

05 – MOTIVES MATTER

- ✓ We've been discussing how to keep our works from going up in flames at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Of course, we *can't* be 100% sure they won't burn. But there are a couple of questions we can ask ourselves that will help *minimize* the burn.)

a.) Did My Works Come from the Energy of the Flesh, or Were They Energized by the Spirit?

- ✓ Works that come from the flesh don't profit. But works energized by the Spirit will be rewarded. The second question is this:

b.) Were My Motives Right?

- ✓ Here's a verse that we don't usually bring up when we talk about good works, but it definitely applies.

1 Samuel 16:7 – “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (NKJV)

- ✓ When it comes to our works, people can only judge by what they see. (Let me illustrate it this way.)
- ✓ Suppose a pastor moves to town and starts a church. He's a good speaker and he's very personable. He gathers some great musicians, and the church grows quickly. Soon every seat is filled, everyone's excited, and there's enough money coming in to do a lot of really good things. Man celebrates *that* he built it! God cares *why* he built it. (What was his motive?)
- ✓ There are so many possible motives in that scenario. Maybe he wanted to be famous, and desired “rock star” status in the Body of Christ. Maybe he wanted a big pay cheque. Or maybe he legitimately cared about reaching the lost and making disciples. Man *sees* the outside and *judges* the outside. But God looks on the heart.

Jeremiah 17:10 – “Only the Lord knows! He searches (the) hearts and

examines (the) deepest motives so he can give to each person the right reward ...” (TLB)

- ✓ Notice God's reason for looking deeply. He wants to give people the right reward! (The same thought is expressed in the New Testament.)

Revelation 2:23 – “All the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts. I will reward each of you as your actions deserve.” (ISV)

- ✓ The Fact Is: Some work deserves a reward, and some work doesn't. That's true in the natural. If you hire someone to mow your lawn and they do a terrible job, your first response is, “I'm not paying for that!”
- ✓ Well, God is no different! If the motive wasn't right, that big, successful church will be worth *no reward*. Even through the pastor worked hard, and *people* celebrated his work, it'll go up in flames at the Judgment Seat.

Let's Talk About Wrong Motives

- ✓ Personally, I think the most common wrong motive is self-promotion – wanting people to look at me, praise me, and make a big deal about me.
- ✓ The thing that makes this so hard is we all want people to like us. And we enjoy when people praise what we do. That's not wrong. It just can't be the motive for what we do in the Kingdom. In Matt. 6:1, Jesus warns:

Matthew 6:1 – “Be careful not to parade your good deeds in front of people, in order to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father Who is in heaven.” (EXB)

- ✓ Sometimes people misunderstand this, so let me clarify. Jesus didn't say you'd lose your reward if people found out what you did. He said

you'd lose your reward if the reason you *did* it was so people would see you and praise you. (Can you see the difference? It's okay if they see what you do. That just can't be your reason for doing it.)

Right Motives

- ✓ If self-promotion is the *wrong* motive, then what's the right motive? Our main motive, according to 1 Corinthians 13, is love.

1 Cor. 13:1-3 – “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as noisy gong, or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be martyred, and have not love, it profits me nothing.”

Paul Makes Three Big Statements Here

- (1) Without love, my tongues and prophecy are just a lot of noise.
- (2) Without love, my knowledge and ministry amount to nothing.
- (3) Without love, my giving and sacrifice profit me nothing.

- ✓ That covers a lot of territory! And it represents a whole lot of wasted effort. Mark it Down: Love should be the motive for *everything* we do. (You can add other motives to it, but love *has* to be first.)

What Other Motives Can Be Added?

a. The Desire to Be Used by God

- ✓ You need to be careful here. Ask yourself, “Why do I want to be used by God?” If the answer is, “Because I want my life to count for the Kingdom”, that’s fine. But if your answer is, “Because I want people to see me and praise me”, then that’s unacceptable.

b. The Desire to Fulfill Your Call

Acts 20:24 – “Neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord.” (KJV)

- ✓ Paul mentions two things here: his “course” and his “ministry”. His *course* is God’s plan for his personal life – (The “Book of You”). His *ministry* is his assignment. Those aren’t the same thing. But they’re both important. The desire to fulfill his call motivated Paul.

c. The Desire to Earn a Reward

- ✓ Remember, this is a legitimate motive. Rewards were God’s idea.

d. The Desire to Help Others

- ✓ This could probably be considered the same as “love”. But I want to make this point: You don’t have to wait for a special leading or a “word from God” to help the needy. It’s acceptable to help, just because you want to.

Mark 14:7 – “The poor are with you always. Anytime you want to, you can help them.” (Amp)

e. The Desire to Bring Glory to God

Matthew 5:16 – “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (KJV)

f. The Desire to Please God

- ✓ The desire to see Jesus smile (and hear the words “Well done!”) should be one of the driving forces of our lives.

A Final Thought

- ✓ Good motives count with God, even if things didn’t turn out exactly as you wanted them to. (The fact you *tried* means something.)

- ✓ King David wanted to build a house for the Lord. But, since he was a man of war, God said, “No, we’re going to let your son build it, not you.” When it was complete, look at what Solomon prayed. (The situation is a bit different, but the verse applies to what we’re talking about.)

1 Kings 8:17-18 – “It was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the Lord. But the Lord said to my father David, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart.’” (NKJV)

- ✓ A right *heart* matters to God. Even if the *outward act* doesn’t work out as you intended, God can still reward you for what was in your heart.
- ✓ I’m convinced that there will be rewards for things that we *thought* were a failure – (like when I tried to share the gospel with some Krishna followers in the airport. I told you that story awhile ago.) I didn’t do very well. But I tried, and God saw my effort and my heart. I believe He can reward that.