

The Third Epistle of John

Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 1:8 NASB)

3 John 6b-8

Someone read 3John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-14 (15)

3Jn 1:6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

“You WILL do well...” Does it sound like the missionaries will be visiting in the future?
And they will need Gaius’ assistance

The shift to future tense was a recognized idiom expressing a polite request by the writer. Without explicitly stating his request, John declares his assurance that Gaius will continue to treat the missionaries as well as he did in the past. Further, he says it would do ‘well’ or ‘good’ that Gaius acts in such a manner.

“send them on their way...”

Lets look at Acts 15:3, Romans 15:24; 1Cor 16:6

These are all examples of a technical term (Greek = *propempsas*) for not merely giving the missionaries a warm send off, but provisioning them for the next stage of their journey.

“...in a manner worthy of God.”

This serves as a reminder that there is a spiritual component to his hospitality. What should be our goal?

2Cor 5:6-10

There’s 2 ways to understand this phrase:

1. The way that we should treat God Himself
 - a. Mat 10:40
2. Or, it could mean worthily from God’s POV
3. Or, it could be both
 - a. A service rendered to God Himself receives His approval and blessing

Again, here is the standard by which we should measure everything we do.

For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. (3 John 1:7 NASB)

Someone with the NASB or ESV please read the first word of verse 7.

Now, someone do read the 1st part of the same verse in the NIV:

It was for the sake of the Name that they went out (NIV)

Aside from the word-order, what's the major difference between the NIV and the NASB/ESV?

The word "For" is missing from the NIV. As I pointed out several weeks ago, the NIV frequently leaves out connecting words like "for." Why is this so important?

1. It is in the Greek (*gar*)
2. It explains why supporting the missionaries was so important to John

Notice the missionaries do not just go out on personal business, they go out for a specific reason. And what is that?

For the sake of "The Name."

Notice the absolute use. It is not for just any name, not for His name (although that's what the KJV and NKJV have). No, it is The Name. And whose Name is that?

Jesus.

Some commentators have suggested YHWH, the ineffable covenant Name whereby God revealed Himself to Israel, but most agree that they went out in the Name of Jesus.

An interesting side note, here: The name 'Jesus' occurs nowhere in 3John.

Let's look at some other absolute uses of "the Name" to denote Jesus in the Bible:

Acts 4:12; 5:41; 9:16; Ro 1:5; Phil 2:9

It was also common in the Apostolic Fathers:

Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, III: "For though I am bound for the name, I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ

IBID, vii: "But some most worthless persons are in the habit of carrying about the name in wicked guile, while yet they practise things unworthy of God, and hold opinions contrary to the doctrine of Christ."

The Shepherd of Hermas speaks of those who "gladly bore the name, and joyfully received His servants into their houses."

"The Name" stand for what, exactly?

Summarizes the Gospel, the saving message which the missionaries proclaimed. It was the inspiration for the life and outreach of the Christian Church, providing the highest motive for cooperation by believers in the spread of the Gospel by means of evangelization.

“accepting nothing from the Gentiles”

This was obviously a carefully thought out method of evangelization. What reasons can you think of why they would use this strategy?

1. They did not want to create any possible misunderstanding of their message
 - a. E.g., quid pro quo (money in exchange for preaching)
2. They did not want to imply that there was any personal motive behind the Gospel proclamation (individual gain)
3. They wanted to create a contrast between themselves and the various other “street evangelists” for other philosophies and cults, who were by and large greedy and solicited fees from their audiences.
 - a. There is one account of a certain self-described “slave” for his goddess, who bragged that he never returned from his begging journeys with less than seventy bags of money for his deity.

The missionaries kept themselves totally free of profiting from the resources of the world, and thereby proved that they had the noblest of intentions for the Gentiles, and did not seek their own things.

Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 1:8 NASB)

The word “we” occurs first in this verse, thereby receiving emphasis. Why would John wish to emphasize “we” in this way?

He wants to lay stress that he shares in the obligation to missionaries with his fellow believers.

“We ought” does not express a legal requirement when we join the church, but a moral obligation, which arises out of our mutual relationship in Christ.

The rendering of “support such men” (NASB/ESV) conveys the image of ‘receiving, supporting, and protecting’ the missionaries in the Greek. The NIV rendering “show hospitality” though perfectly acceptable, does not really convey the rich meaning of the underlying term (Greek = *hupolambanein*).

As the commentator Raymond Brown (who despite his liberal approach, is a formidable Greek scholar), says this “makes excellent sense” and introduces a word-play with the word “accepting” in v7 (Greek = *lambanontes*). The missionaries are going out “taking nothing” from unbelievers, therefore believers have an obligation to “undertake” for them.

The designation “such men” broadens this principle out to all missionaries, in all times, even our

own. The types of persons John has in mind are those who go out to spread the “good news” without getting any support from unbelievers. This principle is consistent with the practice today of settled churches sending out and supporting missionaries.

Read Acts 18:1-4. Is this “tentmaking” principal at odds with the idea of the missionaries receiving support from church members at home? Why not?

The rewards of accepting this obligation are significant: it is one means to effectively realize the spiritual goal, namely “so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.” Notice that in accepting Christ, we have already allied ourselves with the cause of the missionaries. To act on this duty will enable us to live out what already are.

This “living out” is consistent with John’s emphasis that the internal realities of the Christian Faith must be proved by external conduct. In supporting the Missionaries, fellow believers demonstrate that they are “partners with the truth.”

e.g., 1 Jn 2:6; 2 Jn 4; 3 Jn 4

In what ways can we partner with missionaries at the Bridge?

1. Prayer (both general and specific).
2. Email encouragement
3. Financial aid (both one-time and on-going)
4. Short term missions
5. Visits for 1 or more weeks
6. Actually join the missions field