

Field Guide and Leader Guide 8.24.25

Scripture Reference

3 John 9-10

Summary

Who we really are is revealed in our relationships — how we act when we feel overlooked, challenged, or misunderstood. And here's the hard truth: pride is the fastest way to destroy relationships, even the ones rooted in Truth and Love. John's short letter to Gaius doesn't pull any punches. He calls out Diotrephes, a man whose ego hijacked an entire church community. Pride tends to start small - a need to be noticed, a need to win, a need to control - but it never stays small. It grows like weeds, digging deep roots that choke out humility, unity, and grace.

But John doesn't just give us a villain to point at. He gives us a choice. On one side, pride destroys what God is building. On the other, the Spirit of Truth produces something better. Jesus shows us what this looks like - not clinging to status, but washing feet. Not pushing people away, but opening the door wide. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When we reflect Jesus, when we keep in step with the Spirit, pride can't take root. The question is not just whether pride exists in others, but whether the Spirit is alive in us.

Questions and Follow-Up

1. **Pride often creeps in subtly and tends to grow over time. Where have you seen pride trying to take root in your own relationships, and how can the Spirit of Truth uproot it?**
 - **Follow-Up 1:** What are some subtle ways pride shows up before it becomes obvious?
 - **Follow-Up 2:** How have you seen humility or servanthood stop pride in its tracks?
2. **John warns against “wicked nonsense” that distorts truth and love. How can your words reflect the fruit of the Spirit instead of feeding pride or division?**
 - **Follow-Up 1:** When was a time your words brought healing instead of harm?

- **Follow-Up 2:** Which fruit of the Spirit do you want your speech to reflect most right now?
3. **The invitation of this message calls us to forgive or be forgiven, and to step fully into community. Who do you need to ask for forgiveness, extend forgiveness to, or welcome back into relationship?**
- **Follow-Up 1:** What makes asking for forgiveness or offering it so difficult?
 - **Follow-Up 2:** How does the Spirit of Truth empower us to forgive when it feels impossible?

Scripture References

Proverbs 6:16-19 | Mark 10:43-45 | Galatians 5:22-23 | Luke 6:45 | Galatians 5:25-26 | John 14:15-17

Conclusion

Pride destroys what is sacred. It corrupts relationships, twists our words, and locks people out. But the Spirit gives us a better way. The Spirit of Truth renews the heart, transforms the tongue, and opens our lives to hospitality and grace. Jesus Himself showed us what it means: He laid down His life, spoke words that heal, and opened the way for us to enter the Father's house.

So, which spirit will define us? The spirit of pride that closes doors, or the Holy Spirit who opens them? Through Truth, let the Spirit plant fruit in your heart that heals, gives life, and grows love. Let your words carry grace, let your relationships show gentleness, and let your life reflect Jesus. That's what it looks like when Truth and Love walk together, in tandem.

