

The Finest New Testament Christian You Never Heard Of

April 11, 2016



It is important to build a good reputation; it is more important to maintain it. A good reputation takes time to build, but it can be destroyed in just a minute. In a day of social media, this is especially easy to do. To avoid destroying our reputation on FaceBook/social media, we must make sure not to do the following (adapted from):

- Act like we have all the answers (Job 12:2; Proverbs 28:11).
- Use hateful or vulgar language (Colossians 4:6; Titus 2:8).
- Lie (Colossians 3:9).
- Post pictures of ourselves doing something sinful (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12; 1 Corinthians 5:2; Philippians 3:19). There are two things wrong with this:
 - (1) We should not be doing sinful things;
 - (2) We should not be proud of them when we do. People in our congregations and communities will see what we post. We should not post anything we would be uncomfortable saying or showing Sunday morning.
- Post from frustration or in the heat of the moment (Psalm 21:23; Proverbs 13:3).
- Criticize people (Matthew 7:1-2).
- Embarrass our families, youth group, or church (Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 2:17). Our spouses and children say and do funny things. Most of these can be shared without harm; they help people to see we are part of a normal family. But we should be sensitive to other's feelings, and when in doubt, ask a spouse and child if it is permissible to share a quote, happening, or

picture online.

When we die our children may not inherit great wealth from us, but let's see to it that they inherit from us a good name.

Gaius was hospitable, despite limitations of health and finance (3 John 1:5-6).

We gather from the letter that Gaius was genial, gracious, and generous. He opened his home to brethren and strangers (cf. Galatians 6:10).

John prayed that Gaius would prosper and be healthy, which suggests he may have had money and health problems (3 John 1:2). Gaius used what resources and abilities he had to further the kingdom. Gaius had an open home, an open heart, and an open hand. He reminds us of the Danish proverb that says: "Where there is room in the heart, there is room in the house."

Hospitality is not as common as it once was. Someone has said that in our world, "Hospitality is the art of making people feel at home when you wish that they were at home." A man today took his dog to the vet, and asked him to cut off his tail completely. The vet said: "I'm not sure I could do that. Why on earth would you want to do that to your dog?"

Said the dog owner, "My mother-in-law is coming to visit, and I don't want anything in the house to suggest that she's welcome."

The Lord blesses hospitable people because helping His servants counts as personally serving Him (Matthew 25:40). Conversely, failure to care for others is looked upon as failure to care for the Lord Himself (25:45). We have an illustration of this just after the resurrection. Jesus

appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They did not recognize Him, yet “constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them” (Luke 24:29). They were hospitable and opened their home unwittingly to Christ.

Hospitality is so important that it is a qualification of an elder (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Christians are to show love to strangers because by so doing some have entertained angels unaware (Hebrews 13:2; speaking of Abraham, Genesis 18:1-8). Even widows—who as a group are not known for riches—showed hospitality (Romans 12; 1 Timothy 5:9-10).

Such kindness will not go unrewarded. Think of the friendships Gaius must have made and of the fellowship he had as he heard stories of how the Gospel was spreading to the limits of the Roman Empire (Matthew 10:40). Many homes today are similarly blessed by the visits of gospel preachers and missionaries. What reward will we have at the Judgment seat for our open hospitality? God one day will pay back every good deed.

Gaius supported mission work without going to the mission field (1:6-8).

When John wrote this letter, the church had only about sixty years of history behind it, but already a clear pattern of mission work had emerged.

- Jesus sent out the seventy to Israel (Matthew 10:5).
- The church sent out missionaries (Mark 16:15; Acts 13:1-2).

These workers did not take support from unbelievers. John said, “Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles” (3 John 1:7). Most preachers were not wealthy enough to stay in inns, and in some cases

wanted to avoid them because they were more like brothels than hotels. As preachers travelled to mission points, they visited churches in route and stayed in believer's homes. When missionaries were ready to continue on their journey, their host or the church would supply them with food, money, and other needs (cf. Philippians 4:16). Gaius was one such stop.

There are many good causes for Christians to support, but no is more important than the missionaries who are getting the gospel to the world. When we help preachers, we are helping spread the Word. If we receive a prophet, we shall receive a prophet's reward (Matthew 10:41).

*We cannot all be heroes and thrill the hemisphere
With some great daring venture, some deed that mocks at fear;
But we can fill a lifetime with kindly acts and true,
There's always noble service for noble hearts to do.*

*We cannot all be preachers, and sway with voice and pen,
As strong winds sway the forest, the minds and hearts of men;
But we can be evangelists to souls within our reach,
There's always love's own gospel for loving hearts to preach.*

*We cannot all be martyrs, and win a deathless name
By some divine baptism, some ministry of fame.
But we can live for truth's sake, can do for Christ and dare,
There's always faithful witness for faithful hearts to bear.*

Gaius's example shines brightly after two thousand years. What could God do with yours?