

Charity



Charity

Charity Is the Greatest of All Virtues

Throughout His life, the Savior showed His pure love for all people. He even gave His life for us. Charity is the pure love that our Savior Jesus Christ has. He has commanded us to love one another as He loves us. Charity comes from a pure heart (see 1 Timothy 1:5, page 1506). We have pure love when we show genuine concern and compassion for all our brothers and sisters.

The Savior gave us the example of His life to follow. He was the Son of God. He had perfect love, and He showed us how to love. By His example, He showed us that the spiritual and physical needs of others are as important as our own. Before He gave His life for us, He said:

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-13, page 1354).

Charity Includes Giving to the Sick, Afflicted, and Poor

The Savior taught many principles using stories or parables. The parable of the good Samaritan teaches us that we should give to those in need, regardless of whether they are our friends or not (see Luke 10:30-37, page 1295).

In the parable, the Savior told a story about a man who was traveling to another city but was attacked by bandits. They stole his clothes and money and beat him, leaving him half dead. Two others passed him on the road without helping him. However, a Samaritan, who was despised by the people of Jesus's time, felt compassion when he saw the man. This good Samaritan bandaged the man's wounds and took him to an inn. He paid the innkeeper to take care of the man until he recovered.

Jesus taught that we should give food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, and clothes to the poor. He also taught that we should visit the sick and those who are in prison. He promises that as we do these things, we will inherit His kingdom. (See Matthew 25:34-40, page 1233.)





King Benjamin, a prophet in the Book of Mormon, taught that we should not judge others who are poor or in need. And we should not try to decide whether someone really deserves our help or not (see Mosiah 4:16–24, pages 156–57).

Developing Charity

One way we can become charitable is by studying the life of Jesus Christ and keeping His commandments. We can study how He lived and try to follow His example.

Second, we can pray sincerely to have greater charity.

Third, we can learn to love ourselves, which means that we understand our true worth as children of our Heavenly Father. This also means that we repent of our sins and forgive ourselves when we have repented.

Fourth, we can avoid thinking that we are better than other people and have patience with their faults.

As we develop charity and reach out to others in love, we will become more like the Savior Jesus Christ. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 428–29). As we do this, we will become purified, even as the Savior is pure.



“Wherefore, . . . pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons [and daughters] of God.”

Moroni 7:48, page 524

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Additional Scriptures

- **1 Corinthians 12:29–13:8, pages 1453–54** (definition of charity)
- **Alma 34:28–29, page 295** (we are hypocrites if we do not act charitably)
- **D&C 121:45–46, pages 242–43** (be full of charity toward all people)



Personal Experience

I had a drinking problem. When I was arrested for my third DUI, I knew it meant mandatory jail time. I had sunk to a new low. Adding to my drinking was the fact that I kept having horrible nightmares that left me totally sleep deprived.

Two major things happened to me in jail that changed my life's course. First, I started reading the scriptures. I hadn't even looked at the scriptures since my dad had died 40 years earlier. But in jail I started reading again and finished the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Second, some of my Latter-day Saint neighbors and ward members whom I hardly knew came to my rescue. One well-known attorney vouched for me to the judge. Many other brothers and sisters showed me true charity, the pure love of Christ.

When I got out, I decided that I would turn my life over to God and do everything I could to benefit others. I overcame my addictions. I prayed again and again for strength. I went to church every week and followed the counsel of my bishop to repent through the grace of my Savior Jesus Christ.

Through others who were sent by God, I was rescued. I now go about trying to lift others who need my help. I strive to be an example of true charity through quiet service and by diligently performing my Church callings.

"I strive to be an example of true charity through quiet service and by diligently performing my Church callings."



What are your goals for developing charity at this time in your life?

How have you been blessed by the pure love of Jesus Christ?

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Name _____ Offender # _____

Please answer the questions on this response form, detach, and return to the address below:

Correctional Services
 50 East North Temple Street
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Please request the next lesson you would like to study: _____