

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT
FOR THE MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

“GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.”

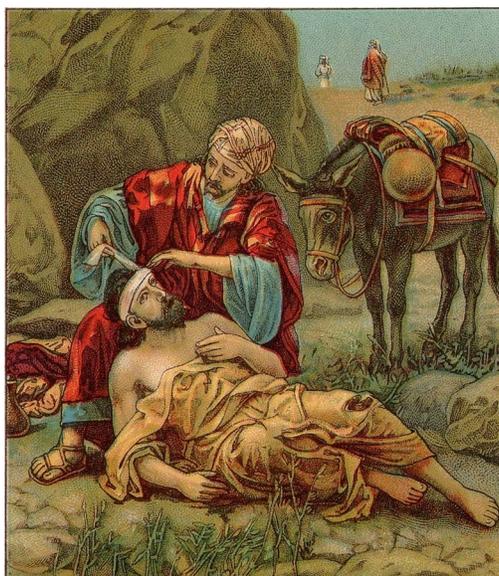
(The following account is a narrative of the parable told by Jesus in Luke 10:25-37 KJV).

Beaten and bloodied, a Jewish man was sprawled, half dead, on the dusty road that led from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbed of his possessions and stripped of his clothes, the flies swarmed around his wounds as the sun beat down on the exposed flesh. Incapable of helping himself, his body grew weaker and weaker.

A ray of hope shone through the fog of pain and semi-consciousness as he sensed someone approaching. Help was on its way. A priest, a professed servant of God, passed by; but upon seeing the man in need, he walked to the other side of the road, not wanting to be hindered in his journey with an unpleasant task. He walked away, studiously ignoring the dying man. Shortly thereafter a Levite passed. He stopped and looked at the wounded man, seeing his horrific condition. With

a grimace, the Levite crossed the road and continued his journey.

Life was ebbing out of the man as his wounds continued bleeding. He was



thirsty, tired, in pain, and now without hope, as “religious” people walked by without helping. He welcomed the darkness of death that hovered around him as an escape from his miserable condition.

Suddenly, the man felt gentle hands on his body, binding his wounds. His head was lifted and in the distance he heard a voice saying, “Drink, my friend.” Cool water poured into his parched throat. As he became more aware of his surroundings, he realized it was a Samaritan man ministering to him. The Samaritans were scorned and segregated from the Jews, and yet this Samaritan was saving his life.

The Samaritan placed the Jewish man on his donkey and took him to an inn. The next day, the Samaritan gave money to the inn keeper and instructed him to care for the wounded man. “I will return and repay whatever more you spend.”

Jesus told this parable in response to a question posed by a lawyer. Jesus and the lawyer agreed that eternal life is given to those who love God with all their heart and who love their neighbor as themselves. But, “Who is my

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WHAT THE BIBLE

Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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neighbor?" asked the lawyer. Jesus then told this parable of the "Good Samaritan."

The true neighbor was not the man of the same race or tribe. It was not the one who was faithful to worship in the temple. The true neighbor was the stranger, the one who sacrificed to help in time of need. This is the kind of love which opens the gates of heaven.

Eternal life, while a gift of God, is given to those who love God and their fellow man. Love is not in word but in action. There are many in our world, whether across the ocean or across the street, who are hurting and need help.

True Christians show the love of God through helping those who cannot help themselves. This is foundational to Christian living. Some people put more focus on their own righteousness and devotion and minimize the duty of giving to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity.

The Samaritan, who ministered to the physical needs of the wounded, was Christ's example of someone loving his neighbor as himself. So Christ said to the lawyer as He still says today: "Go, and do thou likewise."

—mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth. Special thanks to Alyssa Clevenger for photography and artwork contributions for this issue.

Editors: Michael & René Smith

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CONTACT

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Editorial



Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. —Matthew 25:40

Jesus separated the sheep from the goats, the saved from the unsaved, on the merits of their charitable works. While not negating the necessity of salvation, Christ demonstrated the importance of charitable, humanitarian work. How, as God's people, can so many discount the power of charity? What is the power of faith or the holiness of modesty if there is no love that brings sacrifice for the destitute and downtrodden?

