

## *“Being Leads to Doing”*

Mary Ellen Edmunds

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For further information write:

BYU Women’s Conference

161 Harman Continuing Education Building

Provo, Utah 84602

801-422-7692

E-mail: [womens\\_conference@byu.edu](mailto:womens_conference@byu.edu)

Home page: <http://womensconference.byu.edu>

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My hope is that each of us will catch one idea about charity, about love, that we’ll write down or think about, and it will make a bit of a difference in our day and maybe in our life. Please allow the Spirit to teach you something, no matter how horrible my presentation is.

You have heard many descriptions of charity, lots of repetition. One that I especially like is from the Bible Dictionary: Charity is “the highest, noblest, strongest kind of love, not merely affection; it is the pure love of Christ. It is never used to denote alms or deeds of benevolence, although it may be a prompting to do something.”

If charity is pure love, what makes it impure? I think sometimes it might be our motives, and if we’re not careful, sometimes our motives might be only self-serving—schmoozing. I practiced that a lot in the mirror.

A man was doing humanitarian work in Central America, and he saw a little boy with a tattered shirt, and so he went to the large donation of clothing and found two little shirts that he thought would fit—gave them to the little boy. The next day he saw the little boy with one of the shirts on and he had a friend with him and the friend had the other shirt on. He says, “Oh, why did you give one of your shirts away?” And he said, “Oh, sir, you gave me two shirts. I only need one.” That touched me. Jesus taught: “He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none.”<sup>1</sup> I don’t know if the little even knew that verse, but he was charitable.

In the early 1960s there was a violent volcanic earthquake in the Philippines and it left a lot of people dead and many people homeless. Our helper in our home was Pilarica, who had joined the Church because she got really curious about what we were doing as missionaries. She came the next day having heard about this problem and she said, ‘Sisters, we should be doing something to help them.’ She said, ‘Here’s a bucket. They can use it to haul water or they can tip it over and sit on it. And here’s a pair of Johnny’s pants. He has two pair; he only needs one.’ I thought she was poor, but she turned out to be really, really rich. She was filled with charity.

Nothing like charity can make us true Christians. Charity sometimes getteth weary, and even occasionally charity getteth ticked off . . . but it never faileth! It hangeth in there.

First comes charity—becoming, being, conversion—and then comes the doing and the serving. Charity and doing service are not exactly the same thing. We might be able to serve people without loving them. Maybe we’ve all had that experience before. But I maintain that you can’t be filled with charity without being compelled to serve, you can’t avoid serving. Charity is a gift of the Spirit. It’s a gift from God. It’s not just something we “work on” or try to do or practice. It’s a gift from God.

President George Q. Cannon said, “Every man and woman in the Church of Christ can have the gifts of the Spirit of God divided to them according to their faith and as God wills. . . . How many of you . . . are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow? . . . If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. Have I imperfections? I am full of them.”—I’m still quoting him, it’s not me saying that—“What is my duty? To pray to God to give me the gifts that will correct [my] imperfections. If I am an angry man, it is my duty to pray for charity, which suffereth long and is kind. . . . God has promised to give the gifts that are necessary for [our] perfection.”<sup>2</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley, “I am one who believes that love, like faith, is a gift from God.”<sup>3</sup> I believe that too.

Elder Bruce C. Hafen, “[Charity] is not developed entirely by one’s own power, even though our faithfulness is necessary as a qualification to receive it. Rather, as Mormon so eloquently tells us in Moroni 7, charity is ‘bestowed upon’ the ‘true followers’ of Christ. Its source, like all other blessings of the atonement, is the grace of God (Ether 12:36).”<sup>4</sup>

That’s why we pray to be filled with charity--there’s no room for anything but that as taught by the Prophet Mormon—rather than just trying to be nice or kind.

Our desire to be filled with charity moves us to find “filling stations.” With real intent we go to the temple, keep the Sabbath holy, obey the law of the fast, pray, partake of the sacrament, give service, and study—feast on the scriptures, not just nibbling.

Charity is fundamental in the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ. It is essential for missionary work, family history and temple work, welfare services, tithes and offerings, home and visiting teaching, happy families and much, much more. Charity is essential to the success of these things. It’s essential to our spiritual welfare, and that’s important. And it’s essential to the establishment of Zion, which is a very important covenant!

