

## Summary Handout

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# “In Mine Own Way”

Lesson

38

Summary

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### Scripture Summary:

*Doctrine and Covenants 38:30; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Fayette, New York, January 2, 1831. HC 1: 140—143. The occasion was a conference of the Church. 30—33, The saints are to be given power from on high and go forth among all nations; 34—42, The Church is commanded to care for the poor and needy, and to seek the riches of eternity.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 42; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9, 1831. HC 1: 148—154. It was received in the presence of twelve elders, and in fulfillment of the Lord's promise previously made that the “law” would be given in Ohio; see Section 38: 32. The Prophet specifies this revelation as “embracing the law of the Church.” 1—10, The elders are called to preach the gospel, baptize converts, and build up the Church; 11—12, They must be called and ordained, and are to teach the principles of the gospel found in the scriptures; 13—17, They are to teach and prophesy by the power of the Spirit; 18—29, The saints are commanded not to kill, steal, lie, lust, commit adultery, or speak evil against others; 30—39, Laws governing the consecration of properties are set forth; 40—52, The sick are to be healed through administrations and by faith; 53—60, Scriptures govern the Church and are to be proclaimed to the world; 61—69, Site of the New Jerusalem and the mysteries of the kingdom shall be revealed; 70—73, Consecrated properties are to be used to support Church officers; 74—93, Laws governing fornication, adultery, killing, stealing, and confession of sins are set forth.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 58:26—28; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 1, 1831. HC 1: 190—195. On the first Sabbath after the arrival of the Prophet and party in Jackson County, Missouri, a religious service was held and two members were received by baptism. During that week, members of the Colesville saints from the Thompson Branch and others arrived. Many were eager to learn the will of the Lord concerning them in the new place of gathering. 24—29, Men should use their agency to do good.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 104:13—18; Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, April 23, 1834, concerning the United Order, or the order of the Church for the benefit of the poor. HC 2: 54—60. The occasion was that of a council meeting of the First Presidency and other high priests, in which the pressing temporal needs of the people had been given consideration. The United Order at Kirtland was to be temporarily dissolved and reorganized, and the properties as stewardships were to be divided among members of the order. 11—16, The Lord provides for his saints in his own way; 17—18, Gospel law governs the care of the poor.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Original Meaning of Faith Includes Works:** The Hebrew word for faith is *emunah* and that is probably derived from the word *imun* which means practice, procedure or work. Inherent in the word *emunah* is faith and works. Both are necessary to keep us in the right way. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (**James 2:17**) The three attributes of God-fearing people are faith (*emunah*), hope (*tikvah*) and charity (*zedakah*) or (*hesed*). Judaism has, however, evolved to the point that *immun* (practice or works) has become more important than belief.

**Giving to God:** “The purpose of these laws is to teach us that everything in the world belongs to God and man owns only what God has given to him. When a man has worked hard to raise a family or rear a herd of animals, and finally sees the first fruits of his labor, the Torah tells him that these first fruits belong to God. Therefore, if man wishes to own and enjoy these gifts, he must redeem them from their rightful owner.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

**Biblical Instructions on Giving:** “The obligation to help the poor and the needy and to give them gifts is stated many times in the Bible and was considered by the rabbis of all ages to be one of the cardinal *mitzvot* of Judaism. “In the Bible there are several laws which are in effect a sort of tax for the benefit of the poor. Among these are *leket*, *shikhhah* and *pe'ah*, according to which the farmer could not pick up the ears of corn that had fallen during the harvest, or go back for forgotten sheaves or reap into the corners of the field. All these he was required to leave for the poor. Every third year the farmer was also required to put aside a special tithe for the needy. The institution of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee was in order ‘that the poor of your people may eat’ as well as to cancel debts . . . that the needy be remembered when the Festivals are celebrated . . . your male and female slave, the Levite in your communities, and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow in your midst.’ Israel (is) to be aware of the needs of the poor and the stranger because Israel itself had experienced this situation in Egypt. (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

**Charity is Loving Kindness:** “Although the idea of charity (*Zedekah*) and almsgiving is spread throughout the whole of the Bible, there is no special term for it. The term *hesed* (‘loving-kindness’), which is (also) used widely in the Bible, has taken on the meaning of physical aid, or lending money without interest. “Everybody is obliged to give charity; even one who himself is dependent on charity should give to those less fortunate than himself. The court can compel one who refuses to give charity—or donates less than his means allow—to give according to the court's assessment. “To give a tenth of one's wealth to charity is considered to be a ‘middling’ virtue, to give a 20th

or less is to be 'mean'; but the rabbis decided that one should not give more than a fifth lest he become impoverished himself and dependent on charity.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Stages of Charity:** “Maimonides lists ways of giving *zedakah* which are progressively more virtuous: to give (1) but sadly; (2) less than is fitting, but in good humor; (3) only after having been asked to; (4) before being asked; (5) in such a manner that the donor does not know who the recipient is, (6) in such a manner that the recipient does not know who the donor is; and (7) in such a way that neither the donor nor the recipient knows the identity of the other.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**The Highest Form of Charity:** “. . . is not to give alms but to help the poor to rehabilitate themselves by lending them money, taking them into partnership, employing them, or giving them work, for in this way the purpose is achieved without any loss of self-respect at all. “This last way of helping the poor is known as *gemilut basadim*, ‘dispensing kindness.’ This term also includes aiding people who need help and encouragement and includes such matters as visiting the sick and looking after them and inviting needy guests to eat at your home. One of the greatest acts of charity is to provide for orphans.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Fast Offerings:** As mentioned previously, collecting offerings in a Jewish community is similar to a Latter-day Saint custom of fast offerings. “In every town where there are Jews they must appoint 'charity wardens,' men who are well-known and honest that they should collect money from the people every Sabbath eve and distribute it to the poor . . . The actual collection had to be made by at least two wardens who were not permitted to leave each other during the course of it. The distribution of the money was to be made by at least three wardens in whose hands lay the decision as to whom to give and how much. Besides money, food and clothing were also distributed. Apart from maintaining the poor, the fund was also used for redeeming captives and dowering poor brides, both of which were considered to be among the most virtuous of acts. In addition to the fund there were also communal soup kitchens at which any person with less than enough for two meals was entitled to eat.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Tithing:** In modern times, the principle of tithing has been modified to reflect the charity and alms given. It is a general Jewish understanding that three percent of one’s income should be used for charitable purposes. I have found a few who prefer the tithing amount to be ten percent. In the Islamic religion, charity is one of the basic five pillars or tenants of faith. The charitable contribution is generally considered to be two percent.

**Mercy:** “The exercise of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they must act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* (‘Merciful’) and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man's goal the imitation of God: ‘As He is merciful, so be you merciful.’ Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Justice:** “The Hebrew word for justice is *zedek*, and indicative of Judaism's attitude is the fact that another form of the same root *zedakah*, means ‘charity.’ For justice must be tempered with mercy and indeed the main attribute of God is His integration of justice and mercy. Yet another Hebrew word derived from the same root is *zaddik*, which means ‘righteous.’ The righteous man is one who is both just and merciful. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Totally Dependent on God's Mercy:** “The stress placed upon this quality is evident both in the many charitable institutions existing in Jewish communal life, and in the daily prayers which implore God to deal compassionately even with the undeserving man. Human beings are frail, imperfect creatures constantly open to error, and so they are totally dependent on God's mercy.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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