

## New Internet Lesson

The following lesson on Charity works well for personal study; it also is well suited to use as a reading in a worship service, with two or more readers taking turns paragraph by paragraph.

### CHARITY

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In the Greek text there is a word - agape - . Its meaning is love for those who have done nothing to deserve our love - it is love given unconditionally -- the kind of love that Jesus demonstrated. It is the kind of love referred to as Charity in the scriptures. We can find descriptions of CHARITY in Mormon's letter to his son Moroni (Moroni 7:51-52) and in Paul's letter to the saints in Corinth (I Corinthians 13:4-7) and in the Second book of Nephi.

Nephi writes "The Lord God has given a commandment that all men should have Charity, which Charity is Love..." II Nephi 11:107-108

Moroni 7:50 states that "if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have CHARITY; for if he have not CHARITY, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have CHARITY."

Let's look at some of the things Paul and Mormon have said about this thing called CHARITY.

#### Charity SUFFERS LONG.

II Peter 3:9 tell us that the Lord is long suffering toward us and not willing that any should perish. We should be long suffering and patient also. It was by means of charity in their hearts that Alma and the sons of Mosiah were able to bear the persecution and suffering and rejection placed upon them. If you remember they had been persecutors themselves until their conversion and then they were filled with the love of God and wanted even their enemies to be cured of their hatred and come to a knowledge of God so there would be no more contentions. (Mos. 12:2-5)

#### Charity IS KIND.

Charity motivates people to goodness, to compassion, benevolence and sensitivity to the needs of others. It was by means of this pure love of Christ that Ammon was able to humble himself and lovingly become a servant to King Lamoni so as to be an instrument in winning him to Christ. Alma 12.

#### Charity ENVIES NOT.

Jesus told us to beware of covetousness. Those filled with the love of Christ do not concern themselves about the acquisitions or honors that other people receive. They find joy and delight in God's goodness to them and are able to ignore the temptations and enticements the world suggests as being good.

#### Charity IS NOT PUFFED UP, SEEKS NOT HIS OWN - ( IS NOT PRIDEFUL)

The person with charity seeks to turn attention away from self and toward God. In the second chapter of Alma there is an account of a time when many Nephites were lifted up

in pride and became a major stumbling block to the Church. On the other hand, at the same time, there were others who, filled with the love of God, (charity), were "humbling themselves, helping those in need, imparting their substance to the poor and needy, feeding the hungry and suffering all manner of afflictions for Christ's sake."

#### Charity IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED.

Those filled with the love of Christ are meek and have poise under provocation. They control the anger they may feel because of the Charity in their hearts. Remember Alma and Amulek? They were able to witness the terrible scene of women and children being burned to death because of their understanding of the Love of God and their belief in His truth. Paul was able to suffer beatings, rejection and tauntings because he knew the greater love of Christ and was willing to live his life for Christ -no matter what.

#### Charity THINKS NO EVIL

People who have Charity keep their minds on things of righteousness. Their desire is to keep focused on the Lord and His kingdom. Nephi wrote "my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard" (II Nephi 3:30). Paul wrote to the Philippians (4:8) "Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ... think on these things."

#### Charity REJOICES NOT IN INIQUITY - REJOICES IN THE TRUTH

John records Jesus as saying: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life..."(John 14:6) Amos, in the Old Testament, tells us to "hate the evil; love the good" (Amos 5:15) Micah, another Old Testament prophet, said: what doth the Lord require of thee? - but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6:8) The people of King Benjamin's day practiced Charity when they said they had "no more disposition to do evil but rather to do good continually." (Mosiah 3:3)

#### Charity BEARS ALL THINGS

We need to have the perspective of God toward people and circumstances and always practice understanding, forgiveness and mercy. Paul says to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger and evil speaking and be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving one to another. (Ephesians 4:31-32)

#### Charity BELIEVES ALL THINGS

The person who has charity is not gullible but has a believing heart and can readily accept the testimony of one who knows because he is prepared to receive it. He is open to Truth and seeks for it.

#### Charity HOPES ALL THINGS

Such persons have a firm belief in Christ and His message of hope. When asked what they should hope for, Mormon told the humble followers of Christ "...ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection to be raised unto life eternal."

### Charity ENDURES ALL THINGS

How often we wonder if we can "endure"! But we need to remember what Nephi has told us: that " if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father, ye shall have eternal life." (II Nephi 13:30)

### Charity NEVER FAILETH

There may come a time when all else -even the other gifts of God- are no more needed, but Charity, the pure love of Christ, will always burn brightly in the souls of the sanctified. Moroni 7:52 Wherefore, cleave unto Charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.

### PURE LOVE OF CHRIST 2 possible meanings ( both related )

One who has Charity loves others purely just as Christ does; and one who has Charity loves Christ purely!

Moroni wrote in Ether 5:34 that the love which Christ has had for the children of men is charity and (35) if the Gentiles do not have charity ...then that which they have received will be taken away... so, Moroni "prayed unto the Lord that He would give unto the Gentiles grace that they might have charity." (Ether 5:36)

The purpose of Charity is not just to motivate us to Christian service but also to sanctify us and prepare us to be with God eternally. We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving. We cannot truly love people as the Lord does without serving them. Our ultimate purpose is to become as Christ.

Alma asked: "Have ye received His image in your countenance? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? ...Can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord saying unto you in that day, Come unto Me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness ... I say unto you, can you look up...with ...a pure heart and clean hands...having the image of God engraven upon your countenances... Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? ...have you been sufficiently humble? ...Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? ...Can you be puffed up in the pride of your hearts? ...Will ye persist in supposing that you are better one than another? ...Will you persist in the persecutions of your brethren who humble themselves?... Will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor and the needy and in withholding your substance from them? ...Will you persist in your wickedness?" (3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Alma)

Let us answer by looking into our hearts and being brokenhearted for the Cause of Christ. Let us repent and remember Him who has offered us the gift of Salvation. Let us live our lives with Charity, the pure love of Jesus Christ.

COME UNTO CHRIST, and be perfected in Him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and if you shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all

your might, mind and strength...then by the grace of God you are perfect in Christ, denying not His power (and) you are sanctified. (Moroni 10:29-30)

" ... 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 when He shall appear, we shall be like Him - ...that we may be purified even as He is pure. Amen." (Moroni 7:53)