As we minister to the needs of others, we minister to Christ Himself—the cup of cold water, the visit to the sick, the song to the shut-in, the kind word to the elderly, the blanket to the cold, the bread to the hungry, the bandage to the bleeding. What a wonderful privilege and blessing it is to give to someone in need. Some of the greatest joys in my life have come from sacrificial giving. I have also known what it is to be without and have a saint of God meet the need. How wonderful God designed the plan of salvation.

I love the truths and doctrines of the Word of God. My desire is to hold high the banner of Christ and the practical holiness of life which it brings. I promote in this issue of the Gospel Truth the very relevant teaching of charitable deeds. As children of God, our lives should be motivated by love and full of practical deeds of charity for others. This is not something of convenience or something to pick up and leave off at will. It is a divine command and is at the very heart of Christianity.

Some say that humanitarian work, deeds of charity, is not the work of God. While the greatest ministry is sharing the gospel with the world, part of God's work is ministering to the temporal needs of people in need. Much is said about it in the scripture and my prayer is that our eyes be opened in a greater way to the call of God in this area. It is a call for ALL of us.

We sometimes wonder what motivates people when they come to hear the gospel and also receive humanitarian assistance. Why are they here? At the end of the day, I take solace in the fact that Jesus Himself told the people, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Jesus still fed the multitude because of compassion. So it is for us today. In ministering to others, we are sharing the love of Jesus Himself.

May we have the Samaritan's vision to see the needs in our world and not be afraid to give and sacrifice.

Michael W. Smith

January 2016



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Prayer for Charity

If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; . . .

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

Job 31:16-22

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: DEEDS OF CHARITY

Scripture Reading: *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. —James 2:15-17*

Summary: Acts of benevolence and charity are foundational to the life of a Christian. True godly love and religious faith are demonstrated through sacrifice in ministering to the needy and less fortunate.

I. Love is Shown Through Practical Deeds of Kindness

- A. Matthew 22:37-40 Foundation of love.
- B. Luke 10:25-37 Good Samaritan.
- C. 1 John 3:17-18 Love in deed.

II. New Testament Examples

- A. Acts 10:38 Jesus did good.
- B. Matthew 15:32-39 Multitude fed.
- C. Romans 15:26-27 Saints contribute to the poor.
- D. Acts 9:36 Dorcas—full of good works.
- E. Old Testament: Job 31:16-22.

III. Man was Saved to Glorify God Through Works

- A. Matthew 5:14-16 Good works are a light to the world.
- B. Ephesians 2:8-10 Created unto good works.
- C. Titus 2:14 Zealous of good works.

IV. Good Works/Charity Commanded

- A. Isaiah 58:7 Charity enjoined.
- B. 1 Timothy 6:17-18 Ready to distribute.
- C. Titus 2:7 Show a pattern of good works.

- D. Titus 3:8 Maintain good works.
- E. Hebrews 10:24 Provoke to good works.
- F. Galatians 2:9-10 Remember the poor.
- G. Ephesians 4:28 Give to him that needeth.
- H. Galatians 6:10 Do good unto all men.

V. Deeds of Charity Demonstrate

- A. James 1:27 Pure religion.
- B. James 2:14-18 True faith.

VI. Blessings In Giving

- A. Acts 20:35 More blessed to give.
- B. Luke 14:13-14 Eternal recompense.

VII. Final Judgment

- A. Revelation 20:12-13 According to works.
- B. Matthew 25:31-46 Based on practical acts of charity.

