

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Colossians 3:14 KJV



It's easy to feel charitable towards someone who has less than ourselves as long as we have what we deem extra or unneeded. But do we act charitably towards those who possess more? Do we give freely of our own need to others? In Greek, *φιλανθρωπία* means fraternal affection or kindness; *ἀγάπη* translated in scripture as *charity*, means divine affection or benevolence. Are we benevolent to those who possess more? We have more to give than material

goods. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is freely given to us and we should freely give it to others. It is the single greatest act of charity of one soul to another! We may also freely give a listening ear; a word of encouragement or exhortation; kindness of speech; the holding of our tongue when provoked. None of these require the sacrifice of our possessions, but may require a sacrifice of ourselves, our emotions, or our affections. The wealthy are often lonely and shunned because of their status. They become rude by virtue of being panhandled and pursued for their possessions. If we are content with what we have, we can be genuinely affectionate and kind to those who have the burden of possessions to deal with every day. With no ulterior motives, kindness may allow us to give the Gospel to enrich lives and save souls from hell. The same applies to those less fortunate. Gifts of material things may open hearts to receive the Gospel and enrich lives by bringing them to the One who can *“supply all their need according to His riches in glory.”* Many a poor leprous beggar has met Christ and begged no more! It is God's love to us and our love to Him that perfects our love to others. If we are discontent, it is because we covet more than God has given us and invite many troubles into our lives in pursuit of possessions. We stay discouraged and defeated, because we doubt God's promise, *“all these things shall be given unto you,”* on the condition that, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God.”* We are too fearful of loss to trust God's Word. We love our belly more than God! We are too attached to *“stuff”* to just let go and trust God. Letting go doesn't mean *“sitting on your hands”* waiting for God's handouts. It means, *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might. Casting ALL your care upon Him for He careth for you.”* We take our cares to God, but we don't leave them there. We pick them back up when we start worrying again! If you can't trust God, you don't love Him!

I cannot lose God's love to me,
His care is plain for all to see,
The sparrow's fall goes not unknown,
And He will bring me safely Home! ~CGP

God's love is the armor that withstands any trouble or care on my path. Its safety emboldens me to reach out to others in need. We often overlook the needs of the soul trying to meet the needs of the body, but the body is temporal; the soul is eternal! It's time to reset priorities!

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matthew 6:24-34 KJV

C. G. Palmer