

# CHARITY IS KIND (1 CORINTHIANS 13:4(b))

## THE LAW OF KINDNESS (PROVERBS 31:26)

(To the saints gathered at Topeka, Kansas, on May 26, 2019)

**1 Corinthians 13:1-8:** *1. ¶ 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.*

*2 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.*

*3 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.*

*4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

*5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

*6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*

*7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

*8 ¶ 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.*

**Proverbs 31:10, 26:** *10 ¶ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies...26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*

The Bible teaches, in both old and new testament, that charity, or a truly Christian spirit, will dispose us to do good to others. This is the kindness spoken of here, to do good to others. Obviously, it is a dominant characteristic of Almighty God, as will be demonstrated below in several key Bible verses.

### **What does this “do good to others” look like?**

Gill says here that charity is kind, means, “liberal, and bountiful, does good to all men, even to enemies, and especially to the household of faith; he is gentle to all men, affable and courteous to his brethren, and not morose, churlish, and ill natured; he is easy and yielding to the tempers and humours of men; accommodates himself to their infirmities, capacities, manners, and circumstances, in everything he can, that is not contrary to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, his own conscience, and the good of men.”

Barnes says that “[t]he idea is, that under all provocations and ill-usage it is gentle and mild. Hatred prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire of revenge. But love is the reverse of all these.”

This “kind” is the same as “courteous” in 1 Peter 3:8.

**1 Peter 3:8-15** “8 ¶ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, **be courteous**: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

Clarke says that this kindness, “if called to suffer, inspires the sufferer with the most amiable sweetness, and the most tender affection. It is also submissive to all the dispensations of God; and creates trouble to no one.”

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown in explaining this verse point to a companion verse at **James 3:17**: “*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*”

Matthew Henry says: “It is benign, bountiful; it is courteous and obliging. The law of kindness is in her lips; her heart is large, and her hand open. She is ready to show favours and to do good. She seeks to be useful; and not only seizes on opportunities of doing good, but searches for them. This is her general character. She is patient under injuries, and apt and inclined to do all the good offices in her power. And under these two generals all the particulars of the character may be reduced.”

A sampling of Bible verses which further helps in explaining this kindness and the Divine source of this good are found here:

**Nehemiah 9:17**: “*And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.*” Bottom line: we have all been in that place with these rebellious Jews of Moses’ day; only by God’s pardon, grace, mercy, slowness to anger and great kindness are we delivered from the just punishment due us.

**Proverbs 19:22**: “*The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.*” Every sensible man desires this kindness which is a great gift from God.

**Proverbs 31:20:** *“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.”* One of the manifestations of this law of kindness in this virtuous woman (a/k/a as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ) is defined here in action.

**Proverbs 31:26:** *“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”* Gill says: “or “the law of love” {b}, grace and mercy; which is the law of Christ, #Ga 6:2; speaking kindly and tenderly to everyone, exhorting to acts of mercy and kindness, and doing them herself: or “the doctrine of grace [is] in her tongue” {c}; the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of the grace of God, and the grace of God itself; it is the doctrine of the grace and love of God the Father towards men in Christ, as it appears in their election in him and redemption by him; of the grace of Christ in his incarnation, sufferings, and death; and of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; and which contains various doctrines of grace, as of justification, pardon of sin, and effectual calling; and of salvation itself, which is all of grace: and this doctrine of grace, in the several branches of it, the church, and all gracious souls, cannot forbear speaking of; it is often in their mouths, it dwells upon their tongues; and careful are they in other respects that their speech be seasoned with grace, and be such that ministers grace to the hearers, #Eph 4:29 Col 3:6.”

