

PRACTICING TRUE HOSPITALITY

LESSON AIM: Love missionaries by providing help for their work and hospitality in their travels.

MEMORY VERSE: We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth 3 John 8.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson; then ask the following questions for class discussion.

Why did John write two small letters? (2 Jn 10-11; 3 Jn 5-8)

John wrote his Second Epistle to correct a problem where Christians were giving hospitality to false teachers of Gnosticism. He wrote his Third Epistle to correct a problem where Christians were opposed and threatened for giving hospitality to true missionaries of the Gospel. If they showed hospitality to false teachers, they were wrong for cooperating in this evil work. If they showed hospitality to true Gospel missionaries, they were walking in the truth”

Is it right for a believer to love one special believer more than another? 1:1-4

John especially loved Gaius because he walked in the truth of the Scriptures. Gaius faithfully obeyed God’s command to love the brethren. By his obedience to God, John knew that Gaius was spiritually prosperous and healthy, so he prayed that he also would enjoy material and physical prosperity. Since he already was using his material goods to help the missionaries, it was safe to pray for his material blessings. Yes, it is all right to love an obedient believer more than a disobedient one or a half obedient one.

How can all believers be involved in missionary work? 1:5-8

John commended Gaius for his fine ministry of hospitality. He rejoiced over the report he received from missionary evangelists about his care of them when they stayed in his home. He encouraged Gaius to continue such a practice because it was a definite way in which he could be a fellow helper in the spread of the Gospel. When we open our homes to missionaries, pray for missionaries, write to missionaries and give to missionaries, we are fellow-helpers in the work of missions

How do believers hinder missionary work? 1:9-10

John wrote a letter to a certain church about their duty of hospitality, but Diotrephes challenged John’s authority and refused to heed his message. Instead, he maliciously spoke against John and determined not to entertain missionary evangelists even though they were preaching the truth. In fact, he forbade others to do so and cast them out of the church when they did it. If a believer refuses to help a missionary or give money to him, he hinders the spread of the Gospel and disobeys Christ’s commission to all believers (Mt 28:18-20). Christ will bless those who are faithful in obeying His commission.

What should a believer do when another believer hinders him from obeying God? 1:11

John did not want Gaius to follow (imitate) an evil example, i.e., Diotrephes' example, but to follow one that was good, i.e., his own. In other words, Gaius was to continue to show hospitality to missionary evangelists as he had been doing. A believer needs to keep obeying God and trust Him to take care of him.

Gaius' good works proved that he was of God, that is, he was born of God (1 John 2:29). A man's evil works show that he has not seen God, but instead he is a child of the devil (1 John 3:10). Actions reveal a person's spiritual condition. Some believers act like a child of the devil when they allow their sinful nature to control them. The devil uses such believers to hinder God's work. A believer should not let such men control them.

How does a believer know if a missionary is a good missionary? 1:12

John recommended Demetrius to Gaius as one who was worthy of his hospitality. He probably carried John's letter to him on his way to the mission field. A believer should help missionaries who have a high recommendation from trustworthy men. He should be careful about supporting those who are not recommended by good men.

How should a believer communicate with other believers? 1:13-14

John did not depend on letter writing alone to do his job. He preferred a face to face meeting. He knew that would be the safest way to communicate his message. In the meantime, letter writing was the best way to send this important message to Gaius. He concluded by sending personal greetings to all of his friends. A believer will do well to follow John's example.

IF YOU CANNOT BE A MISSIONARY, YOU SHOULD HELP SEND A MISSIONARY.