

LIFE AND VALUES: GENEROSITY MATTERS

Scripture used: [Malachi 3:8-10 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon shared the values of his family. They are humility, love, faithfulness, and generosity. He and wife Rhonda have been married 33 years, and the first ten years of their marriage was marked by financial struggle. They had student debt, worked low-paying jobs, and were attending graduate & professional school, and yet it was in this season they made a commitment to be generous to God by tithing, and to be generous with others as they were able. This commitment laid the foundation for generosity that has deepened their experience of joy, justice, and faithfulness in their lives and marriage. Generosity is the capacity to be kind and giving. A closed hand is often correlated with a closed heart, and those who are generous are almost never mean-spirited.

KEY POINTS

- 1) [Galatians 6:2](#) and [1 John 3:16-17](#) urge us to see people in need and show compassion. As a church, NBCC does not pass a donation basket, and does not expect donations from guests. If people have been wounded by churches, we encourage people to express generosity toward other organizations they trust and believe in. NBCC wants to remove unnecessary barriers for people to encounter God and experience His love. But God's love should transform how we view money and the gift of generosity - if we aren't growing in generosity, then we are missing out on something essential. Generosity expresses the love of God. It is love made visible. It facilitates our best life and a better world. [Proverbs 22:9](#) tells us that "blessed are the generous as they feed the poor." To grasp is to lose; to give is to receive. People who are generous with their time through service/ volunteering report much higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with their lives. People who give and see the impact on others are significantly happier.
- 2) Generosity reveals the heart of the disciple. It encompasses emotions, talents, and resources. It is an expanding commitment, a regular practice, which makes the heart more tender. Jesus was generous as a healer, teacher, friend, feeding the multitude, calming the storm, dying on the cross. God gave His only begotten son for the redemption of humankind.
- 3) There is a straight line between God's character and his call for generosity. Generosity and justice are connected. [Malachi 3:5](#) points out that the ungenerous have a tendency to act in unjust ways: by cheating and oppressing widows, orphans, foreigners/immigrants, and the marginalized. God takes it personally when His people, who are supposed to represent Him, instead propagate injustice and are ungenerous and unfaithful. Generosity reverses this pattern of injustice. Generosity is never accidental. It must be intentional and planned.
- 4) The average US household gives slightly less than 2% of income to charity. Regular church-goers give about 7%. But many people who understand the New Testament teaching on generosity give far more than 10%, because the tithe is no longer a requirement of law, and is now a guideline that those who are generous will often exceed. A helpful guideline for generosity is that it should be Prioritized (come before other commitments of money), Percentage (be scaled to the income God has blessed you with), and Progressive (the percentage should grow over time, as we increase in generosity).

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Discern your heart. What is your attitude toward giving? What negative examples have you seen in churches that have made it hard for you to be generous? What positive examples of generosity have you seen? How has your attitude toward generosity changed over time in your life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Review [Malachi 3:5-10](#) together. How does this passage reveal God's heart? What promises does it make? Have you ever taken up God on His challenge to "test me in this"? Consider the relationship between joy, justice, faithfulness, and generosity - have you seen how these are related in your life? Share an example of where you made a commitment to give of yourself, and how it tied to your idea of justice and service to others, and how it affected your relationship with God.
- 3) **DO** - Develop a plan to increase in generosity and challenge yourself to give more freely and wholeheartedly. If you know you will have a hard time executing this plan, share it with someone you respect and trust and ask them to support you and check-in with you about your plan.