

# Charity

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Mike Miller  
Straight Paths Bible Church

2 Peter 1:5-11 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## I. Add to your faith charity.

A. Charity is defined and described for us so very clearly in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

- B. Without a doubt charity is declared by the Word of God to be the most important attribute of a Christian.
- C. It is the sum of all duty to all men.
- D. It is the evidence of whether or not we truly know God:

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

- 1. It is the one thing that defines and identifies us as children of God in the minds of others.

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

- E. Like brotherly kindness, charity has no qualifications or requirements before it is applied.
  - 1. The obligation to love has nothing whatsoever to do with the character of the object of that charity.
  - 2. The sun is as bound to shine on the dunghill as on the diamond.
  - 3. Our obligation to love others has a far deeper source than the accidents of their character.
  - 4. Charity does not examine someone to see if they pass our test and meet our qualifications as to whether they are worthy of our charity or not.
  - 5. Any type of “love” that does this is selfish, proud, human love that has nothing to do with Divine love (the love of God).

- F. A person must get past the notion that love is emotion and feelings before he can even begin to understand what true charity is.
- G. True charity cannot exist without these other graces that have been added to our faith – virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness.
- H. Charity is the sum of these graces, therefore it is mentioned last here.
- I. Charity is not just what we practice, but what we ARE.
  - 1. It is the attitude of our heart toward others.
  - 2. It is the FIRST attitude of our heart toward others – not an after-thought.
  - 3. It is not something that reins us in from our hatred and evil thinking, but something that happens in our minds and hearts FIRST.
  - 4. It is looking for the best in others first, instead of looking for the worst.
  - 5. It is being inclined to give the benefit of the doubt rather than assuming through imagination what might appear to be bad or undesirable.
- J. This is where true saving faith in Christ brings a person – they will be best described as “charitable” in all things and toward all people.
- K. It is the result of the love of Christ dawning in our own heart that makes us love those who Christ loved and gave his life for.
  - 1. No matter how unlovable a person may be, charity makes us realize that Christ loved that person enough to die for him, so then we can love him like Christ loved him, also.

II. Charity stands in directly opposed to human nature that is corrupted by sin.

- A. Selfishness is the first rule of life and the first consideration of a person who is under the dominion of sin.
- B. There is something in every person that urges them to give when they see a fellow human being suffering and in want.
- C. But there is also something in that person that looks for a reason NOT to help, or NOT to show mercy, or NOT to receive someone, and in the person who is still under the dominion of sin, there is always a way to avoid being charitable.
  - 1. You cannot truly love someone and dishonor and disrespect them.
- D. Charity requires that we do violence to ourselves – deny ourselves, esteem others better than ourselves. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
- E. To the person who is led by the Spirit of God and sin does not have dominion over him – there is always a reason to have mercy and to be charitable.
- F. This is one reason why charity is the banner of the child of God – his identifying mark, or uniform which he wears.

Song of Solomon 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

- G. Those who will walk the streets of heaven will be those who loved people and showed mercy here on earth.
- H. Those who are able to always find a reason and a way to withhold mercy, kindness, and benevolence – even to their enemies, will not be spending eternity with God in heaven, unless there is a great change wrought in their souls before they leave this world.

Matthew 25:41-43 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.