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AFTER LOVE, THEN WHAT?

Our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has taught that “love is the very essence of the gospel.”¹

Love is so important that Jesus called it “the first and great commandment” and said that every other particle of the law and words of the prophets hang upon it.²

Love is the central motive for all we do in the Church. Every program, every meeting, every action we are part of as disciples of Jesus Christ should spring from this attribute—for without charity, “the pure love of Christ,” we are nothing.³

Once we understand this with our mind and heart, once we declare our love for God and for our fellowman—what then?

Is feeling compassion and love for others enough? Does declaring our love for God and our neighbor satisfy our obligation to God?

The Parable of the Two Sons

At the temple in Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews approached Jesus to trap Him in His words. The Savior, however, turned the tables on them by telling a story.

“A certain man had two sons,” He began. The father went to the first and asked him to go work in the vineyard. But the son refused. Later that son “repented, and went.”

The father then went to his second son and asked him to go work in the vineyard. The second son assured him that he would go, but he never went.

Then the Savior turned to the priests and elders and asked, “Which one of these two sons did the will of his father?”

They had to admit that it was the first son—the one who said he would not go but later repented and went to work in the vineyard.⁴

The Savior used this story to emphasize an important principle—it is those who obey the commandments who truly love God.

Perhaps this is why Jesus asked the people to listen to and follow the words of the Pharisees and scribes but not to follow their example.⁵ These religious teachers did not walk the talk. They loved to talk about religion, but sadly they missed its essence.

Actions and Our Salvation

In one of the Savior’s final lessons to His disciples, He spoke to them of the Final Judgment. The wicked and the righteous would be separated. The good would inherit eternal life; the wicked would be delivered to eternal punishment.

What was the difference between the two groups?

Those who demonstrated their love through action were saved. Those who did not were condemned.⁶ True conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its values and principles will be witnessed by our actions in our daily lives.

In the end, mere declaration of love for God and fellowmen will not qualify us for exaltation. For, as Jesus taught, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter



into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”⁷

What Comes after Love?

The answer to the question “After love, then what?” can be simple and straightforward. If we truly love the Savior, we incline our hearts to Him and then we walk in

the path of discipleship. When we love God, we will strive to keep His commandments.⁸

If we truly love our fellowmen, we extend ourselves to help “the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.”⁹ For they who do these selfless acts of compassion and service,¹⁰ the same are disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is what comes after love.

This is the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 91.
2. See Matthew 22:36–40.
3. See Moroni 7:46–47.
4. See Matthew 21:28–32.
5. See Matthew 23:3.
6. See Matthew 25:31–46.
7. Matthew 7:21.
8. See John 14:15.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 52:40.
10. See Mosiah 18:8–9.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Uchtdorf defines true disciples of Jesus Christ as those who show their love for Him and for others through their actions. He teaches us that “if we truly love the Savior, we incline our hearts to Him and then we walk in the path of discipleship.” Consider asking those you teach in what ways love has motivated them to walk in the path of discipleship. You could share your experiences with them as well. You might consider inviting them to pray for more charity and strength to act out of love.

Keeping the Commandments and Loving Others

When we think of love, often the first things that come to mind are romantic movies, chocolate, and flowers.

But love—*true* love—is a lot deeper and a lot more selfless than that. Jesus Christ lived for us and died for us because of His love for us. In fact, the two great commandments are to love God and love everyone else (see Matthew 22:36–40). But how can we *show* others that we love them?

President Uchtdorf shares Christ’s parable of the two sons, one who works for his father and one who does not. The Savior makes the point

that only the son who obeyed his father truly loved him. Similarly, when we obey God’s commands, we show that we love Him and want to return to Him.

But how do we show we love everyone else? President Uchtdorf explains that too: “If we truly love our fellowmen, we extend ourselves to help ‘the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.’ For they who do these selfless acts of compassion and service, the same are disciples of Jesus Christ.”

So the next time you see your parent, a sibling, or a friend, think about serving them to show your affection for them. Not only will it make them and you happy, but it will make your Father in Heaven happy too.



CHILDREN

Showing Love

Jesus shared a story of a father and his two sons. The father worked in a vineyard and asked his two sons to help. The first son said no at first but later came to help in the vineyard. The second son said that he would help, but then he never did. Jesus

taught that the first son showed more love for his father by being obedient.

Act out this story! Then write or draw three things you can do to show your love for Heavenly Father.

