



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

While it may seem like our network of churches manage large giving and service projects relatively quickly, the fact is that it takes years of growth through *planned* giving and service in order to make an “overnight” difference. Still, despite all the infrastructure we have managed to build in order to support large-scale giving projects like Be Rich, only 27% of our regular attendees have a plan to financially support their local church. Apart from its implications for our Christian obedience, this number also reveals how easy it is to prefer intervention to prevention— to solve an immediate emotional problem we can see, rather than doing the slow work of preventing problems before they arise in our communities, our personal financial lives, and (perhaps most importantly) our hearts.

Start Talking

1. Apologies for the potentially traumatic thought exercise here, but let’s say your house is on fire. What are the three things you grab on the way out? Why?
2. What inanimate objects in your home would not be for sale at any price? Why?

Looking Back

1. What did “submission” look like for you this past week? How did you invite God to take control in order to write you into a better story?
2. Where did you heed the invitation to put your faith into action through love and generosity this week?
3. Did you remind yourself this week to share your questions *about* God *with* God?



What About You?

1. Does the prospect of regular financial investment in a local church seem easy or difficult for you? Why?
2. Why do you think so many people have such negative associations with religious organizations and money?
3. Why is it so easy for us to default to intervention over prevention? (For example: ignoring sound health and nutrition principles, then running to a doctor for a "fix.")
4. Do you find it easier to engage in emotionally-driven intervention giving, or systematized preventative giving? Whatever your answer, why do you think you feel that way?
5. What are some of the "reasons to give" you've heard from churches in the past? Which of these struck you as valid? Which seemed manipulative? (Example: "God says to tithe so you should do it out of fear, end of story." "If you give God a dollar, he'll give you ten.")
6. What "reasons to give" might be better, less manipulative, more healthy?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Luke 12: 34

1. How do you think Jesus is using the word, "heart," here? What does he mean by it?
2. Many of us have been taught that Christianity is a strictly private, internal relationship between a person and God. What implications does this passage have for that understanding of the Christian Faith? According to Jesus's words here, how can you best describe the relationship between faith and "doing?"
3. Why do you think that the best way to measure the status of our hearts is by assessing our actions? What's the relationship?

Putting It All Together

1. Where in your life do you find yourself opting for "interventative" care, rather than preventative care? What can you do to start the slow, difficult work of prevention this week?
2. How can you form an actionable plan to begin regularly giving to a local church, and God's redemptive work in your community this week?
3. Will you set a deadline and some reminders for yourself in order to be sure that there's no breakdown between intention and action?
4. What will you do to be sure you continue to give out of thankfulness for the generosity of God, rather than guilt or self-centeredness?