**Luke 6:35:** *“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”*

**Luke 6:36:** *“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”*

**Ephesians 4:32:** *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*

**Colossians 3:12:** *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”*

**2 Peter 1:7:** *“And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”*

**1 John 3:16:** *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*

**1 John 3:17:** *“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?”*

**1 John 3:18:** *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”*

**1 John 4:11:** *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”*

We do good to the souls of others. Men are often instruments of spiritual and eternal good to others. Greater good than if they had given them the riches of the world. We do good to the souls

of others, by taking pains to instruct the ignorant, and to lead them to the knowledge of the great things of true religion; counseling and warning others about the condition of their souls; stirring them up to their duty; by reproof of those that may be out of the way of duty; by setting them good examples, which is most needful and effective; all for the promotion of the good of their souls. The example must follow the instruction to be effective and forceful; and without it, the instruction will be likely to be in vain. **Daniel 12:3:** “*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*”

John Trapp helps explain this verse: “*Heb., That justify many; ..., Ministerially, as instruments in Christ’s hand; for “we preach Christ,” yea, we give what we preach; “we give the knowledge of salvation for the remission of sins”; {#Lu 1:17: And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.} we deliver men from hell; {#Job 33:24: “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.” } we save the souls of them that hear us. {#1Ti 4:16: Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.}*

We are ministers of these good things—we do not have intrinsic value (we didn’t originate these Gospel truths) and we don’t have the power to grant or withhold or to exercise our discretion to pick and choose what we like or don’t like—we simply minister those things which are commanded to be ministered.

“Saints, too, may be the instruments of comforting and establishing one another, and of strengthening one another in faith and obedience; of quickening, and animating and edifying one another; of raising one another out of dull and dead frames, and helping one another out of temptations, and onward in the divine life; of directing one another in doubtful and difficult cases; of encouraging one another under darkness or in trial; and, generally, of promoting each other’s spiritual joy and strength, and thus being mutually fellow-helpers on their way to glory.” (Jonathan Edwards’ exposition).

**Psalms 141:5:** “*Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*” Here we read of David’s perspective as one who received a thorough reproof from Nathan in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah (**2 Samuel 12:7-12**), and he so valued this excellent oil ministered by Nathan, he made him his counsel (**1 Kings 1:32**).

We do good things to others in outward things, and for this world. We help in their external difficulties and calamities. **Matthew 25:35-36:** “*35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*” We further their outward

estate or substance, we aid them in their good name, and thereby promote their esteem and acceptance among men; or by anything that may add to their comfort or happiness in the world, whether by a kind word or considerate and benevolent deed. Thereby we hope that our instructions, counsels, warnings and good examples when accompanied by these outward goods, tends to open the way for the better effect of our efforts for their souls. In any event, we do contribute to the good of others by giving them of those things that they need, and we possess, by doing for them and taking pains to help them, and promote their welfare, and by suffering for them, and aiding them to bear their burdens.

**Luke 6:38:** *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*

**1 Thessalonians 2:9:** *“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”*

**Hebrews 6:10:** *“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”*

**Galatians 6:2:** *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”*

### **To whom should we do this good?**

Scripture uses this expression: *“our neighbor.”* The duty is implied in the command, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. (**Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19 and 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8**). That lawyer said to Christ: *“Who is my neighbour?”* (**Luke 10:29-37**). Christ’s answer taught him that the Samaritan was neighbour to the Jew. Understand that each esteemed the other as vile and accursed, and they were bitter enemies. So here is what we can reasonably derive from the Bible as to who we do this good.

*We do this good to the good and the bad.* **Matthew 5:43-48.** See Ben’s recent sermon expounding these verses. The world is full of various kinds of people—some good and some evil; and we should do good to all. **Galatians 6:10:** *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”* We have Paul as the prime example of an evil man turned to do good by the power of God (**Acts 9**); and who are we to question that power of conversion exercised upon whom God wills?

*We do this good to friends and enemies.* Our Savior says: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”* (**Matthew 5:44**). **Doing good** is the only retaliation we are permitted and that is becoming to us as Christians. **Romans 12:17, 21:** *“17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. ... 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”* **1 Thessalonians 5:15:** *“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever*

*follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.” 1 Peter 3:9: “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”*

*We do this good to the thankful and the unthankful. We should follow the example of our heavenly Father. Luke 6:35-36: “35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”* You should assume that they will never thank you for it and they will only repay you with abuse and injury. We should believe and trust in the word of God.

