

Divine Motivations

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation—it is what moves our hearts, our minds, our souls, our wills, and our bodies. What motivates a Christian to continue walking with God by faith, when neither sight nor feelings encourage him? John 1:1 does not say “In the beginning was love,” although certainly love was there in the beginning. That verse says, “In the beginning was *the Word*.” The greatest motivation for us in these last days will come from understanding what existed in the beginning: It was the Word.

We were created by the Word (Genesis 2:7). The heavens were created by the Word (Psalm 33:6). The worlds were framed by the Word (Hebrews 11:3). Everything is held together by the Word (Hebrews 1:3). It is not our feelings, our emotions, nor our opinions that motivate us. It is the objectivity of the Word of God.

Jesus said we are to live by every single word that proceeds out of the mouth of God

(Matthew 4:4). Consider that! In this booklet, we will see what it means to have His Word as the motivation for our thinking. When we hide the Word of God in our hearts, we do not practice sin (Psalm 119:11), but instead we are cleansed (Psalm 119:9). Then, when the tests come, truth will control our opinions and emotions because we have divine motivations through the mind of Christ.

Chapter One

THE LIVING WORD
WHO LOVES US

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalm 90:2).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1)

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Throughout the Word of God, we see that God has ordained families and congregations of believers to provide a healthy environment for individuals. In these provisions, there must be love, communication, compassion, wisdom, con-

viction, and integrity.

A woman's husband was dying. Overwhelmed with fear and sadness, she visited a certain church because members she knew said they would pray for her husband. The day she went, they sang "The Old Rugged Cross." They just sang it, and this woman started crying profusely. As the tears ran down her cheeks, she said that was the first time she heard "The Old Rugged Cross" sung with such intensity. "On a hill, far away, stood an old rugged cross...." The people sang it with conviction, expressing a love for the Savior that was unsurpassed.

"And I love that old cross, where the Dearest and Best, for a world of lost sinners was slain...." With those lyrics, this woman thought of her husband going into eternity at any moment, and she thought of the Old Rugged Cross that could assure her husband of heaven.

She almost ran to the altar to be saved. There, she prayed that her husband would become conscious so she could lead him to Christ. He did become conscious when she went to his bedside, and she did lead him to Jesus. Not only did he become conscious, but slowly he was miraculously healed through a doctor's care and by the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of

God sent to heal him.

“The congregation gave me love and hope,” this woman said. “The Word that was preached and the music that was sung meant more to me than anything in my life. Thank God for that local church.”

There is healing, there is love, and there is edification in the local assembly. Deep friendships are found in the local church. Patience, compassion, and forgiveness are all found there because it is Christ’s Body. We all need to get to know the Body of Christ in our local church and in the Word of God that motivates us.

Visions that Changed Lives

The following testimony was given by an Arab soldier who was present during the Six-Day War against Israel in 1967. Several nations were fighting over land that belonged to Israel by Divine decree.

Near the end, it was clear that Israel would win the war. As Arab leaders were about to order soldiers out of the Golan Heights, many of the enemy reported seeing chariots—thousands of armed chariots in the sky that helped Israel win that war supernaturally. They put down their weapons and ran. That happened on the

final day.

But before all of that, this young Arab soldier who also believed he was serving God, tired and hurting, cried out, "God, please show Yourself."

When he looked up, he saw a vision of Jesus Christ facing toward Israel. Behind the Lord, but toward the man who had just prayed, were written these words: "The Lord Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, loves you."

Today, this Arab citizen still tells the testimony of the supernatural answer to his prayer. This is a true story. Oh, there is such power in the Word of God! (See 2 Kings 6:15-17.)

The Master vs. Moods

The Word of God motivates us because He lives and abides forever and ever. It is so vital that we grasp the greatness of the call of God. We can have an intimate relationship with the Savior by knowing God's thoughts toward us. He has a plan for every detail of life we face. And that kind of oneness will only come from abiding in His Word. This is the truth that sets us free from any moodiness we may be living in.

Someone said that people who are plagued by moods shouldn't pray about them. Instead,

they should kick the moods, because moods are physiological, and they have nothing to do with the psyche.

Moods begin in the physical realm of the body. So, stop being moody! It is only a habit of your Adam nature being expressed through your genetic makeup. Start thinking with the mind of God on purpose, and don't let yourself be ruled by your physical body. You are a brand-new creature, and you have been re-generated. *

Motivated to Serve

The Word of God motivates us to serve. The Word of God motivates us to make the Word our life and to be convicted of truth by the power of the Word.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). The Word is “for ever settled in heaven,” and not one single thing about it has changed (Psalm 119:89). A person who is hungry and thirsty after the Word shall constantly be filled when he knows the Word of God as the Word of Life (see Philippians 2:16).

The story has been told of a man in a prison. He was visited by a woman who told him the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). He

read the story and became gloriously saved. Then he went out and affected thousands of people with his life. Persecuted, he died at a very young age, but here was a man who made the Word of God live. Others' lives were changed forever because he made the Word of God live.

