



From Thunder to Love: *Apostle John*

Sons of Thunder

John & brothers nicknamed “*Sons of thunder*” by Jesus to describe their *fleshy ambitions, fiery zeal and hot tempered* (Mk.3:17) disposition, all on full display throughout the gospels.

1. Lacked tolerance for those who don't believe as he did i.e. the Samaritans (Lk.9:51-56).
2. Didn't like other believers who didn't subscribe to his methods i.e. those who were casting out demons in Jesus' name but not part of the group. No tolerance for those of other groups (Mk.9:38-41).
3. Had earthly ambitions i.e. wanted Jesus' guarantee of esteemed position in the kingdom; learned to balance ambition with humility (Mk.9:33-40; 10:35-37).

The cross changed John

- Began as a “*son of thunder*” but ended as the *apostle of love*.
- Saw a different kind of leadership in the last supper.
- Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, including his betrayer.
- Became the apostle of love, having been changed by Jesus' love (5 references as “*disciple who Jesus loved*”).
- Got a revelation of Agape vs. Eros

John's “Passion” Problem

- **Eros** relates to the arts; let's say someone was making a sculpture. It had to be the absolute best. It couldn't have any flaws in it. With Eros there's no tolerance for that which is less than perfect. It had to have no flaws, it had to be exquisite.
- The flip side of Eros is that it's also a love of excluding, of kicking out, of rejecting, if it's not the highest quality. No tolerance for anything less than perfect. It rejects anything and every person that's beneath its standards. So, rejection is a part of Eros.

This was the “passion” problem John had to overcome.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

How does that grace manifest?

- ***When one is weak - i.e. sickness; a loss.***
 - ***When there’s a need for you to show grace to others in their weakness***
 - ***Graceful people will always be gracious - you simply can’t give what you don’t have***
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- How can you know when you’ve crossed over to the dark side of discipline? One sign is that you are unwilling to extend grace to others who are less disciplined than you.
 - If someone shows up late to a meeting or drops a ball on a project, you may find yourself seething with self-righteous anger that attempts to mask the fact that you have made the exact same mistake before.
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- If this is part of what the dark side of discipline looks like for you, let me remind you (and myself) that the root cause of our failure to extend grace to others is a forgetfulness of the gospel.
 - *Everything* we have—including our ability to be disciplined—has been graciously given to us. James 1:17 says that “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.”
 - Our ability to be disciplined is a gift of grace, just like salvation, “*so that no one can boast*” (Ephesians 2:9).
 - We can’t take credit for being disciplined. God has graciously brought us books, software, mentors, and other resources to help us cultivate self-discipline. And because all of these things were gifts we did not earn, we can be gracious with those who have yet to be given the same gifts.

