

BE RICH

GIVE SERVE LOVE

Better Done Than Said

When we need something done, we usually don't care what the person helping us believes. It would be odd to quiz a paramedic or plumber, for instance. In fact, it's generally easier to know what to *do*, than what to *believe*. And yet, the church has often gone to war with itself over beliefs, emphasizing the right thing to *believe* over the right thing to *do*. While beliefs are important, there is clarity at the core of our faith, especially when it comes to the simple and memorable fact of what we should devote our time and energies to: the redemptive work of God on Earth. In fact, John (who knew Jesus) makes it clear that our devotion to God is demonstrated and authenticated by our actionable love for others.

Start Talking

1. Has there ever been a time when someone did something for you that you couldn't have done for yourself? What kind of difference did it make for you?
2. When you evaluate other people (and let's be honest, we all do), do you do so on the basis of what you imagine their inner intellectual life to be like, or on what they actually do? Why?

Looking Back

1. We're all prone to lean on our own understanding. Did you take the step to invite other people into your decision-making circle starting this week?
2. Where did your private decisions have the potential to carry public implications this week? How did you navigate those situations?
3. Were you able to combat the internal narratives you use to reinforce your resistance to outside voices speaking into your decision-making process? (example: "what could ____ possibly know about ____?")



What About You?

1. Have you ever found yourself hung up analyzing details, unable to act? In what situations are you likely to get stuck in this kind of paralysis?
2. Do you think it is generally true that people who are skeptical of what Christians believe are nonetheless envious of how well we treat each other, amazed at how well we treat them?
3. What might make skeptical people *want* Christianity to be true before they even believe that it is?
4. What should assure us of our relationship with God, in your opinion?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: John 13: 35. 1 John 3:11, 14-19. 1 Timothy 6:17-18.

1. Think back to the parable of the Good Samaritan: Who does Jesus define as our neighbor (or brother or sister)?
2. If people are supposed to know that we are disciples of Jesus by our love, what signs will clue them in? What does love *look* like?
3. What do you think it means in this context to “pass from death to life?” How will we know that we have?
4. What does it look like to lay down our lives, even for the people we’re tempted to hate?
5. What’s the basic requirement presented here for any believer who sees someone else in need?
6. Does John leave open the possibility for followers of Jesus who don’t have extreme compassion?
7. What does John say assures us of our salvation?

Putting It All Together

1. What are the implications of the fact that the parable of the Good Samaritan redefines our neighbor (or brother or sister) as any person who has a need we can help meet?
2. Which of our Be Rich partners intersects with your personal passions? How will you help make a big difference in that area during Be Rich?
3. How will you guard against the temptation to shut up your compassion when you see other people with a need you can meet this week?
4. What can you do for others in the next few days that they may not be able to do for themselves?