What should motivate us? The Word of God. That is why Bible college is so crucial. Every Christian should study the Word of God on purpose. We should plan to receive at least one hour of doctrine daily. That is the source of our strength and the basis for a walk of faith.

**Read Re-Gened, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.*

Chapter Two

WORKS THAT STAND THE TEST OF FIRE

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This verse is the first thing that should motivate us in the Scriptures. We will receive the things done in our body. If they are good, we receive good; if they are bad, we suffer loss. But we must all appear before God. There isn't a single thing that can stop anyone from appearing before Christ—either at the White Throne Judgment for the lost or at the Bema Seat evaluation for all born-again believers.

Romans 14:12 tells that believers will appear alone before our Creator and Redeemer at the Bema Seat. Remember, we will not be at the Bema Seat to hear about our sins. It is an evalua-

tion, and what happens there will determine whether or not we receive rewards.

Building with the Right Materials

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Corinthians 3:11-13).

The Word of God says that the day will come when it will be declared what sort of works we have done. They will all be tried by fire. If the works are gold, silver, and precious stones, we will be rewarded. If they are wood, hay, and stubble, we will suffer loss. Yet, each one who received Christ as his Savior will be saved even as by fire (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Dear friend, these are the facts. Gold represents living in the nature of God by receiving His Word through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:4). Silver is living in grace because grace is the only thing that can buy back what Satan has robbed. Precious stones speak of being hid in the local assembly and becoming a vital, committed part

of Christ's Body.

1 Peter 2:5 refers to us as being lively stones and members in particular of the Body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:27). Ephesians 4:16 tells us we are to support the Body with what God has given us, fitly framed and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. Wood, hay, and stubble, on the other hand, refer to what we have done in our own strength and energy without God.

Seek First the Kingdom of God

Lovingly, kindly, and graciously, the Lord pleads with us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God—and the Word was God. Seek Him first, and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).

This is how it works. New Testament believers gave themselves first to God and then to the apostles by the will of God (2 Corinthians 8:5). For us, this means we are to get on our knees every morning before we do anything else. We should seek the Lord as our Savior and our Redeemer.

Seek the Lord as the One who made you and redeemed you, and go to Him. As you go to

Him say, "You are first, Lord Jesus. In every decision today I will put You first and then Your Word, as preached by your representatives."

God's way is unique. Christianity is not difficult; it is impossible. He doesn't ask us to try to live a better life. Rather, He demands that we give up our lives to follow Him.

"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

"And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

"Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:57-62).

God wants to be first in our lives.

Right Reverence

“Knowing therefore the [fear] of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men so that the truth will be made manifest. This fear is not one that has torment. This fear speaks of reverence, respect, and honor, knowing who God is so that we have Him as our motivation.

“Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28). “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate” (Proverbs 8:13).

The fear of the Lord is not just the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7), but the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).

You would fear today if electrical wires were down, and you were in danger of coming in contact with them. You would not be casual, as though they were not worth considering, but you would have a realistic fear of the power in them. More so, we should have the fear of God in a good way—to esteem Him and honor Him with great reverence.

Chapter Three

CONSTRAINED BY THE CROSS

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

In 2 Corinthians 5:14, we have another motivation: It is the love of Christ.

Here is the love of God: He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to the Cross. And did you know that when He went to the Cross, Jesus had to have His human preferences and His human desires crucified? In Matthew 26:39, Jesus prayed in the Garden, “If it be possible, remove this cup from me: nevertheless thy will be done.” There, God the Father had to tell God the Son, “It is not possible.”

On the Cross, Jesus said, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

Yet, God did have to forsake Him because the sins of the entire world—past, present, and future—had been placed upon Him, and God could not look upon sin. It wasn't His desire to be forsaken, but Jesus had to have His desires and His preferences crucified.

That is what the Cross does. It crucifies our opinions, our preferences, our lusts. It crucifies the old sin nature in us. There are so many heartbreaking problems because people won't let the Cross crucify their well-preserved lives.

When people refuse to get right with God, they repudiate unconditional love, grace and mercy, and the ministry of reconciliation. They repudiate all the attributes of God in order to get their own way. They may say that they don't care—but the day is coming when, guaranteed, they will reap what they sow.

Walking in Integrity

“But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

“My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD” (Psalm 26:11-12).

This means that if I am being mistreated, the only thing that matters is my integrity, not the

person who is mistreating me. If I walk in integrity, I will respond in the filling of the Spirit and the love of God. Maybe the person is obnoxious, but I will walk in my integrity. And while I do it, I will say, “God, give me mercy.”

If you will just walk in the integrity of the living Word of God, in the integrity of grace, in the integrity of mercy, in the integrity of love for yourself, then you will be healed and cleansed. You will feel good about yourself and your foot will stand firmly at Calvary. The Cross is an even place in the midst of the congregation.

Our prayer for the assembly and for ourselves ought to be that we will continually walk in the integrity of what has always existed from the beginning—the Word of God. There we discover the depth, height, length, and breadth of His unconditional love for us.

