

## Caring for Missionaries in a Manner that Pleases God

3 John 1-15 HCSB

A 'missionary' is someone who is sent by Jesus Christ just as he was sent by the Father. He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you"* (John 20:21). Since Jesus sends forth all His disciples to carry out God's mission, every believer, to a certain extent, is a missionary. However, today's message—and Scripture passage—is about a group of people whose vocation and occupation is to be missionaries.

3 John talks about some traveling teachers who were cared for by Gaius. *"Send them on their journey"* (v. 6) is a technical term in the early church for missionaries. These traveling teachers were missionaries. The term implies recognizing their God-given calling as missionaries and caring for them so that they could fulfill whatever God has called them to do. How should we care for missionaries? Verse 6 lays down the standard of missionary care: *"in a manner worthy of God."* Let's examine what John meant by this.

### A. A MODEL for Missionary Care

After a season of mission work, the traveling teachers returned to their home church and shared with John how his good friend Gaius was. They also shared how they were well taken care of by Gaius. Naturally, John was delighted. About a third of his letter contained commendations:

1. Gaius was strong in spirit, v. 2.
2. He was faithful, vv. 3, 5.
3. He was living according to the truth, vv. 3-4.
4. He cared for the traveling teachers who passed through, v. 5.
5. He expressed 'loving friendship' to the traveling teachers, v. 6.

As our model, Gaius demonstrated that missionary care is not only about doing certain things for the benefit of the missionary. It is also a matter of developing a godly character and aligning oneself with the mission of God.

## **B. METHODS of Missionary Care**

Gaius did not invent the methods he employed in caring for the traveling teachers. We see these methods in the history of Israel and of the early church. These methods remain relevant in the 21st century not only for missionary care but also for the spread of the gospel throughout the world. What are these methods?

1. Hospitality, vv. 5-6a.
2. Financial Partnership, v. 6b.

## **C. MOTIVATIONS for Missionary Care**

The needs of missionaries are important. However, biblical missionary care is not simply needs-driven. Here are some motivations why we need intentional and exceptional missionary care.

1. Their purpose, v. 7a.  
*'they set out for the sake of the Name'*
2. Their policy, v. 7b.  
*'accepting nothing from pagans'*
3. Our practice, v. 8a.  
*'Therefore, we ought to support such men...'*
4. Our partnership, v. 8b.  
*'so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth' (NLT)*

## **Final Thoughts:**

John called Gaius "dear friend" four times in this brief letter. Why? Because Gaius lived a life of faithfulness to the truth for which John had dedicated his life to. This faithfulness to the truth was demonstrated in a life of love for others, especially for missionaries who were bearers of this truth. We—having learned of the faithfulness and love of Gaius and having been warned of the bad example of Diotrephes—have enough to do what John says: "Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God" (v. 11).

What is your life a proof of?