



<b>DATE</b>	November 13, 2016
<b>SPEAKER</b>	Bob Lupton
<b>TITLE</b>	Becoming Neighbors
<b>SERIES</b>	The Great Command - loving God and loving neighbor - involves more than attending church and volunteering to serve. Serving can be for better or for worse. Serving well requires the engagement of both the heart and the mind.

*Almsgiving (charity) is a mammon's perversion of giving. It affirms the superiority of the giver, binds the recipient, demands gratitude, humiliates him and reduces him to a lower state than he had before."*

– Jacques Ellul

1. As Robert shared his calling into the inner city, share a time God called you somewhere you weren't expecting to go and other plans had to be abandoned. If you yourself haven't had a moment like Robert's, share someone you know who has had that calling. What must happen within someone's heart when the calling comes and they answer in obedience? What was Robert's wife's reaction to his call?
2. Read **Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 19:19; Galatians 5:14; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18**. In five passages a key command is repeated. Discuss the importance of following this command according to these passages. Discuss the ramifications if this command were truly lived out to the fullest. What would you say is the greatest deterrent for Christians living a life of love toward their neighbors? How do you see that being changed?
3. Robert's heart is to teach us how to be stronger givers, how to love our neighbors well, and how not to bring them harm through our love. He shared very specifically the progression he saw as he lived and served in the city of Atlanta. Discuss the following progression of one-way giving. Do you feel his steps are universal, or are simply unique to his experience in Atlanta? Share if you can how you have experienced this progression.
  - Give Once – appreciation
  - Give twice – anticipation
  - Give three times – expectation
  - Give four times – entitlement
  - Give five times – dependency
4. Robert defined the difference between a crisis need and a chronic need:  
*A crisis need demands emergency intervention. Address a crisis need with a crisis intervention, and lives are saved.*  
*A chronic need requires development. Address a chronic need with a crisis intervention, and people are harmed.*

Robert gave the example of delivering Christmas presents to families at their homes. How did the children respond? How did the mom respond? How did the father respond? What did Robert suggest could have been done instead so dad could hold onto his pride in front of his family?

How has Fairhaven adopted this suggestion in our Christmas Gift giving this year? How did your shopping experience to fill a bin differ than years past? Where have you signed up to volunteer at the Life Enrichment Center as they open the Christmas store for parents to shop for their families?

5. Finally, Robert suggests a new Golden Rule:

- I will never do for others what they can do for themselves.
- I will limit one-way giving to crises and seek always to find ways for legitimate exchange.
- I will empower by hiring, lending, and investing, and offer gifts sparingly as incentives to reinforce achievements.
- I will put the interests of the poor above my own self-interest even when it means setting aside my own agenda.
- I will listen carefully for spoken and unspoken needs (knowing clues may be hidden).
- Above all, I will – to the best of my ability – do no harm.

Discuss each of these “I will” statements, or certain ones that speak directly to you. What changes can you personally make to reduce the toxicity of your giving? Not giving isn’t an option. Where can you become stronger as one who loves God and loves your neighbor as yourself. How did Robert’s message impact you for tomorrow?

*But there is a second to set alongside it:  
‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’*

**Matthew 22:39** (The Message)