Several years ago I welcomed my dear companion Endang from Indonesia to come to America for the first time. And we were up near Temple Square, and we were—I wanted to take her to the Relief Society building. And I knew that the Primary general presidency and board were having a meeting, but I wanted them to meet her but I didn’t know if I was courageous enough to tap on the door—they get pretty serious. But I thought, ‘Oh, she would want to meet them, and they probably would want to meet her,’ so I took courage and tapped on the door. They welcomed us instantly. President Grassli immediately got up and hugged Endang, and they sang her the “Hello Song” and they sang “I Love to See the Temple”—that’s when I lost it. And when she knew that this was the president of the Primary for the whole church and the whole world, who was right here, right now—but this was President Grassli—Endang kept going, ‘Oh! Oh my goodness! Oh! Oh!’ And she was overcome by the privilege of seeing somebody so—to her—so important.

Well, I learned a great lesson from that experience. They weren’t just talking about kindness and reaching the one—they did it. They stopped whatever they were doing and showed me that people really do matter more than meetings. People matter more than programs. People matter more than activities. People really, really matter.

Later I was thinking that they could have said something like, “I’m sorry, we’re having a really important meeting, and we’re talking about Heavenly Father helping us to serve the one, take care of Heavenly Father’s children, so sorry.” They taught that there are times when there’s something more important than what they’re discussing, and in this case it was Endang, a sweet, sweet soul from a place most of them, if any of them, would never go, Indonesia.

I remember that Jesus stopped on the way to a miracle. He had been asked by a ruler, a father, to come and heal his daughter, who was at the point of death. And so he starts to go with him, then he’s thronged, and what happens, a woman with an issue of blood feels if she can just touch his garment she will be healed. And so she touches his garment, and he feels virtue go out of him, as if virtue is like a purchasing power of heaven. And he stopped and he wondered who had done it, and she—you know, he knew—and she admitted it. And he just told her that her faith had

made her whole and to go her way, healed. Meanwhile the daughter died, and he gets word that the daughter has died, but he goes to the home and brings her back—brings that little 12-year-old girl back. He knew he was on the way to a miracle, pretty big one, but he stopped—he stopped on the way to be kind.<sup>5</sup>

Charity, pure love, is the royal law of the gospel. We talk about “the law of the gospel.” The Savior’s brother James described this in James 2:8, “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” The royal law of the gospel is pure love, charity.

From President Marion G. Romney, “I desire to say a few words about ‘the royal law according to the scriptures’ . . . . It is as much a part of the requirements of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and obedience thereto is as certainly a prerequisite to exaltation in the celestial kingdom, as are baptism and the laying on of hands. . . . This matter is very important to me, it is next to my heart, and it should be important to you. . . . During his earthly ministry, the Lord placed the ‘royal law,’ second only in importance to the love of God. Without attempting to catalog the many things which the keeping of this royal law entails, it may be said with certainty that chief among them is caring for the poor.”<sup>6</sup>

How many ways are there to be poor? It’s not just about money or stuff, is it? Loneliness is a terrible kind of poor. So is grieving and being frightened.

I remember saying a certain phrase in my prayers which was so familiar that it came out rapidly and I almost never thought about it: “Bless the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, and those that have cause to mourn.” Good luck, you guys. You know, I didn’t think, well, should I be on the committee? Should I help? Should I do something? It didn’t occur to me, and I began to think I was kind of a “minimal Mormon” and maybe a “not so Christian Christian.”

President Joseph F. Smith: “It has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints that a religion that has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually and to exalt them in the life to come.”<sup>7</sup>

Our religion, through helping us develop pure love, does have the power to save us both temporally and spiritually!

As recorded in the beginning of 4 Nephi, the people lived the royal law after the Savior’s visit for quite a while and they experienced Zion. How was Zion described: one heart, one mind, dwelling in righteousness, with no poor among them, nobody with a need that wasn’t being met or attended to by someone else. They had all things common. There were no rich or poor. They all prospered exceedingly. The disciples performed many mighty miracles.

I want to read a couple of verses, which you’ve already heard today:

“There was no contention in the land”—and contention is mentioned several times—“because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.” Their hearts were so full of love, there was no room for contention. I think that’s possible if we really, really want that gift from God.

Sixteen: “And there were no envyings . . . strifes . . . tumults . . . whoredoms . . . lyings . . . murders, [n]or any manner of lasciviousness”—I think I met a girl in second grade named, no, never mind—“and surely”—OK, here’s the result—“surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.”<sup>8</sup> Back in the book a ways there’s a people that are happier than they’ve been since the days of Nephi, but this is among all the people. Why? Because they loved each other. Because their hearts were full of charity. I wish that could have lasted longer.

Here we are in 4 Nephi and you go a few verses and all of a sudden, pow! It starts to disintegrate. They’ve put 200 years into just a few verses.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “Has not the Lord with . . . truth and relevance told us, concerning the resources of this planet, ‘The earth is full, and there is enough and to spare’? Should not this reality sober us in terms of what might be achieved [in] regards to poverty? Clearly, it is the attribute of love, not other resources, that is in short supply—a scarcity that inevitably means misery.”<sup>9</sup>

When I read that phrase about “enough and to spare” from Doctrine and Covenants 104:17, I like to say “enough and to *share*.” Just change it a little tiny bit.

This from J. Richard Clarke: “It has always been the disposition”—that’s an interesting word, I love that word, disposition—“of the true disciples of Christ, as they reached higher degrees of spirituality, to look after the needy.”<sup>10</sup> Where are we? Where am I as a person? Where are we as individuals and as a church?

Charity is evident in other languages. In Bahasa Indonesia, for good morning we say selamat pagi, which means “Peace to you this morning.” And to say thank you we say terima kasih, which means “Receive love.” And for you’re welcome we say kembali kasih, “May love come back to you.”

In Tagalog we say thank you, maraming salamat, which means “Much peace to you.” And in Africa, if you ask someone how they are, you usually ask “Are you well?” and they respond “I am well if you are well.” Wow.

Interestingly, I mentioned to a friend recently that I was writing to a man who’s in prison who has become my pen pal—he’s in the pen—and you can have charity in many situations—we call the place where he is “the spa.” But she said, “Well, don’t you know he’s guilty?” Interestingly, that surprised me, and I said remember when the Savior said in Matthew 25, he says to those on his right hand: “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” And he then says that he was hungry and they had given him meat, He was thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick. And He says, “I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

Well, I can’t go, but I send notes. And I just told my friend it mattered a lot to me to keep in touch with him, and that I really enjoyed and treasured his letters. So I want to share a little bit about charity in prison from my pen pal. He told me about his roommate, a huge man from Polynesia, who had been in jail and prison most of his life. I’m going to call my friend Evan. He began telling me that they needed to serve the other men in their section in some way. The roommate was pretty puzzled about what this meant, but he agreed. Evan said, “we’re kind of like home teachers.”

Now I’m quoting: “My awesome roommate and I have ‘upped’ the intensity of our ‘service log.’ We have been prayerfully selecting four men to serve each week. We pray for them specifically, together, and we listen for inspiration about what they may need—kind of like being home teachers, but to the whole section. It’s been so neat to see my massive, Polynesian, tattoo-covered roommate, who has spent much of his life hurting people, turning that power and intensity to helping people. It’s awesome. People notice. It’s pretty darn funny to watch him as he serves. People don’t expect it, and it shocks them. They don’t know what to do. He’s the toughest guy in our section, he shows up to do something thoughtful and kind. People are torn between fear and gratitude! But as they see he is sincere, they are so touched!

“A few of us here tried to do something for Christmas. We each saved for a month to make Christmas packages for the men who have so little. One very large, hairy man got a strange expression when he delivered his package. He doesn’t even believe in Jesus. But kindness is a language that translates into every belief system. He followed me into my cell later that day, which is generally a cause for concern here at “the spa.” He tried to speak, but he broke down weeping and just picked me up in an enormous bear hug. He said he had never been shown kindness in his life. His ‘thank you’ was so pure and tender. He has been to several Church functions since.

“Another man had just arrived on our block two days before Christmas and he had nothing. He too was deeply shocked by his package. Later that day he approached me to tell me that the day before, he had been trying to figure out how he could somehow get a T-shirt (which is the normal “attire” here at the “SPA”). He considered what foods

are popular enough that he could trade food to eventually afford a T-shirt (which was \$3.00). It still seemed like it would take a while to do his best to get the T-shirt, but if Father could somehow send him one it would be viewed as a special Christmas present from Jesus. Each of the Christmas packages had a T-shirt, and he was holding his as he told me his story. He started to cry, saying that he knew for sure that God answers prayers. It so happened that we had some extra T-shirts, so I went and got one for him as well. He just wept.”

You can have charity no matter what your circumstances are. You can be charitable. You can be filled with it. You can receive this gift from God. We are covenant people, and we are bound together by love, no matter where we are or who we are. It’s a heart condition that we have when we are committed to become more like the Savior, more filled with love.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr.: “The world is moaning in tribulation—because of the elections. That’s not there. I apologize—I do not know the cure. . . . But it is my faith that if the people shall . . . re-enthroned brotherly love, and return to the old time virtues . . . we shall be far on our way to returned prosperity and worldly happiness. . . . wealth, however great, is a mere shadow compared [to] the living, enduring riches of the mind and heart. We must remember the command . . . "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self," which, says James, is ‘the royal law according to the scriptures.’”<sup>11</sup>

Charity leads to being, to becoming, to conversion, and it leads to doing. Doing leads to pure joy!

A man named Matthias Baldwin built the first American locomotive and he became really, really wealthy. He was known to distribute literally gifts of money freely among those who were less prosperous than he. He was so generous and kind that when he didn’t have cash he’d write a note to somebody.

This man would say things like, “Are we to trust the Lord to take care of *our* affairs and not *his own*?” One bank president said “We will stand by him because he is determined to do good with his money. His collaterals are God’s promises!” What a great collateral.

Mr. Baldwin was obviously acquainted with Paul’s admonition to Timothy:

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute . . .

“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”<sup>12</sup>

Here is a comment from Mr. Baldwin. I hope you’ll hear it enough for it to affect you the way it does me. He said, "I feel more thankful for the disposition"—there’s that word again. “I feel more thankful for the disposition to give largely than for the ability to do so.” “I feel more thankful for the disposition to give largely than for the ability to do so; for I know that immense wealth can be acquired a great deal easier than the heart to use it well. My money without a new heart would have been a curse to me.”<sup>13</sup>

That’s incredible. Being becomes doing. Being leads to doing. Here was a man who had a disposition as described in Mosiah 5:2, and that disposition, the people’s disposition changed. They had no more disposition to do evil. They wanted to repent. They wanted to repent of things they had done by commission, but they from then on had a disposition to do good continually, so they would not be guilty of omission, of leaving something out that they could have done.

I think Mr. Baldwin—I look forward to meeting him. I just have a long list of people I want to meet. That’s why I’m in charge of the afternoon of the first resurrection. The morning’s all scheduled but in the afternoon we’re just going to meet people we want to meet, and we’re just going to have reunions and just a ton of fun.

From 1 John 4:7–9, 11,19:

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; . . .

“ . . . God is love.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. . . .

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. . . .

“We love him, because he first loved us.”

We may need to love more than we do, and we may need to love better—deeper, more consistently, more continually, more patiently.

Brother Stephen R. Covey described patience in this loving way: “I’ll go at your speed. I’m happy to wait for you. You’re worth it.”<sup>14</sup>

And Helen Keller. Oh, I can’t wait to meet her. I dream about her—I don’t know if she appreciates that or not, but I do. “I believe that love will finally establish the kingdom of God on earth, and that cornerstones of that kingdom will be liberty, truth, brotherhood, and service. I believe that we can live on earth according to the fulfillment of God’s will, and that when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, every man will love his fellow men and act toward them as he desires they should act toward him. I believe that the welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all.”<sup>15</sup>

Doctrine and Covenants 78:7, “For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.” Think: two great commandments. What is required of us is that we come home to our Heavenly Parents and our other dear ones clothed and filled with charity. I hope we’ll all be there together! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 3:11.

<sup>2</sup> George Q. Cannon, “Seeking Spiritual Gifts,” *Ensign*, April 2016, 80.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon B. Hinckley, “And the Greatest of These Is Love,” *Ensign*, March 1984, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life’s Experiences*, 18, Deseret Book first edition 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See Mark 5:22–42.

<sup>6</sup> see Matthew 22:39. Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, October 1954, 65–66.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph F. Smith, *Out West*, September 1905, 242.

<sup>8</sup> 4 Nephi 15–16.

<sup>9</sup> Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am* [1992], 25.

<sup>10</sup> J. Richard Clarke, “The Storehouse Resource System,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 82.

<sup>11</sup> J. Reuben Clark Jr., Conference Report, April 1933, 103.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Timothy 6:17–19.

<sup>13</sup> Osborne J. P. Widtsoe, *What Jesus Taught: A Mormon Perspective*, 175; shared by Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Conference Report, October 1965, 133.

<sup>14</sup> *Principle-Centered Leadership*, 127, First Fireside Edition 1992.

<sup>15</sup> *The Faith of Helen Keller* [Kansas City, Missouri: Hallmark [1967], 32.