Conclusion:

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:17-18

DEEDS OF CHARITY

Companion Article for Bible Study

FOUNDATION OF LOVE

Jesus stated that the greatest commandment was to love God and secondly was to love others as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). Love is more than a theoretical concept. It is a decision, a heartfelt choice, a responsibility, a purpose, and that which motivates to action. Love for God is exemplified through obedience to His word. Love for our neighbor is exemplified through deeds of kindness and charitable acts. Without this kind of love, people will not be pleasing to the Lord nor fulfilling their God-given purpose in life. The life of a saint should be full of deeds of charity.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) was the pattern that Christ set for us to follow in helping people in need. If a Christian sees someone has need and does not help but is unmoved by compassion, how does the love of God dwell in him? "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18). A Christian's life should consist of more than going to church, praying, and believing in doctrinal truth. It should consist of regular sacrifice and effort in behalf of people in need.

JESUS SET AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD WORKS

Jesus went about doing good in His short time on earth (Acts 10:38). He not only preached and taught about God, He healed the sick. He visited the sinner. He fed the hungry (Matthew 15:32-39). He was a man of great compassion and ministered to the material needs of the poor. Dorcas was mentioned in Acts 9:36 as a woman who was "full of good works and almsdeeds." The saints in the early morning church repeatedly gave to the poor (Romans 15:26-27) and ministered to the needy. Historians of the early Church suggest that extraordinary, sacrificial charity was a "primary driver" of the rapid expansion of Christianity. This should be the report of the saints today in the local and global community. God's

people should be known for their acts of love and deeds of charity.

GOOD WORKS GLORIFY THE FATHER

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16). The purpose of charitable acts is not to gain a reputation nor to be seen of men. Rather, good works shine the light and love of God to a dark world. Through those works, the world might see the Father and be drawn to salvation.

CREATED UNTO GOOD WORKS

Acts of charity do not save a person, but we were "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). Hence, one of the greatest purposes of the child of God should be to walk in

good works. This goes beyond the personal works of righteousness and encompasses the sacrifice of time and money in behalf of others in need. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).



GOOD WORKS INSTRUCTED

The scripture teaches that those who are rich (have more than needed) should be "rich in good works" and "ready to distribute" (1 Timothy 6:17-18). The saint is instructed to show a "pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7) and to "be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). The child of God must truly "be careful" because the cares and busyness of life will begin to erode the lifestyle of doing for others. Many people today are selfish and never have enough time or money to give to the needy. This is a spiritual problem. Hence, Paul challenged the saints to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24).

(Continued on page 6)

*“As we have
therefore
opportunity, let us
do good unto all
men. . .”*

(Continued from page 5)

GIVE ACCORDING TO ABILITY

The world is a large place and the needs are great. It is impossible for one person to give to all the needy who exist. The Lord does not want people to live in a state of guilt because He has blessed them individually or their respective country with prosperity. As God has blessed, the child of God is to share as they are able. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

PURE RELIGION

Some people separate their spiritual walk from the humanitarian needs around them.

James 1:27 addresses this clearly, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Unfortunately, there are people that focus on one aspect or the other of pure religion. Pure religion is keeping oneself unspotted from the world and living holy before God. This is paramount, but pure religion also includes acts of charity—visiting the orphans and widows and providing for their temporal needs. “Remember the poor” (Galatians 2:9-10).

TRUE FAITH

What does it profit if a man says he has faith and does not have works? If someone is naked and does not have daily food, and you say be warmed and filled and do not give them what they need, what does your faith profit? Faith without works is a dead faith (James 2:14-18).

True faith and pure religion is not all about personal piety. It is about the love of God working in the heart which causes one to love other people. That love and faith is lived out through ministering to the poor. There is great joy and blessing in living unselfishly. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Many people are missing out on the true blessing found through deeds of charity. The greatest reward will be eternal recompense (Luke 14:13-14).

JUDGED BY OUR DEEDS

Jesus painted a poignant picture of the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46. People were judged not according to their spiritual gifting, their measure of faith, nor according to their modesty or long prayers. They were judged on their deeds of charity. Had they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner?

May our lives be transformed through Christ and may we daily, willingly work and minister with a generous spirit in behalf of the spiritual and temporal needs of others.

—mws





Will people who dedicate their lives to helping the impoverished go to heaven?

Not necessarily. Giving and sacrificing for others is an outcome of salvation; but does not save them. All have sinned and need to repent and be forgiven through the power of Jesus Christ.