**We should do this good to others freely, cheerfully, heartily, with good-will, liberally and bountifully.**

The command is *“Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.” (Luke 6:35)*. So, we should not do this good to others expecting something in return. Freely, not for our temporal good, interest, honor or profit, but from the spirit of love. Period. *“When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:12-14).*

We should do this good cheerfully and heartily and with good-will to the one we would benefit. The very idea of giving acceptably is presented throughout the Bible as implying that we give with a cordial and cheerful spirit. *“Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:9-10).* *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7).* *“[H]e that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Romans 12:8).* *“Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.” (Deuteronomy 15:10).*

We should do this good liberally and bountifully. We are not to be scant and sparing in our gifts and efforts, but open-hearted and open-handed. **2 Corinthians 9:8 and 11** teach we are to *“abound to every good work,” “being enriched in everything to all bountifulness.” Deuteronomy 15:8: “But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.” Proverbs 11:25: “The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” 2 Corinthians 9:6: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”*

This goodness, this kindness, this law of kindness is the sum of the Christian spirit and shows itself by good-will to others. This love of benevolence is manifest in Christians because it is an

imitation of the eternal love and grace of God, and of the dying love of Christ, which consists in benevolence or good-will to men. This was sung by the angels at his birth: **Luke 2:14**: “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*” The main thing in Christian love is good-will, or a spirit to delight in and seek the good of those who are the objects of that love. Put another way by Paul at **2 Timothy 2:10**: “*Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*” Gill says here: “There is a certain number of persons whom God has chosen in Christ from everlasting unto salvation, who shall certainly be saved; for these Jesus Christ suffered and died; and on their account is the Gospel sent, preached, and published to the world; for their sakes are ministers fitted and qualified for their work, and have their mission and commission to perform it, and suffer what they do in the execution of it; and since it was for the sake of such, whom God had loved and chosen, that the apostle endured all his reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, he was the more cheerful under them; and the consideration of it was a support unto him.”

This love—this kindness—this goodness, is effectual and is not in word only but in deed. **1 John 3:18**: “*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*” “*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?*” (**James 2:15-16**). This is the proving ground; this is the test of the true Christian.

The Bible exhorts all to the duty of freely doing good to others, and I leave you with these considerations:

It is great honor to be made an instrument of good to the world. **Daniel 12:3**: “*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*”

To do good to others, is but to do to them as we would have them do to us. We have received those good things from others and we highly approve of and commend their spirit and conduct. What we therefore approve and commend we should exemplify in our own conduct.

We must consider how kind God and Christ have been to us, and how much good we have received from them. Their kindness in things pertaining to this world have been great. And still greater good things has God bestowed for our spiritual and eternal good. What he has given is more valuable than all the kingdoms of the earth. Among these many things, he has given his only-begotten and well-beloved Son—the greatest gift he could bestow. Christ has not only done, but he has suffered great things for us and given himself to die for us. This he did freely and without grudging or hope of reward. **2 Corinthians 8:9**: “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*” He has granted unto us “*an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and*

*that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for [us]” (1 Peter 1:4). And we are not good, but evil and unthankful, and in ourselves deserving only of wrath.*

Consider what great rewards are promised to those that freely do good to others. God has promised that to *“the merciful he will shew himself merciful” (Psalm 18:25)*. Our Savior declares that *“it is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)*. **Proverbs 19:17:** *“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”* And not only will he repay it, but it shall *“be given to you again, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38)*. Doesn't Solomon tell us that this is the very way to increase at **Proverbs 11:24:** *“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”* And **Isaiah 32:8** declares: *“The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.”* **Proverbs 27:27:** *“He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.”* **2 Corinthians 9:6-8:** *“6 ¶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”* **Proverbs 10:22:** *“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich.”* Psalm 41:1: *“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”* **Luke 12:33:** *“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.”* **Luke 14:13-14:** *“13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”* **Psalm 112:9:** *“He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.”* *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ...And the King shall answer and say unto them, 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 25:34-36, 40).*

I love you. Amen.