

BE RICH

GIVE SERVE LOVE

When faced with complicated problems they couldn't solve, the earliest followers of Jesus didn't waste time asking unanswerable questions about the motives of God, or engage in theorizing about the "deeper" meaning of various tragic events. Instead, they simply chalked difficulty up to the conditions of a broken world awaiting its redemption. And, having tasted that redemption themselves in relationship with God, they followed the example of Jesus and generously gave to people they hadn't met, who couldn't return the favor. As people who have likewise received more than we could ask for in the sacrifice of Jesus, we're also called to leverage everything we have for our fellow human beings in times of great suffering. And in addition to acting out this law of love in our individual everyday lives, our churches get involved on a larger, organizational level every year during a season we call Be Rich.

Start Talking

1. What has surprised you about the way different people and communities in our culture have reacted to the past six months?
2. If you could share one piece of advice with the March 2020 version of yourself, what would it be?

Looking Back

1. What talents, resources, or opportunities had you been overlooking and downplaying, rather than using? How did you step out in faith to use them this week?
2. What comforts has COVID forced you to forgo? What new opportunities did you find in recent days to jump into the uncomfortable work God is doing around you?
3. What did you find "in your house" (*note: this doesn't merely mean material resources*) that you could leverage for the benefit of the people mourning around you?
4. How did you do when it came to putting questions and doubts on the back burner last week in order to jump into action?



What About You?

1. Have you ever seen someone focus on unhelpful, speculative theological questions during times of tragedy? (“Are these the end times? Is God judging us?” etc...) What effect did it have on the situation?
2. Why do you think this response is so tempting for so many people?
3. Why do you think that Americans in particular seem to have such a low tolerance for pain or discomfort? Where have you seen this show up in your life?
4. When you think of people or communities that have thrived in horrible seasons, what comes to mind? What about these stories inspires you?

Look It Up

Read the following passage before answering the questions below: Acts 8: 1 – 4. Acts 11: 19 – 30. 1 Timothy 6: 17–18.

1. What do you notice about the early church’s response to persecution? How does it differ from typical reactions to inconvenience?
2. What was so radical about the system of “caritas” that the early church set up in response to the empire-wide famine they were facing? Why were these early followers willing to serve those who didn’t share their culture, and couldn’t give anything back?
3. What was the result of the early Christians’ decision to sacrifice for the well-being of people they’d never met?
4. Why do you think that the church has historically thrived during its most difficult seasons?

Putting It All Together

1. Where in your life have you been devoting energy to “figuring it out” instead of jumping in to help the people around you in keeping with the teaching of Jesus?
2. What do you think evidence of devotion to God looks like in everyday life? What would it look like for you to “love God” in action this week?
3. Where have you been tempted to let your individual rights get in the way of your personal responsibilities? What can you do in the next few days to change course in that area?
4. In five years, what would you hope has become the story of the American Church during COVID19? What can you do this week to help write that story into existence?
5. In addition to giving to our general Be Rich initiative, which of the causes or partners we’ve highlighted do you find yourself especially passionate about? What can you do to extend your involvement on this front after the Be Rich season is over?

