

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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an LDS chaplain played a significant research role in the constitutional defense of the U.S. chaplaincy in federal court in 1979 and 1985.

LDS chaplains conduct religious services comparable to those led by chaplains of the Protestant faiths, and they provide counseling, classroom instruction, and other support activities to military personnel and their families. They provide such services through coordination with other chaplains or ministers. LDS chaplains are approved and supervised by the Church's Military Relations Committee.

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ROBERT E. NELSON, JR.

CHARITY

Charity is a concept found in many cultures, its meaning ranging from a general selfless love of humanity to the specific alms-giving that is often its focus in modern times. Latter-day Saints take their understanding of charity from the Book of Mormon: "Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moro. 7:47; cf. Ether 12:34; 2 Ne. 26:30).

As the love of Christ, charity is characterized as selfless and self-sacrificing (1 Cor. 13:5), emanating from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned (1 Tim. 1:5). Thus, more than an act, charity is an attitude, a state of heart and mind (1 Cor. 13:4–7) that accompanies one's works and is proffered unconditionally (D&C 121:45). It follows, but surpasses in importance, faith and hope (1 Cor. 13:13).

This may have been what Jesus was trying to teach Peter in John 21:15–17, wherein he asks Peter three times if he "loves" him, and, to Peter's affirmative answers, responds, "Feed my sheep" and "Feed my lambs," teaching that the true love of Christ always goes out to others. Loving all of God's children and being willing to sacrifice for them are the depth and breadth of the pure love of Christ. This "bond of perfectness and peace"

(D&C 88:125; Col. 3:14) becomes the foundation of all human relationships (cf. 1 Cor. 13). The everlasting love of charity is intended to be an integral part of one's nature: one is to cleave unto it (Moro. 7:46) and be clothed in it (D&C 88:125). In fact, *all* things are to be done in charity. Charity is everlasting; it covers sins (1 Pet. 4:8), it casts out all fears (Moro. 8:17), and it is a prerequisite for entering the kingdom of Heaven (Ether 12:34; Moro. 10:21).

Throughout its history, the law of the LDS Church has been that its members are to do all things with charity. Since its inception in 1842, the LDS Relief Society has had the motto Charity Never Faileth (1 Cor. 13:8; Moro. 7:46). The concept of charity is fundamental to the teachings and the procedures of the Church, being the very core of all it does, including missionary work, welfare services, temple work, tithes and offerings, and home and visiting teaching. As the spiritual welfare of the individual member of the Church is contingent upon charity, so is the welfare of Zion dependent upon the charity in the hearts of Latter-day Saints (2 Ne. 26:28).

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ADDIE FUHRIMAN

CHASTENING

Latter-day Saints view chastening as a manifestation of God's love and concern. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). Like other religious peoples, they sometimes see death, famine, pestilence, and other human calamities as "acts of God" because he allows them to happen as functions of natural forces. However, Latter-day Saints tend to focus less on the punitive nature of such events and more on the possible positive results, such as HUMILITY, REPENTANCE, instruction, and spiritual change. To "chasten" denotes "to make chaste."

God loves all mankind and works to bring his children back to dwell with him. No one can en-

duce God's presence who has not been purified to become like him. For this reason, Latter-day Saints view life on this earth as a period of testing and training, a time to instruct, refine, and purify the individual, making the child of God more like the Father.

The Book of Mormon tells of God allowing natural disasters to chasten people because whole communities had forgotten him, broken his commandments, and desecrated holy things (Hel. 12:3). The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that many will be blessed if they willingly turn their hearts to God and accept the call to repent and put their lives in order (D&C 93:38–52; cf. Heb. 12:5–11).

The Prophet Joseph SMITH stands as an example to Latter-day Saints as one loved, yet chastened by the Lord. To carry out his mission effectively, he had to learn many lessons. Sometimes the Lord merely reminded him to humble himself and become more submissive. Other times, as when he allowed Martin Harris to take the first 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, which were subsequently lost, the Lord withdrew the power of translation and allowed Joseph to suffer the oppression of darkness. When Joseph was incarcerated in the LIBERTY JAIL, the Lord counseled that all his experiences would be for his good (D&C 122:7). It was, indeed, during and after this difficult period that Joseph received some very significant revelations.

GLADYS CLARK FARMER

CHASTITY, LAW OF

In the law of chastity, the Lord commands restraint in exercising the body's sexual and procreative powers. As revealed in scripture, this law forbids all sexual relationships outside of marriage. Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also condemn perverse or coercive sexual acts within marriage.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," declares the Lord in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:14). Elsewhere in scripture, he prohibits fornication, HOMOSEXUALITY, incest, and bestiality (Ex. 22:16; Lev. 18:6–23). Teaching in both the eastern and western hemispheres, Jesus denounced unchastity in thought as well as deed (Matt. 5:27–28; 3 Ne. 12:27–28). The apostle Paul warned that if the Saints succumbed to sexual sin they would not "re-

tain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:26–29). The Lord affirmed in the Book of Mormon that he "delight[s] in the chastity of women," condemning infidelity of husbands as an offense against wives and children (Jacob 2:28, 31–35). The prophet ABINADI indicted the priests of King Noah for harlotry and for failure to live and teach the Mosaic law that prohibits adultery (Mosiah 12:29; 13:22). Corianton was taught by his father, ALMA₂, that sexual sin is "most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost" (Alma 39:5). Mormon lamented the utter degeneracy of soldiers who raped female prisoners, "depriving them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue" (Moro. 9:9).

In latter-day revelation, Church leaders are directed to excommunicate adulterers if they refuse to repent. The Doctrine and Covenants reproves adulterous desires as a denial of the faith, disqualifying offenders from the companionship of the Spirit (D&C 42:23–26; 63:16). The Prophet Joseph SMITH beheld in vision that unrepentant adulterers and whoremongers will be with liars and sorcerers in the TELESTIAL KINGDOM (D&C 76:103).

Church leaders have repeatedly stressed obedience to the law of chastity. In an official pronouncement in 1942, the FIRST PRESIDENCY promised "the exaltations of eternities" to those who remain chaste, deploring sexual immorality as a destroyer of individuals and nations. "The doctrine of this Church," they stated, "is that sexual sin—the illicit sexual relations of men and women—stands, in its enormity, next to murder. The Lord has drawn no essential distinctions between fornication, adultery, and harlotry or prostitution. Each has fallen under His solemn and awful condemnation" (CR 112 [Oct. 1942]:10–12). Sexual violations desecrate much that is holy, including divinely given procreative powers, the sanctity of life, marriage, and family. President David O. MCKAY said chastity is "the most vital part of the foundation of a happy marriage and . . . the source of strength and perpetuity of the race" (CR 137 [Apr. 1967]:8). Church leaders recognize only one standard of chastity for both men and women. Speaking in 1980, President Spencer W. KIMBALL affirmed: "Total chastity before marriage and total fidelity after are still the standard from which there can be no deviation without sin, misery, and unhappiness" (CR 150 [Oct. 1980]:4).