

## LOVE IS A VERB: LOVE CARES!

Scripture used: [1 John 3:16-18 \(NIV\)](#) & [1 Timothy 6:17-19 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

This week Pastor Hurmon continued his sermon series “Love is a Verb.” Today we dug deep into what to expect from real love, and what it means to practice it. Pastor Hurmon gave the example of his great aunt and uncle, who took him in as a young boy. He was scarred, angry, and labeled as a special needs child. He acted out for years, causing his adopted parents a lot of pain and frustration. Instead of retiring peacefully, they had to help Pastor Hurmon navigate a difficult childhood. He was about to flunk out of school, but at that moment decided to pray for a turnaround. Pastor Hurmon came to realize what real love meant for him at that moment. He had to work hard in school to show his great aunt and uncle that their sacrifice wasn’t in vain. He wanted to show them how much he cared about them and their sacrifices. In other words, he loved them the same way Jesus loves each of us. His schoolwork and behavior improved, and the rest is history! This is a dramatic example of the love that God wants us all to practice each and every day. Fortunately, we have an easy way to get started: our annual [Be Rich to Others](#) campaign. A few simple acts can transform lives and communities.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **Real love is God’s tool to change people and the world.** This is not the love of “cuteness and chemistry,” as Pastor Hurmon described childish love. Real love is the powerful, transformative practice of thinking about others first. Jesus modeled this for us. His love is extravagant, meaning it places the interests of others first. His love is unconditional, meaning it happens regardless of what we do. His love is sacrificial, meaning it pays a price on our behalf. And his love is generous, meaning it feels like a gift when we receive it.
- 2) **We must practice real love to develop it.** Real love is not about perfection. It is about consistency. Pastor Hurmon gave the example of his wife, who still practices real love toward him on a daily basis after 35 years of marriage. The flip side of this truth is that our growth can be stunted. We can’t wait to love others until we feel like it. [1 John 3:18 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us to love “with actions and in truth.” If we don’t develop the habits of taking action then we aren’t really expressing the love of God.
- 3) **Live with God-inspired generosity.** Remember the story of the poor widow in [Mark 12:41-44 \(NLT\)](#). Jesus called her out as an example of true generosity. She gave what little she had to others. That required a huge sacrifice on her part, and also the wisdom and courage to plan ahead. She knew she could trust God. Her needs would still be met even if she gave away what little she had. This is an example of the kind of generosity that is only possible when we truly reflect on God’s incredible work in this world. He redeemed us all by sending His Son.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - COVID has been hard on everyone, but we are fortunate to live in America. Even a working class life here is better than almost anyone else in the world. Pastor Hurmon reminded us that being greatly blessed should lead to being a great blessing. We are all tempted to feel sorry for ourselves. Resist that temptation, and instead practice giving to others the same way Jesus selflessly gave of Himself. What is one way you have received care from another person that has made a difference in your life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read [Deuteronomy 14:28-29 \(NLT\)](#) and reflect on God’s command to the Israelites. They gave to foreigners, to orphans, and to widows “so they can eat and be satisfied.” Now think about your current level of giving. What does the next level of generosity look like in my life? Are there ways for you to give that would connect you more deeply with God’s purposes? Have you ever given for a cause or purpose that activated your prayer life as you gave your time or finances?
- 3) **DO** - Commit to participating in our [Be Rich to Others](#) campaign. As a starting point, discuss and decide what percentage of your household income will be given away, versus saved, versus lived on. Commit to giving away a consistent percentage as the first thing you do each month, rather than the last thing. Even better, commit to giving with a spirit of enthusiasm and gratitude rather than reluctance. Remember: it’s all God’s money, and He has graciously entrusted it to us to steward!