The love of God—what an amazing motivation. To think that He loved me so much that I will never have to face Him for sin, or iniquity, or evil, or anything else! That is motivation for me to love Him and to love others regardless of what they do to me.

Know No One after the Flesh

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man

after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Corinthians 5:16).

Jesus was crucified in weakness (2 Corinthians 13:4), but He was raised up in resurrection power. Therefore we are not to know anyone—neither family, friends, nor other believers—after the flesh. We are to know people after their capacity today. We are to know them in such a way that our love will do everything in its power to help the need, the cause, and the pain of it all.

A woman pleaded for help when she found out that her husband was leaving her for another woman. "I love him," she said. "I have never gone out on him. Is there anything I can do?"

It is so easy to see the faults of the other party and to get to know him after the flesh. But we are not to know each other after the flesh. Yes, we are aware of what is going on; we are not foolish. But I will not know people after the flesh. I will get to know others after what they need from me. They need to be loved with the love of God, even though I will not compromise the truth.

We said to her, "Quiet your soul before God. We will help you in every way we can, but the

battle is the Lord's—and the battle isn't over yet."

We Who Have Been Forgiven Much, Love Much

I pray with many who go through battles with drug addiction. "Pray for me, I can't get out of it," they say. "I will do anything. I want victory. I just can't get it." I see such a hunger for deliverance in their eyes. They want to be delivered as much as we want them to be. So, instead of knowing them after their addiction, I determine to know them only after the love of God. If enough of us will operate this way, I believe that the love of God will never fail (see 1 Corinthians 13:8).

We do not know them after the flesh, because Jesus said in Luke 7:47, those who have been forgiven much, love much. Obviously, we are not to sin so that we will love more. But those who are truly forgiven, who go on beyond their failures in the power of God, will have a tender heart, a sensitive spirit, and a deep love. They have been forgiven much, therefore they find it quite easy to forgive others.

Love is a motive for not knowing *anyone* after the flesh. That means we are not to know ourselves after the flesh. We are to know our-

selves after the Finished Work of Christ.

Completely Brand-New

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Greek text of this verse includes an aorist, active, indicative, dogmatic assertion of a fact that is true forever: Old things *have* passed away. All things *are* new—a perfect active indicative relates to something that happened in the past. The perfect tense means that it stands forever. Christ produced the action of making us new creatures. The indicative mood is an assertion of an absolute reality that cannot change. This means that if *any* man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and old things are passed away; all things have become new.

Don't think of somebody else's flesh, or even your own flesh, if you are fighting a battle. Think of the new creation; think of the new nature. Think of the new potential. Think of your new life (see Romans 6:4). Think of the new love that you are experiencing through being loved by God, the new capacity you have through grace and forgiveness. Spend time with God every morning, noon, and night. Remember this:

All things have become new.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

We have a ministry of reconciliation, a word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors representing heaven, representing the New Covenant, representing the new creation. Jesus Christ has given us all this through the Cross.

Jesus could have said, “Why is the Father doing this to Me? I have never done anything to Him.”

Oh, how great is the love of Christ, that He never mentions our sin.

Consider the motivations we have: the love

of God, the Word of God, the Bema Seat, reverence toward God, knowing no man after the flesh, the new creation, the ministry of reconciliation. These are our motivations and the foundation of our integrity. If I have the integrity of the Finished Work, then it doesn't matter what anyone thinks of me. It only matters that I walk in mine integrity.

If people try to hurt a person who has integrity, he will not react because he is motivated by that integrity—because of the love of the One who died for us all. Remember, we are all dead because Christ died for us. Now, we must not live unto ourselves, but unto Christ who loves us.

Let Truth Have Control

Truth can control our emotions. Recently I read an amazing article about a couple and their eleven-year-old daughter, Audrey, who were in a train that plunged into a river after a bridge was knocked out. The daughter had cerebral palsy and was in a wheelchair. This couple did everything in their power to save the girl. They had just enough strength to push her to the rescuers before they were both pulled under and drowned. Truth controlled their emotions through love. It would have been only normal for them

to want to save their own lives, but they gave their lives to save their little girl.

Truth sets us free, and the truth can control every emotion we face. When we are led by God, we will not respond to situations by sight. Instead, we will hear from heaven. With divine motivations, we will seek those things that are from above, to impart “a word in season to him that is weary...to hear as the learned.” Then, we will not be ashamed when we face God (see Isaiah 50:4).

CONCLUSION

Like never before, let's begin to face every situation according to the Spirit. If the Word of God says something and you disagree, don't argue the point with your personal rights. Just agree quickly with your adversary, the Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:25), and obey the Word of God.

There isn't a single thing in this life that is more enjoyable than knowing God—really knowing Him. There isn't anything more fun than making a decision to put Him first, and then to know personally and experientially the power of His resurrection.

Sharing the fellowship of His sufferings is a great, great privilege. Life comes and life goes, but His life will never leave us, because we are one with Him forever. In Him, we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28a). Every breath that we take is because of Him. He is our reason for living. He is the divine motivation of all things eternal.