

Elder Robert J. Whetten

Love others as the Savior does

Alone in that upper room with the eleven, Jesus uses these last teaching moments of His mortal ministry to teach: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹ He talks of His coming death and Resurrection: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."² He reaffirms His divine sonship: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."³ And He promises that the Father will send them another comforter, the Holy Ghost: "He shall teach you all things."⁴

Jesus' unconditional love for us motivated His atoning sacrifice for our sins. How He lived His life is the example we should follow. Without His love we would be unable to return to our Heavenly Father. His way should be our way. "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am."⁵ He showed us that we must go about doing good, that the spiritual and physical welfare of our fellowmen is as important as our own, and that we should show genuine concern and compassion for all of our Heavenly Father's children.

Seek to be filled with charity

Moroni defines Christlike love as charity. "And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father."⁶ It's not enough to say we believe and that we love Him; we must be found possessed with His kind of love for others at that

last day. It is not necessary for us to lay down our life for others as He did, but like the Savior, we should bless the lives of others by giving of what our life is made up of—our time, our talents, our means, and ourselves.

Mormon urges us to "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."⁷ Like faith, Christlike love is a gift of the Spirit, is granted upon the principles of personal righteousness and in accordance to our level of obedience to the laws upon which it is predicated. And like faith, love must be exercised to grow.

Love and serve others

We all live our lives one day at a time, and each of us, regardless of our age or circumstances, is presented each day with choices in our relationships with others. As we deny ourselves and reach out to serve others, the Spirit will refine us and teach us and we will come to learn what Paul meant: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."⁸ Our compassionate service to others will grow into divine love and change us, and "when he shall appear we shall be like him."⁹

Brigham Young taught, "We should commence our labors of love and kindness with the family to which we belong; and then extend them to others."¹⁰ King Benjamin counseled parents to teach their children "to love one another, and to serve one another."¹¹ President Kimball taught that "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another mortal that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom."¹²

A young girl shows Christlike love

Last January an earthquake in the central mountain region of Colombia left the city of Armenia devastated. Concerned stake presidents called the Area Presidency in Quito to find out what the needs of the members living in Armenia were. The district president confirmed that many Church members had lost their homes and had found shelter in the four undamaged chapels but urgently needed food and clothing. The Relief Society and priesthood leaders swung into action, and donations from members throughout Colombia poured into a designated chapel in each city. Seven-year-old Neidi had come with her parents to the chapel in the city of Cali and watched as Bishop Villareal received donations from members.

"Bishop, how can I help the children in Armenia?"

"Neidi, your parents have already helped."

She went to the other end of the chapel and observed that little clothing and no shoes for children were being packed. Neidi came back to the bishop with her shoes in her hand. "Now I know how I can help. Please give these shoes to another little girl in Armenia who has lost hers." Her bare feet made no sound as she slipped away.

Be full of love

King Benjamin counseled his people to yield to the enticings of the Holy Ghost, put "off the natural man and [become] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and [become] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love."¹³

In the late spring of 1829, as the marvelous events of the Restoration were unfolding, the Lord told Joseph Knight through the Prophet Joseph, "And no one can assist in this work ex-

cept he shall be humble and full of love."¹⁴ Today each worthy young man is asked to give two years in full-time missionary service. As missionaries teach His gospel and serve others, they are granted gifts of the Spirit, including a Christlike love for those they serve. Missionary service can and should become the foundation for a lifetime of happiness built on love and service to others.

And motherhood, like priesthood, is a divine call to serve and to nurture others. Who that has witnessed the pure love of a mother for her child can deny that this kind of love is of God? Sisters, this same kind of Christlike love can and should be extended to others throughout your life.

Give "all that you have and are"

When the rich man who came to Jesus asked, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" the Lord reiterated the commandments, and the man answered, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."¹⁵

As His disciples today, we should ask, "What lack I yet?" You can go about doing good, you can love and serve others in your family, in the Church, and in the community. At some point you must be willing "to render to him all that you have and are."¹⁶

Some of the truest followers I know are couples that have put the anticipated ease and pleasures of retirement on hold and followed Him into full-time service in His kingdom. If your desire is to grow in your discipleship together, talk to your bishop about a mission. Every mission in the Church needs more missionary couples, and the soon-to-be 100 temples in operation need more workers. President Hinckley has asked:

“Why are missionaries happy? Because they lose themselves in the service of others.

“Why are those who labor in the temples happy? Because their labor of love is in very deed harmonious with the great vicarious work of the Savior of mankind.”¹⁷

Lift one another's burdens

I am grateful to have been surrounded by loved ones who have blessed my life with their love and service. Like the converts in Alma's time, if we are to be called His people, we must be “willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light.”¹⁸ Each of us can think of true followers that have lifted the burdens of many through their Christlike love and service. Ernest LeRoy Hatch was the medical doctor in the community in which I grew up in northern Mexico. He was also my mission president and served several other missions. For much of his life he carried with him the written words to the hymn “More Holiness Give Me.” The last two lines read, “More fit for the kingdom, more used would I be, more blessed and holy—more, Savior, like thee.”¹⁹

As His true followers, the Savior wants us to love others as He loves them—more unconditionally, more purely, more perfectly. As in the past,

His apostles and prophets in our day continue to exemplify and teach that this Christlike love is the very essence of His gospel. I have come to know and feel of their love one for another and for each of us. I bear witness that they are true disciples of Jesus Christ. This Church is His kingdom on the earth. We have His and their example of love and service. May we be true disciples as well, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. John 13:34–35.
2. John 15:13.
3. John 14:6.
4. John 14:26.
5. 3 Nephi 27:27.
6. Ether 12:34.
7. Moroni 7:48; italics added.
8. Galatians 5:22.
9. Moroni 7:48.
10. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 271.
11. Mosiah 4:15.
12. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 252.
13. Mosiah 3:19.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 12:8.
15. Matthew 19:16, 20–21.
16. Mosiah 2:34.
17. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 595.
18. Mosiah 18:8.
19. *Hymns*, no. 131.

Elder Robert D. Hales

The Spirit strengthens families

Strengthening families is our sacred duty as parents, children, extended family members, leaders, teachers, and individual members of the Church.

The importance of spiritually strengthening families is taught clearly in the

scriptures. Father Adam and Mother Eve taught their sons and daughters the gospel. The sacrifices of Abel were accepted by the Lord, whom he loved. Cain, on the other hand, “loved Satan more than God” and committed serious sins. Adam and Eve “mourned before the Lord,