

LOVING SERVICE AND COSMIC CITIZENSHIP
Are We Ready When Circumstances Present?
Serving and Ministering to Others in Times of Adversity.

You cannot perceive spiritual truth until you feelingly experience it, and many truths are not really felt except in adversity. 48:7.18 (557.2)



Welcome

I. Adversity

II. Cosmic Citizenship, The Fruits of the Spirit, Assurance of Safety

III. Loving Service

Closing

Welcome

So many friends and family members are lacking the perspective that we have gained from the fifth epochal revelation. Let's remind ourselves of what *The Urantia Book* teaches about adversity, loving service, and our path to cosmic citizenship. Are we grounded in the assurance of safety in our long journey to Paradise? Can we stand here and now as shining beacons of spiritual love which inspire those around us to become better men and women?

What are some of the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of cosmic citizenship? Please join me in exploring the answers to these questions. Many of you will have valuable insights to share from personal experiences of adversity.

I. Adversity



READING: Paper 148 - Training Evangelists at Bethsaida

The Purpose of Affliction

A common problem that perplexes many people is the question of why people are beset with affliction. "How can there be a God if He causes suffering?" they ask. *The Urantia Book* discusses this question in many places. What follows is Jesus' comments in response to Nathaniel.

- What is the purpose of affliction?
 - How should we deal with it?
 - How shall we help others when they are besieged with problems?
 - How can we help people to reconcile suffering on our mortal planet with the idea of a loving, parental Deity?
1. At another of these private interviews in the garden Nathaniel asked Jesus: "Master, though I am beginning to understand why you refuse to practice healing indiscriminately, I am still at a loss to understand why the loving Father in heaven permits so many of his children on earth to suffer so many afflictions." The Master answered Nathaniel, saying: 148:5.1 (1661.3)
 2. "Nathaniel, you and many others are thus perplexed because you do not comprehend how the natural order of this world has been so many times upset by the sinful adventures of certain rebellious traitors to the Father's will. And I have come to make a beginning of setting these things in order. But many ages will be required to restore this part of the universe to former paths and thus release the children of men from the extra burdens of sin and rebellion. The presence of evil alone is sufficient test for the ascension of man — sin is not essential to survival. 148:5.2 (1661.4)
 3. "But, my son, you should know that the Father does not purposely afflict his children. Man brings down upon himself unnecessary affliction as a result of his persistent refusal to walk in the better ways of the divine will. Affliction is potential in evil, but much of it has been produced by sin and iniquity. Many unusual events have transpired on this world, and it is not strange that all thinking men should be perplexed by the scenes of suffering and affliction which they witness. But of one thing you may be sure: The Father does not send affliction as an arbitrary

punishment for wrongdoing. The imperfections and handicaps of evil are inherent; the penalties of sin are inevitable; the destroying consequences of iniquity are inexorable. Man should not blame God for those afflictions which are the natural result of the life which he chooses to live; neither should man complain of those experiences which are a part of life as it is lived on this world. It is the Father's will that mortal man should work persistently and consistently toward the betterment of his estate on earth. Intelligent application would enable man to overcome much of his earthly misery. 148:5.3 (1661.5)

4. "Nathaniel, it is our mission to help men solve their spiritual problems and in this way to quicken their minds so that they may be the better prepared and inspired to go about solving their manifold material problems. I know of your confusion as you have read the Scriptures. All too often there has prevailed a tendency to ascribe to God the responsibility for everything which ignorant man fails to understand. The Father is not personally responsible for all you may fail to comprehend. Do not doubt the love of the Father just because some just and wise law of his ordaining chances to afflict you because you have innocently or deliberately transgressed such a divine ordinance.
5. "But, Nathaniel, there is much in the Scriptures which would have instructed you if you had only read with discernment. Do you not remember that it is written: 'My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction, for whom the Lord loves he corrects, even as the father corrects the son in whom he takes delight.' 'The Lord does not afflict willingly.' 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now do I keep the law. Affliction was good for me that I might thereby learn the divine statutes.'... 'When you pass through the waters of affliction, I will be with you, and when the rivers of adversity overflow you, I will not forsake you.' 'He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to comfort all who mourn.' 'There is correction in suffering; affliction does not spring forth from the dust.'" 148:5.5 (1662.2)

