

## **Lesson 7: CHARITY AND LIFEWORK**

*Doctrine of Charity, chapter 7*

### **Introductory Ideas for the Seventh Lesson**

Chapter 7 is a very practical chapter. Often the Heavenly Doctrine talks in more abstract spiritual terms about things— but this is extremely practical and down-to-earth. The general message is that as long as people look to the Lord and shun evils as sins, and also sincerely, justly and faithfully *do the work of their employment*, they become forms of charity. This is then applied in various careers, both from the perspective of someone in charge, and from the perspective of those serving others. This is at the core of what the New Church teaches is the way to heaven. Here are a few questions to start things off:

1. In terms of the life of charity, what do you think is the most important thing for a person to do every day?
2. Can we know whether we are in spiritual charity or not?

### **Some Key Points in Chapter 7:**

**Charity 158** lays out the specifics of what we have to do to become forms of charity: We have to look to the Lord and **shun** evils (in other words, run away from bad thoughts, and actions). We also have to do goods— useful things. These are done "...from morning to evening, from year to year, from earliest age to the end of life." They are done to "...the community or public, ...also individuals and private citizens."

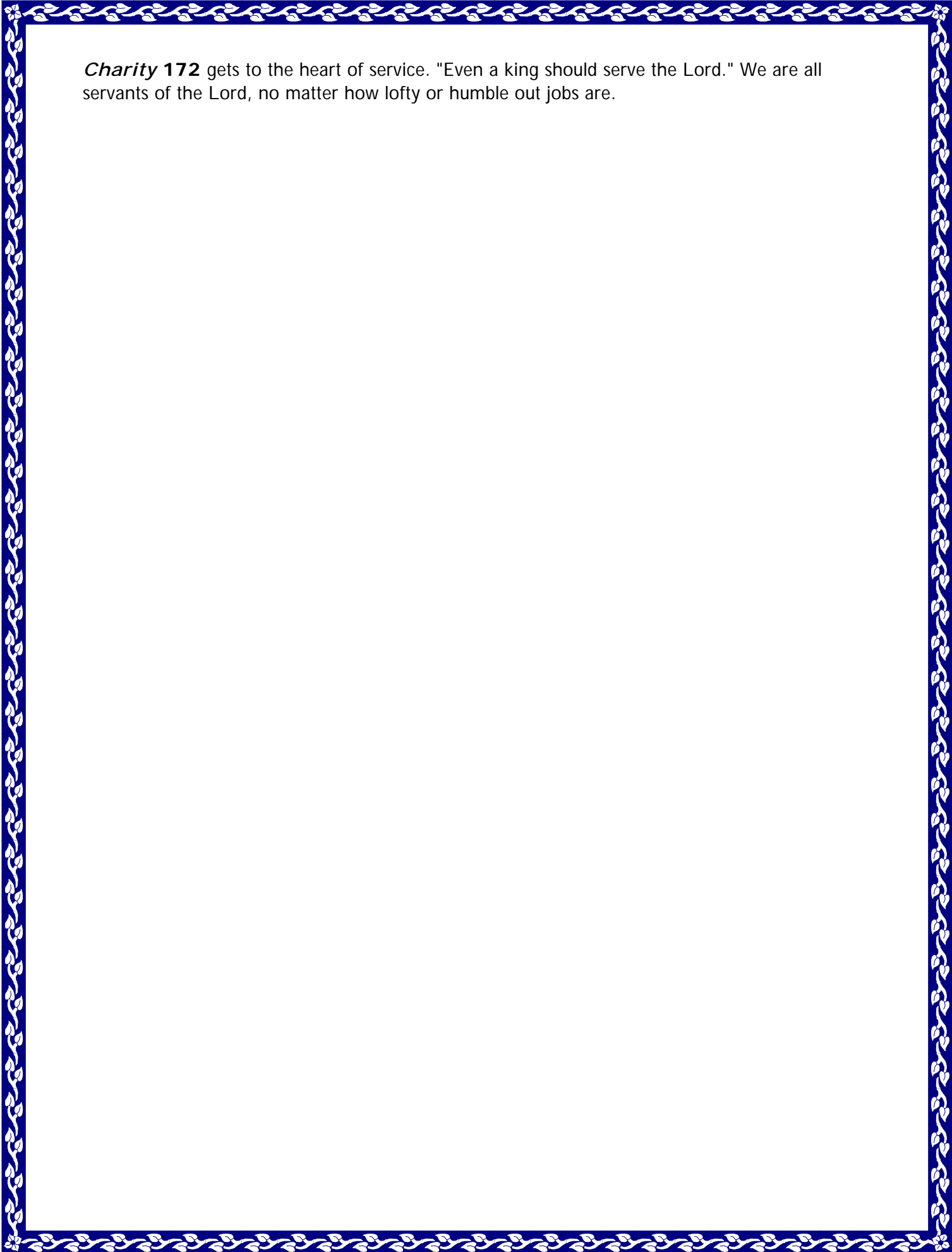
**Charity 160-172** describe many professions, and how this teaching applies to people doing their jobs. There are many good examples to draw from here.

**Charity 166** discusses the implications for soldiers. He hates "...wrongful killing. In battle it is another thing. There he is not averse to it; for he does not think of it, but of the enemy as an enemy, who desires his blood. When he hears the sound of the drum calling him to desist from the slaughter, his fury ceases." He also keeps his thoughts raised to the Lord— if he lives, he lives in the Lord, and if he dies, he dies in the Lord.

**Charity 167** addresses businessmen and their need to trust in the Divine Providence— not being despondent in misfortune, or elated with success. They do not think of the morrow— but of what should be done on the morrow. Money should be secondary to business. He shuns greed.

**Charity 167** at the end holds an important New Church teaching— "No one can know the secrets of charity within himself, for he cannot see them; but the Lord sees them." We can examine what gives us delight. This will help us see what we love at heart.

**Charity 168** discusses workmen. This is perhaps what many young people are most familiar with as a job. (Lawn mowing, *etc.*) Evils to be shunned here are idleness, insincerity and fraud (making photocopies on the side?) He works for his neighbor as he would for himself.



*Charity 172* gets to the heart of service. "Even a king should serve the Lord." We are all servants of the Lord, no matter how lofty or humble our jobs are.