

A Culture of Generosity (Part 3)

14. Generous People Give to their Family Members

We need to take responsibility for those who are dependent on us. You can't be giving to the poor at the same time not taking care of your family members. When we do not provide for our family our children can grow up resenting the Gospel. Some people have many children some of which are not from their current wife and they choose not to take care of those children which is wrong.

1 Timothy 5:8 says: *"Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

Could it be that we can end up giving the church of Jesus Christ a bad name because we are not fulfilling our basic responsibilities. I am not saying that when you get manipulated by your relatives, you must always say yes to them. You do what you can, but you must take care of what God has given you responsibility over. We are called to give of ourselves financially, emotionally, spiritually etc Your children should not feel insecure because they are fearful when they are around you. It is your responsibility to affirm and validate them. As fathers, we are responsible for giving our kids identity. The voice of the parents speaks worth into their children. The personalities that are formed in the first ten years of children's lives are influenced greatly by the parents. As we can see, giving is not just financial. As a husband, are you giving tenderness to your wife? Wives, are you providing your husbands with the emotional intimacy that they require? A lot of us give our best to our workplace whilst our families get the left-overs.

Be generous with compliments and communication of appreciation. There are many reasons why people do not communicate appreciation.

15. Generous People Give from a Grateful Heart

In Psalm 116:12, David said *"What shall I return to the Lord for all His goodness to me?"*

It is easy to give when you are grateful and you know that God has blessed you. When one is filled with gratitude, it is easy to give and be thankful for being blessed. When you have a revelation of how good God has been to you, you tend to give. It is the same when you have a revelation of people's goodness towards you. Sadly, many people have a perceptual distortion that everyone around them is out to get them. It is difficult to be generous when you have that outlook on life.

16. Generous People Give to their Enemies

Matthew 5:40-44

⁴⁰*"And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. ⁴³'You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."*

You know you are a generous person when you give wholeheartedly to your enemies. This totally goes against the flesh, yet God calls us to show love to our enemies. Even when people come to you with wrong motives, you can choose to be a blessing to them because you desire to bless those who curse you. This could be the person that hates you or is envious of you at work. Come in the opposite spirit. Do not play God, trying to figure out who deserves your love.

You are giving because you are generous, not because they deserve it.

17. Generous People Give to their Workers over and above the required amount

James 5:4

“Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.”

Workers need to be paid on time even if it is uncomfortable for you to do so. It must be prioritised. Sometimes I find myself realising that it is the end of the month and I have not paid my workers at home and I won't feel like going to the Automated Transfer Machine (ATM). Often, the person that needs to be paid may not even mind being paid the next day but because of this principle, I get up and I go and get their money. You can also find ways to bless your employees apart from just their salary.

One of the ways in which companies remain in a cursed state is because they prioritise other expenses whilst not paying the salaries of those that are desperate for them. You might be praying for breakthrough but at the same time, there are people you have not paid. Employees will likely be feeling abused because the employer actually has power over them and they need the job. The Proverbs 31 woman is described in Proverbs 31:15 as: *“She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.”*

This woman was clearly generous to her workers and we should follow suit.

18. Generous People Prioritize God's Kingdom in Their Giving

Haggai 1:4 (Amplified Version - AMP)

Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house [of the Lord] lies in ruins?

Could it be that we have worked on the renovations of our own houses, and we have prioritised all sorts of furnishings for ourselves and we give our left-overs to the church in order to advance the Kingdom?

I encourage you to go through these points prayerfully, because the key to breakthrough lies in being generous people. The whole world and the rest of the church might not know what you are doing but heaven will be applauding.

In Malachi 1:6-8 the Lord says, “A son honours his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the Lord Almighty. “It is you priests who show contempt for my name. “But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name?’ “By offering defiled food on my altar. “But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’ “By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?” says the Lord Almighty.” (NIV)

In this passage God clearly communicates His feelings. I love the fact that God makes the comparison between Himself and the governor. He compares how the Israelites treated their governors with how they treated Him. A lot of people give their best at work but at church they give their left-overs. God values honour and He desires the honour He is due. When you truly honour someone or something, it manifests behaviourally. You give your best. There are some people in congregations who are so excellent in the workplace. Everything they do at work has a high standard of excellence, but the minute they come into church, the standard of excellence disappears and they are just winging it. Some of my congregants will come and tell me about the promotions or awards they have received at work and when they share these testimonies, I think

to myself, “Why can’t you up your game in the church context and deliver excellence?” Giving your best at work, but not doing the same at church is the same as offering God the blind animals mentioned in the passage from Malachi.

Conclusion

In Acts 20:35, Paul quoting Jesus: *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*