

## **An Uncommonly Generous Church: The Urgency of Uncommon Generosity**

*Participant Study Guide*

Thursday, June 25, 2020

Series: P.U.R.S. **U**.E. Excellence | Unit: Uncommon Generosity

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*Uncommon Generosity occurs as we exceed expectations in the areas of financial gifts, hospitality, and presence. We go beyond the norm to demonstrate God's graces in this world for all people. Acts of uncommon generosity are our acts of faith.*

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Having recognized the call to engage in uncommon generosity, we now consider the urgency of uncommon generosity. Closely tied to the call to engage (the what), recognizing the urgency of our engagement (the why) is also necessary. As stated previously, we are called to demonstrate that we are stewards of God who exists in abundance and not lack, in resourcefulness and not scarcity, in connection with those in need and not disconnected from lived experiences. While the call is clear, the urgency may not be as clear. Thus, this final lesson on Uncommon Generosity centers a few reasons why this concept is important for the Church and what we should consider doing about it.

### ***Understanding the Urgency***

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Uncommon generosity has been synonymous with Christianity since at least the formation of the early church (ref. Acts 2:40-47). Recall that uncommon generosity arises from a natural disposition to give out of the supply of one's heart beyond what is normal. For our spiritual ancestors, there were at least three ways to view this natural disposition. First, they responded to the impact of Jesus on their lives, for salvation among other things, was to move with zeal to spread the Gospel. The second perspective was the belief that the return of Christ was imminent (e.g., Matt 24:36-44; Rom 13:11-14; 1 Thess 5:1-2). As such, the ways in which believers lived and acted were intensely focused on that prospect. The third view is seen in the ways the early churches demonstrated their support for 1) Paul's missionary ministry, 2) one another, and 3) believers in need whom they would never meet (e.g., Acts 11:27-30; Phil 4:10-20; and Gal 6:10).

To review, the three perspectives on the urgency of uncommon generosity are:

1. The zeal to fulfill Christian duty
  2. Fulfilling Christian duty before time ran out on them
  3. An awareness of needs
- What is your understanding of why uncommon generosity was so urgent for the early church?
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- How do these perspectives shape how you think of uncommon urgency for our day? Or, how do these perspectives help you understand the urgency of uncommon generosity today?

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- As you see it, what might be some additional perspectives or reasons for the urgency of uncommon generosity?

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In the space that follows, write your own understanding for why uncommon generosity is an urgent concern in our day:

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### ***Responding to the Urgency***

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If there is an urgency for uncommon generosity, and if this urgency touches the heart of present-day Christians (namely, you), then it stands to reason a response will follow. As seen above, this is a part of the historical nature of Christianity. That said, let's take the three aspects of uncommon generosity discussed in the previous lessons and determine how we, the church, can attend to the urgency.

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Potential Responses</u>
1. Money	* * *
2. Hospitality	* * *
3. Presence	* * *

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