

Givers and Goers

3 John 5-8

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Have you ever wondered why we talk about missions so much at Edgewood? *It's because the gospel is all about missions!* Missions is not a program we run; it's part of who we are. It's in our charter, and it's how we chart our course. Our marching orders come from Jesus Himself in the Great Commission which forms our mission statement: *Edgewood is committed to living on mission by glorifying God and making disciples of Jesus in our families, among our neighbors, and among the nations.*

Simply put, we believe the gospel is too glorious, and the world too lost, for us not to be missions-minded.

That's why we're taking a short break from our *Revelation Unveiled* series as we focus on "Givers and Goers" from 3 John 5-8. Let's read these verses together: ***"Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth."***

We could summarize this Scripture like this: *When givers give and goers go, God gets the glory among the nations.* Missions does not belong just to the missionary or only to the church. It takes two distinct, equal commitments to fulfill the Great Commission: the sent ones who go with the gospel, and the senders who give so the gospel can go.

Writing to an ordinary guy named Gaius, his beloved brother in the Lord, the apostle John praised him for participating in gospel work in extraordinary ways. His words form the curriculum for a masterclass on missions.

I see six actions we're called to demonstrate.

1. Practicing love. Look at verse 5: ***"Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are."*** John refers to Gaius as ***"beloved"*** four times in this brief book and in verse 1 he verbally expresses that

love: ***“whom I love in truth.”*** Gaius was faithful toward those who were ***“strangers,”*** which means *“foreigners from another place.”* It’s likely that ***“brothers”*** were those known by the church.

Gaius’ faith was not merely in his head; it resided in his heart and was lived out through his hands. In contrast, a man in the church named Diotrephes was self-centered and self-serving according to verse 9: ***“Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first.”*** Verse 10 says he was against missions and even turned missionaries away: ***“...he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.”*** Gaius, on the other hand, was a selfless servant who lived out His love for the Lord by loving missionaries.

Gaius and Diotrephes represent two ways of approaching the Christian life. One says, *“My life is for God’s mission.”* The other says, *“My life is for myself.”*

2. Proving loyalty. These missionaries returned and told John’s church about Gaius’ loyal love in verse 6: ***“who testified to your love before the church...”***

After being with our team in Mombasa, Beth and I traveled to Nairobi and spent a couple days with Jerry Novak, who has been supported by Edgewood for 44 years! His dear wife Nancy went to be with the Lord four years ago. When we asked him if he ever thought about leaving Kenya after she died, he smiled and testified to his love for the Lord, *“There’s no need to leave. The Lord called me here.”* He told us he’s often asked if he’s going to retire. His answer to that question was short and to the point, *“Is everyone saved?”* What a great testimony of Jerry’s loyal love for His Lord!

3. Promoting the mission. Our English word “missionary” comes from the Latin *missio*, meaning “to send,” which reflects the Greek word *apostello* (apostle), meaning one commissioned and sent out with a specific message.

Those who are called “sent ones,” must be sent by those who are called to send. We see this in the next phrase of verse 6: ***“You will do well to send them on their journey...”*** The phrase ***“do well”*** means it is right and pleasing. To ***“send them on their journey”*** has the idea of *“sending forth by moving them forward.”* Acts 15:3 says: ***“So, being sent on their way by the church...”*** Titus 3:13 amplifies this: ***“Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.”*** To ***“speed them”*** means to remove obstacles so they can go quickly.

When Beth and I were at Jerry's church, we met a young man who was leaving for a short-term mission trip to Tanzania the very next day. As I talked to him, I realized he did not have money for a bus ticket to get there so I gave him some money from Edgewood to speed him on his way. Without realizing it, you gave so he could go!

4. Pursuing God's glory. We see in the last part of verse 6 and the first part of verse 7 the motive of missionary work: ***"...in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name..."*** We're to send "sent ones" in a way that reflects the worthiness of God. One pastor said it well: *"Since they are God's representatives, treat them as you would God."*

These missionaries were not traveling for their own name, recognition, or comfort but had been thrust out ***"for the sake of the Name,"*** which means for the honor and reputation of Jesus. Paul's passion was to take the gospel to all nations, especially the least reached ones as we see in Romans 1:5: ***"...to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations."***

When we support gospel workers, we are not merely helping people. We are participating in the pursuit of the glory of God.

5. Providing resources. The first part of verse 8 tells us we have an obligation to give so sent ones can go: ***"Therefore we ought to support people like these..."*** The word ***"ought"*** means, *"to owe, to be bound and indebted."* Since the Great Commission is a command, we're called to obey by either giving or going. The word ***"support"*** means, *"to take up, to aid and help."* People ***"like these"*** refers to ordinary people who are obeying in rather extraordinary ways as they go with the gospel.

Supporting gospel workers is not presented as an optional extra for especially generous Christians. Rather, it's a joyful responsibility for all of us.

6. Partnering in the truth. Ponder the last part of verse 8: ***"...that we may be fellow workers for the truth."*** The word ***"that"*** can be translated as, *"so that"* or *"for the purpose of."* When we give to those who go, we become co-laborers in the gospel with them. The phrase ***"fellow workers"*** means, *"together with"* and was used for soldiers fighting under the same banner or business partners sharing equal equity.

I find 1 Samuel 30:24 deeply encouraging: “...*for as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike.*” In David’s day, the soldiers who went into battle and the servants who stayed with the baggage were both essential. Without warriors who go into battle, there is no victory; without baggage-keepers who guard the supplies, there is no support.

Soldiers who go into the battle and servants who stay with the baggage share alike. God sees both roles, God values both roles, and God rewards both roles. By assisting cross-cultural workers, we stand shoulder to shoulder with them and become part of the larger effort of taking the gospel to the world.

One of the highlights for our Kenya trip was the day we gave 70 goats to the teachers and staff of the school. There were a lot of tears and a lot of joy. I asked one woman what she was going to name her goat. She smiled and said, “*Edgewood!*” It struck me that when we give to those who go, in a very real sense, the name Edgewood is going all over the globe. But it’s not about us, is it? We’re committed to the glory of God alone and to the name of Jesus Christ among the nations.

Alex Logan, one of our Go Team partners in Japan, sent me an email the day the Edgewood team left: “*If we (the Logans) walk somewhere here in Japan, Edgewood in a sense does too. If we share the gospel with a non-Christian, Edgewood does too.*” I love that.

When we give, we’re going *with* those who have gone with the gospel.

We may not all go to Kenya. We may not all go to Japan. We may not all cross an ocean or learn another language. But when we give, pray, encourage, send, and support those who do, we share in their work and in their reward.

So don’t underestimate the ministry of staying by the baggage. Your faithful giving supplies frontline workers with what they need to take the gospel to the nations.

When givers give and goers go, God gets the glory among the nations.

Here are two questions to consider.

1. **Is God calling you to GO?** Perhaps God is stirring you to step out, leave comfort behind and take the gospel to places and people who need to hear it. Take your next step.
2. **In what ways is God calling you to GIVE?** This is not just something we “ought” to do, but something we get to do. Maybe this means increasing your giving to Edgewood, partnering with a specific missionary, sponsoring a child, or participating in our monthly prayer nights for the unreached.

I’m reminded of John Piper’s famous quote, “*Go, send, or disobey.*” Every believer must be actively invested either as a “goer” on the frontline or as a “giver” who supplies what is needed. As someone has said, “*You don’t have to go across the world to be involved in the Great Commission; but you can help someone who does.*”

Our Kenya team will now share what God has done through your prayers, your joyful generosity, and your willingness to send us. Let’s begin by watching this video recap. Special thanks to Nick Frey for putting it together.

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