Let's look at several Morontia Motas:

6. Difficulties may challenge mediocrity and defeat the fearful, but they only stimulate the true children of the Most Highs. 48:7.7 (556.7)
7. The greatest affliction of the cosmos is never to have been afflicted. Mortals only learn wisdom by experiencing tribulation. 48:7.7 (556.7)
8. Stars are best discerned from the lonely isolation of experiential depths, not from the illuminated and ecstatic mountain tops. 48:7.15 (556.15)
9. You cannot perceive spiritual truth until you feelingly experience it, and many truths are not really felt except in adversity. 48:7.18 (557.2)
10. Impatience is a spirit poison; anger is like a stone hurled into a hornet's nest. 48:7.20 (557.4)
11. Anxiety must be abandoned. The disappointments hardest to bear are those which never come. 48:7.21 (557.5)

Exercise

- Pick a Mota that resonates with you.
- Sit back, close your eyes, and relax. Think of a time when you experienced adversity. If you prefer, pick a time when someone else experienced adversity.
- Remember the details and how you felt at the time.
- Now reexamine it from the perspective of **spiritual truth**. What emerged for you? (Or for the other person) How are you better prepared to serve others because of it?
- Share.

II. Cosmic Citizenship, The Fruits of the Spirit, Assurance of Safety

Some important topics that relate to loving service and cosmic citizenship are the meaning of cosmic citizenship, displaying the fruits of the spirit, and enjoying the assurances of safety. Let's read each of the following three references and then consider the question after each. (Note: emphases in the quotations that follow are added by the author of this study.)

Some Duties and Obligations of Cosmic Citizenship



Paper 178 -- Last Day at the Camp
"Discourse on Sonship and Citizenship"

12. Sonship in the kingdom, from the standpoint of advancing civilization, should assist you in becoming the ideal citizens of the kingdoms of this world since brotherhood and service are the cornerstones of the gospel of the kingdom. The love call of the spiritual kingdom should prove to be the effective destroyer of the hate urge of the unbelieving and war-minded citizens of the earthly kingdoms. But these material-minded sons in darkness will never know of your spiritual light of truth unless you draw very near them with that unselfish social service which is the natural outgrowth of the bearing of the fruits of the spirit in the life experience of each individual believer. 178:1.4 (1930.1)

Discussion: How can we become "ideal citizens of the kingdoms of this world"?

Fruits of the Spirit



Paper 34 -- "The Local Universe Mother Spirit"
The Spirit in Man

The consciousness of the spirit domination of a human life is presently attended by an increasing exhibition of the characteristics of the Spirit in the life reactions of such a spirit-led mortal, **“for the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.”** 34:6.13 (381.7)

Discussion: How can we live our lives so that we will display these fruits of the spirit?

Assurance of Safety



Paper 100--"Religion in Human Experience"
Spiritual Growth

13. Jesus portrayed the profound surety of the God-knowing mortal when he said: “To a God-knowing kingdom believer, what does it matter if all things earthly crash?” Temporal securities are vulnerable, but spiritual sureties are impregnable. When the flood tides of human adversity, selfishness, cruelty, hate, malice, and jealousy beat about the mortal soul, you may rest in the assurance that there is one inner bastion, the citadel of the spirit, which is absolutely unassailable; at least this is true of every human being who has dedicated the keeping of his soul to the indwelling spirit of the eternal God. 100:2.7 (1096.4)

Discussion: During our short, fragile mortal career on Urantia, how can we learn to feel safe and secure?

III. Loving Service



The Urantia Book places great emphasis on loving service as an essential aspect of our progress throughout the universe. As we read each of the following references, let's consider several questions:

- How shall we serve in a way that is meaningful?
- What are some specific ways we can serve?
- How must we transform to best serve?
- How can loving service help us to transform?

There is a goal

(In references below the emphases are added by the presenter.)

14. The mortal-survival plan has a practical and serviceable objective; you are not the recipients of all this divine labor and painstaking training only that you may survive just to enjoy endless bliss and eternal ease. **There is a goal of transcendent service concealed beyond the horizon of the present universe age.** If the Gods designed merely to take you on one long and eternal joy excursion, they certainly would not so largely turn the whole universe into one vast and intricate practical training school, requisition a substantial part of the celestial creation as teachers and instructors, and then spend ages upon ages piloting you, one by one, through this gigantic universe school of experiential training. 48:8.3 (588.1)

15. Mysticism, as the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God, is altogether praiseworthy, but when such practices lead to social isolation and culminate in religious fanaticism, they are all but reprehensible. Altogether too frequently that which the overwrought mystic evaluates as divine inspiration is the uprisings of his own deep mind. **The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster**, while often favored by devoted meditation, is more frequently **facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry** to one's fellow creatures. 91:7.1 (1000.2)
16. ...when a human being does find God, there is experienced within the soul of that being such an indescribable restlessness of triumph in discovery that **he is impelled to seek loving service-contact** with his less illuminated fellows, not to disclose that he has found God, but rather to allow the overflow of the welling-up of eternal goodness within his own soul to refresh and ennoble his fellows. Real religion leads to increased social service. 102:3.4 (1121.6)
17. ... The great goal of human existence is to attune to the divinity of the indwelling Adjuster; the great achievement of mortal life is the attainment of a true and understanding consecration to the eternal aims of the divine spirit who waits and works within your mind. But a devoted and determined effort to realize eternal destiny is wholly compatible with a lighthearted and joyous life and with a successful and honorable career on earth. Co-operation with the Thought Adjuster does not entail self-torture, mock piety, or hypocritical and ostentatious self-abasement; **the ideal life is one of loving service** rather than an existence of fearful apprehension. 110:3.4 (1206.2)
18. (Ganid's "Our Religion") ... But first of all I am going to practice worshiping God by learning how to do the will of God on earth; that is, I am going to do my best to treat each of my fellow mortals just as I think God would like to have him treated. And when we live this sort of a life in the flesh, we may ask many things of God, and he will give us the desire of our hearts that we may be the better prepared to serve our fellows. **And all of this loving service of the children of God enlarges our capacity to receive and experience the joys of heaven, the high pleasures of the ministry of the spirit of heaven.** 131:10.5 (1454.2)
19. Then the Master discoursed at some length on the earthly family as an illustration of the heavenly family, restating the two fundamental laws of living: the first commandment of love for the father, the head of the family, and the second commandment of mutual love among the children, to love your brother as yourself. **And then he explained that such a quality of brotherly affection would invariably manifest itself in unselfish and loving social service.** 142:7.4 (1603.5)
20. You may not worship your temporal rulers, and you should not employ temporal power in the furtherance of the spiritual kingdom; but you should manifest **the righteous ministry of loving service to believers and unbelievers alike.** In the gospel of the kingdom there resides the mighty Spirit of Truth, and presently I will pour out this same spirit upon all flesh. **The fruits of the spirit, your sincere and loving service,** are the mighty social lever to uplift the races of darkness, and this Spirit of Truth will become your power-multiplying fulcrum. 178:1.6 (1930.3)