Am I required to give to every needy person I see?

No. As with every area of life, we must be led by the Spirit of God. While we must do charitable deeds, we are to be good stewards of what God has entrusted in our care. If we gave to every needy person, we would never have enough. Deeds of charity start with people who are of the household of faith. It is a poor

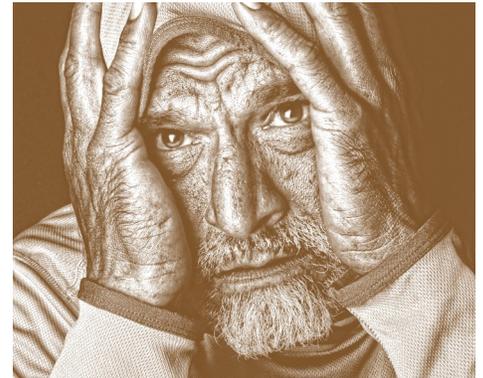
testimony when people give money to strangers and the person sitting by them in worship service is going hungry.

In addition, different people have different calls in life which may focus their charitable acts. One person may have a special burden to minister to the needs of orphans. Someone else may have a special burden for the homeless people on the street. Another may have a special burden for the hungry people in other countries. All of these needs are important. There are enough needs for each to give as God leads and directs them. Remember though, God IS directing us to good works.

Does charitable giving encourage destructive behaviors or laziness in the recipient?

This is a far-reaching question and space does not permit a full response. Charitable giving is commanded by the scripture and should never be minimized by justifying it as irresponsible. It is not good stewardship to give the drunkard money with which to buy alcohol. But, if the drunkard's children are going hungry because of the sin of the father, it would be commendable to feed those innocent children. The scripture was not promoting a welfare state but a condition where loving people would assist the hungry, naked, and poor.

If a man is lazy and sits at home unwilling to work, giving him food or money might encourage his laziness. On



the other hand, if a man cannot find work and is doing his best, he is worthy of assistance.

Do we enable our children when we feed them? Orphans do not have a father or mother to feed them, so the scripture says to minister to their needs.

The tenor of the teaching of Christ was to help people in need, not people who necessarily "deserved" it or who could pay it back. "I was in prison, and you did not visit me." Jesus did not say the visit was just for the one who was unjustly incarcerated.

Are the poor exempt from charitable giving?

No. While the rich may have more ability to give, the Bible teaches all of us to give and sacrifice for the needs of others. Giving is not only in money but in time. If a poor person cannot feed the hungry, he may be able to help the poor man plow the field, build a house, or share a blanket. There is always someone who has greater needs than we ourselves.

—mws



DID YOU KNOW?

Quotes from three early church fathers/writers concerning works of charity:

And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. —The Apologist Aristides, 125 AD

We know many among us have who have given [sold] themselves into bondage, in order that they might ransom others. Many, too, have surrendered themselves to slavery, that with the price which they received for themselves, they might provide food for others. —Clement of Rome, 96 AD

On that day in which you fast, you shall taste nothing except bread and water. Of the foods which you were going to eat, reckon how much the food of that day when you fast was going to cost, and give the amount to a widow or orphan or one in need. —Hermas of Rome, (c. 90-140)



**A Word
In Season**

Cast Thy Bread Upon the Waters

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Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. —Ecclesiastes 11:1

Solomon encouraged the reader to “Cast thy bread upon the waters.” Not unjustly, this scripture is often used to challenge people to sow the seeds of the gospel everywhere. While this is also true, Solomon is specifically speaking of deeds of charity. Sow the seeds of kindness and goodness upon people all around you. Give a portion of food to seven and also to eight (v2).



Sow upon all waters. Be hospitable to the most unlikely people even if they may seem unworthy. Sacrifice for the orphan, the single mother, the sick father, the elderly, the sinner. Give as unto the Lord and withhold not your hand.

In due time, God will cause an abundant increase. We sow not for the fleshly gratification, but God will repay His faithful servants. There will be a return.

—mws

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD