

# Assurance 101

## Lesson 7

### Charity

#### PART I EXPLANATION

**Introduction:** We come now to the final link in the biblical chain of assurance - charity. The ultimate goal of the Christian's life is to be a charitable person. The book of Colossians calls it the "bond of perfectness". Charity is the uniting principle to which all of the Christian virtues and graces contribute. Just to the degree that you have a charitable disposition have you truly grasped what the Christian life is all about. Love is the fulfillment of the law. If you successfully add charity to your faith you have truly come to Christian maturity and are promised that you shall never fall but receive an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Charity is the ultimate fulfillment of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Charity goes beyond brotherly kindness because it loves not only other saints but those that are our enemies and that act spitefully toward us. It is not loving others because they are kind to us rather it is being gracious and merciful to them in spite of the way that they act. That is why this is a commodity that is near extinction in our current world. It is the putting of the interests of others ahead of our own, regardless of whether we are treated fairly in return. It is relatively easy to love someone who acts with respect and affection or returns your love and affection. It is quite another to love the unlovable and to be kind to those who hate and persecute you.

That is why charity is a great contributor to an assurance of salvation, because it manifests the merciful nature of God shining through the Christian. God expressed His love by sending His Son into the world to die for sinners at enmity against Him. "For God so loved" that He gave His Son, not to a world that would reverence Him as their King. Rather to a world that would mutilate His body and hang it on a cross. He sends His sun on the good and the evil. He sends His rain on the just and the unjust. He is kind and merciful to the unthankful and to the evil. The Christian that follows that example manifests that they have partaken of the Divine nature of God.

That is why the word charity is a better translation than the word love. When people "give to charity", there is an understanding that they will not receive anything in return. It is giving to people who have nothing to offer them and may even bite the hand that feeds them. It is turning the other cheek to those that smite you and giving to those that won't repay that manifests true charity. It is just such love that confounds the world and causes them to be drawn to true Christianity. We desperately need to regain this Christian grace in our lives and in our churches.

Too often however, when people refer to "genuine Christianity" they are referring to an accurate doctrinal statement. While it is not that doctrinal statements are not important, however, if you have the most perfectly constructed doctrinal statement and have not charity you are worthless. (I Corinthians 13) If your doctrine doesn't produce godliness and charity you are a spiritual descendent of the Pharisees. They tithed out of their garden but neglected the more important matters of unbiased judgment and the love of God. Bare knowledge not put into practice only serves to "puff up" individuals but charity edifies or builds up others. It doesn't matter what virtue or grace that you have, if it is not accompanied by charity it is worthless. The greatest asset to a home, a church, or a nation is to have the presence of charitable people.

**Definitions:** *For English use the Webster's 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong's Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong's number is in parenthesis.*

English: **Charity** -

Greek: (26) **agape** *ag-ah'-pay*

**Quotation:**

“A man that is charitable and not pure, is better to others than to himself.” Thomas Manton

“Charity offereth honey to a bee without wings.” John Trapp

“Love is the only thing in which we can retaliate with God. If God be angry with us, we must not be angry again; if He chide us, we must not chide Him again; but if God loves us, we must love Him again. There is nothing in which we can answer God again, but love. We must not give Him word for word, but we must give Him love for love.” Thomas Watson

“Love is the queen of the graces; it outshines all the others, as the sun the lesser planets.”

Faith deals with invisibles, but God hates that love which is invisible.”

Thomas Watson

“He that demands mercy, and shows none, ruins the bridge over which he himself is to pass.” Thomas Adams

“Not only do you have a God-given responsibility toward the family of believers, but your heavenly Father asks also that you walk blamelessly toward those outside His family. So you must add to brotherly kindness, charity. This grace empowers you to do good to the worst of men. The more they curse you, the harder you must pray for them. ‘Father, forgive them,’ Jesus prayed as His executioners raked His side for His heart’s blood.

Where is Christ’s compassion in the church today? It is evident the lack of this last piece of armour gives Satan great advantage in our time. We have become penny-pinchers with God’s mercy for fear our charity will be too broad – whereas in the biblical sense, if it is not as wide as the world, it is too narrow for the command which bids us ‘do good to all.’ ” William Gurnall

“A man may as well go to hell for not forgiving as for not believing.” Thomas Watson

“Whilst wrongs are remembered they are not remitted. He forgives not that forgets not.” John Trapp

**Confessions** (Look up and read these articles)

**London Baptist Confession of 1689**

Chapter 18 Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation - paragraphs 1-4

**PART II EXPLORATION**

**Key Questions** (*Answer in writing*)

1. What is the ultimate goal of the Christian’s life?

2. What is meant by the “bond of perfectness”?

3. In what ways does charity exceed brotherly kindness?
  
4. How does charity contribute to an assurance of salvation?
  
5. How did God display the ultimate example of charity?
  
6. Why is “charity” a better translation of agape than “love”?
  
7. Why is charity a better indicator of genuine Christianity than a doctrinal statement?
  
8. Which definition from Webster’s 1828 gives the best description of biblical charity?
  
9. Why would charitable people be the greatest asset to a home? A church?
  
10. Who is the most charitable person that you know? Why do you choose them?

**Key Scriptures:**

Luke 6:27-36 In describing the difference between the saved and the lost, Jesus challenged those professing to be saved to \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_, do \_\_\_\_\_ to them which \_\_\_\_\_ you, \_\_\_\_\_ them that \_\_\_\_\_ you and \_\_\_\_\_ for them which despitefully \_\_\_\_\_ you. Him that smiteth thee on the one \_\_\_\_\_ offer also to him the

\_\_\_\_\_ ; him that takes away your cloke \_\_\_\_\_ not to take your \_\_\_\_\_ also. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ man that asketh of thee; and he that takes away thy goods don't ask to have them returned. Treat others as you would like to be treated. If you only love those that \_\_\_\_\_ you, how are you any different than the unsaved? If you only do good to them that do \_\_\_\_\_ to you, how are you different? If you will only \_\_\_\_\_ to those who can pay you back, how are you any different than a bank? A Christian is challenged to do these things without anything in return and to act like \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

I Corinthians 8:1 This reveals that the goal of Christianity is not to have the most \_\_\_\_\_ rather the goal is \_\_\_\_\_ .

I Corinthians 13:13 Very few things will endure into the world to come. Three of them are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ and the greatest of the three is charity.

I Corinthians 14:1 We are encouraged to \_\_\_\_\_ after charity.

I Corinthians 16:14 \_\_\_\_\_ things need to be done with charity.

Colossians 3:14 Charity is the mark of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Christian life.

I Thessalonians 3:6 Paul was greatly encouraged when he heard from Timothy \_\_\_\_\_ that the saints in Thessalonica were walking in faith and charity despite their persecution.

II Thessalonians 1:3 Paul thanked God because the charity that the members of the church had toward each other \_\_\_\_\_.

I Timothy 1:5 The end or fulfilling of the law is charity out of a pure \_\_\_\_\_ .

I Timothy 2:15 Women will be saved from the curse of sin (revealed in childbirth) only if they are found to \_\_\_\_\_ in faith, charity, and holiness.

I Timothy 4:12 To prevent people from despising the youth of a young preacher Paul challenged him to be an \_\_\_\_\_ to others of charity.

Titus 2:2 Titus was to charge the \_\_\_\_\_ men in the church to be an example of charity.

III John 6 John rejoiced when others bore \_\_\_\_\_ that the saints were charitable to them.

**Key Chapter(s)** (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

I Corinthians 13

### **PART III EXPECTATION**

**Memory verse:** I Peter 4:8

**Personal Definition:** (*Write a definition in your own words*)

Charity –

**Personal Application:** Record one instance this week of responding charitably (in the ways listed in I Corinthians 13:4-6) to someone who is treating you wrongfully and describe the result.

**Personal Confession:** (*Study the confessions and summarize them in your own words*)

Assurance of Salvation

**Meditation question:** (*be prepared for discussion*) Which method is God in His providence likely to employ to help a saint add charity to their faith?

**Extra Credit -** Identify someone who has wronged you in the past and display an act of charity toward them.