21. (in "The Farewell Discourse, The New Commandment") "You have not merely chosen me, but I have also chosen you, and **I have ordained you to go forth into the world to yield the fruit of loving service to your fellows** even as I have lived among you and revealed the Father to you. The Father and I will both work with you, and you shall experience the divine fullness of joy if you will only obey my command to love one another, even as I have loved you." 180:1.4 (1945.1)
22. Keep in mind: It is loyalty, not sacrifice, that Jesus demands. The consciousness of sacrifice implies the absence of **that wholehearted affection which would have made such a loving service a supreme joy**. The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing **the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend**. The impulse of friendship transcends all convictions of duty, and the service of a friend for a friend can never be called a sacrifice. 180:1.6 (1945.3)
23. Then Jesus stood up again and continued teaching his apostles: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. I am the vine, and you are the branches. And the Father requires of me only that you shall bear much fruit. The vine is pruned only to increase the fruitfulness of its branches. Every branch coming out of me which bears no fruit, the Father will take away. Every branch which bears fruit, the Father will cleanse that it may bear more fruit. Already are you clean through the word I have spoken, but you must continue to be clean. You must abide in me, and I in you; the branch will die if it is separated from the vine. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abides in the vine, so **neither can you yield the fruits of loving service except you abide in me**. Remember: I am the real vine, and you are the living branches. He who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit of the spirit and experience the supreme joy of yielding this spiritual harvest. If you will maintain this living spiritual connection with me, you will bear abundant fruit. If you abide in me and my words live in you, you will be able to commune freely with me, and then can my living spirit so infuse you that you may ask whatsoever my spirit wills and do all this with the assurance that the Father will grant us our petition. 180:2.1 (1945.4)
24. ... **Do you not remember that this Jesus always taught that his kingdom was not of this world, and that all men, being the sons of God, should find liberty and freedom in the spiritual joy of the fellowship of the brotherhood of loving service in this new kingdom of the truth of the heavenly Father's love?** 190:5.4 (2035.1)
25. "Peace be upon you. For a full week have I tarried that I might appear again when you were all present to hear once more the commission to go into all the world and preach this gospel of the kingdom. Again I tell you: As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you. As I have revealed the Father, **so shall you reveal the divine love, not merely with words, but in your daily living. I send you forth, not to love the souls of men, but rather to love men**. You are not merely to proclaim the joys of heaven but also to exhibit in your daily experience these spirit realities of the divine life since you already have eternal life, as the gift of God, through faith. **When you have faith, when power from on high, the Spirit of Truth, has come upon you, you will not hide your light here behind closed doors; you will make known the love and the mercy of God to all mankind**. ... Your mission to the world is founded on the fact that I lived a God-revealing life among you; on the truth that you and all other men are the sons of God; and it shall consist in the life which you will live among men — the actual and living experience of **loving men and**

serving them, even as I have loved and served you. Let faith reveal your light to the world; let the revelation of truth open the eyes blinded by tradition; **let your loving service effectually destroy the prejudice engendered by ignorance.** By so drawing close to your fellow men in **understanding sympathy and with unselfish devotion,** you will lead them into a saving knowledge of the Father's love. The Jews have extolled goodness; the Greeks have exalted beauty; the Hindus preach devotion; the faraway ascetics teach reverence; the Romans demand loyalty; **but I require of my disciples life, even a life of loving service for your brothers in the flesh."** 191:5.3 (2043.1)

26. **I lived my life in the flesh to show how you can, through loving service, become God-revealing to your fellow men even as, by loving you and serving you, I have become God-revealing to you.** I have lived among you as the Son of Man that you, and all other men, might know that you are all indeed the sons of God. Therefore, go you now into all the world preaching this gospel of the kingdom of heaven to all men. **Love all men as I have loved you; serve your fellow mortals as I have served you. Freely you have received, freely give.** 193:0.5 (2053.1)

27. My Father sent me into the world to proclaim this salvation of sonship to all men. And so send I you abroad to preach this salvation of sonship. Salvation is the free gift of God, but **those who are born of the spirit will immediately begin to show forth the fruits of the spirit in loving service to their fellow creatures. And the fruits of the divine spirit which are yielded in the lives of spirit-born and God-knowing mortals are: loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unailing goodness, forgiving tolerance, and enduring peace.** 193:2.2 (2054.3)

28. The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of **his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present-day professed followers.** 195:10.16 (2086.2)

Closing

But long before reaching Havona, these ascendant children of time have learned to feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable. Long since, the battle cry of these pilgrims became: "In liaison with God, nothing — absolutely nothing — is impossible." 26:5.3 (291.3)

(Note: most effective if read in unison)

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