

NO TIME FOR DISTRACTIONS

In Matthew 10, Jesus sent out his disciples/apostles on a specialized mission with special instructions!

Matthew 10:9–10 (NKJV)

**9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,
10 nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs;
for a worker is worthy of his food.**

This clearly was a specialized and temporary mission. We are not told how long this “kingdom campaign” lasted, but we do see in Luke 9:10 that later the apostles returned and reported to Jesus what had happened. The sense is clearly that this was not the norm, as seen in the fact that Judas was the treasurer of the group who normally controlled the money bag (Jn. 12:6; 13:29) and also that Jesus and the 12 were commonly supported by various women and supporters (cf. Lk. 8:1-3).

In this specialized “kingdom work,” the apostles were to focus on God’s provision. They were to travel light and not be distracted or weighed down by the normal concerns of life. Time was of the essence. Their mission was to be laser-like focused and not be distracted by any minor detail.

“A dear elderly lady lived in the country and for the first time in her life was to take a train journey of about 50 miles through a very beautiful region. She looked forward to the trip with great anticipation. She wanted to see so much and take it all in. But it took her a good while to get her baskets positioned, her seat adjusted, and the shades just right. She was just getting seated to really enjoy the trip, and the conductor called out to ready themselves for departure. She had to get up and hustle out.

‘Oh, my! – she said, If I’d known that we would be here so soon, I wouldn’t have wasted my time fussing.” – ***Story told by A.B. Simpson***

By way of application, many dwindle their short time in this life away by “fussing” over things that don’t really matter. Don’t be distracted. One of the great challenges in life is distractions. Often, they appear as “good things” but really end up being distractions. The elderly lady said, “If I’d known that we would be here so soon I wouldn’t have wasted my time fussing”. Time is short – eternity is long. Don’t waste your time fussing over trivial stuff that in the end won’t matter and in the end is seen as a distraction.

Some have imagined a discrepancy between here in Matthew 10:10 where Jesus says not to take “staffs” and the parallel passage in Mark 6:8 where Jesus says, “take nothing for the journey except a staff” etc. When you put

it all together the sense seems to be that Jesus allowed them to take a single staff but not extra staffs. Likewise, I expect they could wear their sandals but not take extras and so forth. They were to take just the bare necessities and nothing extra – depending on God to provide for them along the way.

Note that later on the instructions changed...

Luke 22:35–36 (NKJV)

35 And He said to them, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?” So they said, “Nothing.”

36 Then He said to them, “**But now**, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

Again, this shows the unique nature of this temporary short term mission in Matthew 10.

At the end of verse 10, Jesus said, “***for a worker is worthy of his food.***” The sense is that God would provide for them as His workers through His people in every city, as seen in the verses that follow. The word “worthy” (Gk. axios) means “correspondingly right”. Before God, this is right.

And there is an abiding principle here: It is expected in God’s economy that God’s people should provide for those called to full-time ministry service.

1 Corinthians 9:13–14 (NKJV)

13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

14 Even so the Lord has **commanded** that those who **preach the gospel should live from the gospel.**

1 Timothy 5:17–18 (NKJV)

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who **labor in the word and doctrine.**

18 For the Scripture says, “**You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,**” and, “**The laborer is worthy of his wages.**”

Matthew 10:11 (NKJV)

11 “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

Who is worthy refers to those open and responsive to the kingdom message and thus were willing to offer hospitality to the preachers. They were not to waste time seeking better accommodations. Once they were staying at a place, they were to stay put because they would only be there for a short time anyway.

In the providence of God, each village or city would have people through whom God would provide for these apostolic preachers. God would provide, but He would do it through people and in conjunction with human responsibility. After all, the apostles would have to “inquire” – meaning do a little investigation to see who might be open to their ministry and then act on that basis.