The person who defies the church does not care about the authority of God. They only try to push their own authority on everyone else. Of course, in truth, they have no authority at all. It is interesting to notice the extent to which Diotrpehes went to propagate himself. He was doing things which he had no authority to do — speaking evil of others, not receiving the brethren, forbidding others to receive the brethren, and kicking people out of the church. Diotrephes had no authority to do such thing but simply wanted domination over the brethren.

Finally, it is interesting to see the final **demise** of Diotrephes. He tried to control the church but the Holy Spirit got John’s letter to the church implicitly through Gaius. In the end, what was said and recorded in the Bible about Diotrephes is really rather sad. He is infamous for being a person who only exalted himself. The Holy Spirit records him as a person who was evil and of a malicious mind. Nothing good of him is said in the text. This is the final end of anyone who wishes only to exalt themselves. They only end up hurting themselves.

Again, people today try to exalt themselves but would do well to learn from the end of Diotrephes. They end up only hurting themselves. They could end up losing their own souls. They are not concerned with what is really important.

John ends the section by exhorting the reader: “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.” The connection is clear. If Christians follow in the way of Diotrephes, then they are doing what is evil. The exhortation is to imitate what is good because what is good is what is of God.