

Your Motivation Matters

March 16, 2022

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-21

Summary: Examines the importance of Correct Motivation

Christians are abnormal in their motivation

YOUR MOTIVATION MATTERS

- Matthew 6:1-8, 16-21.

Psychology Today magazine defines motivation as “the desire to do things. It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all day. It's the crucial element in setting and attaining goals.”

I say that motivation is primarily “the reason you do something.” It's the cause behind the curtain that others never see. If you lay around the house in your pajamas all day, there's a reason. If you get up and go to work, there's a reason. If you are unemployed, but you still get up and pound the pavement each day, or work the internet looking for a job, or you get up and garden each day, there is a reason.

What is your motivation?

You see, in the eyes of the world, your motivation doesn't necessarily matter. All the world cares about is results or what they see on the outside. Christianity is different. With Christianity it's what's on the inside that counts. It's why you do what you do that really matters.

Matthew 7:21-23.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Why you do what you do is important.

Now, there are some motivations mentioned in the Bible, good and bad, not mentioned in this passage.

For instance, the book of Proverbs describes hunger, or the stomach as a motivator, and it is. Sadly, in this country, we have to some extent destroyed that motivator by feeding everyone even if they are able but unwilling to work, completely ignoring the biblical command that “if a man will not work neither shall he eat”.

I would like you to notice both good and bad reasons for doing something.

I. THERE ARE WRONG REASONS FOR DOING STUFF

- 6:1-2

1. It is wrong to do things simply because you want the applause of people. Now, I’m not talking about reciting a poem you’ve memorized, or singing a song. The passage here is talking about doing things for the poor. It’s talking about helping people out.

In other words, it is wrong to help people, so you can get the applause of people.

Now, that really doesn’t matter if it is the applause of the people you are helping or the applause of your neighbors. The Bible says if you are doing just so people will pat you on the back and tell you what a good guy you are then you are doing it for the wrong reason.

2. It is wrong to do things simply because you want people to think you’re something you’re not. – v2

Verse 2 talks about the hypocrite. The word hypocrite was originally used as we use the word actor. It described a person playing a part on a stage. Later, it came to be used to describe a person pretending to be something he isn't.

Jesus had a lot of strong words to say about hypocrites. Look, it is good to read your Bible every day and to share those insights, if they have touched you. It is something else entirely, if you talk about your Bible or what you've read simply because you want other people to think you're a spiritual person.

It is a good thing to memorize scripture and there are a number of good reasons to do so, but if you memorize scripture or help people, or read through your Bible every year, or teach children, or whatever, just because you want people to think you are a good person or that you are spiritual; you've blown it. Jesus says, you've already gotten your reward from the accolades of folk.

Doing things because you want people to think you're something you're not is not a good motivation.

3. It is wrong to do things so you can feel proud of yourself.

- v3

There are people who work their whole lives, building homes and businesses, and buying cars, and stuff so they can sit back and feel good about what they have accomplished. There are people who go to school and acquire multiple degrees and such for the same reason. They want to be able to point to what they have accomplished. They want to feel proud of themselves.

In verse 3, Jesus says, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. In other words, don't dwell on what you have done or who you have helped or what you have accomplished or whatever. Pride is not a motivation that pleases God. It is not God-pleasing to sit in your office, look at all of the accolades and certificates and such on your wall and think that you're something on a stick.

4. It is wrong to do things because you think you are causing God to owe you something.

- v7

Some folks do things because they think if they do enough of the right stuff that God will somehow “owe” them something.

For instance, in this passage, Jesus seems to indicate that some pray a whole bunch thinking that they will wear God down by their prayers or that if they pray often enough or loud enough or something, that God will somehow owe them and do what they want done.

God made you. He gave your life the first time and if you have been born again then He has given your life a second time. ...

These are just a few of the improper motivators listed in the Bible, but the Bible also lists a number of God-pleasing reasons to do what you do.

II. GOD-PLEASING MOTIVATIONS

1. It pleases God when you do things because you want to help people.

- vvs 2-3

Giving to the poor, helping the poor pleases God when we do it because we love the poor or the needy.

> John 13:35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus feeds the 5000. Just before that, you see Jesus healing the multitudes and the Bible says, He was moved with compassion. That’s why He fed the people. Love and compassion are good motives for doing what you do.

Why do we strive to tell people about Jesus? Why do we strive to make disciples and help them grow as believers? It isn’t because we want other churches to talk about what we are doing. It isn’t so other Christians can talk about the goings on around here. It is because we love and care about people and want them to find the joy that we have found in a relationship with Jesus.

> Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is good. How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!

We have done that. We know it’s true and our love for people drives us to help them discover the same joy and peace and goodness that we have found.

It pleases God when you do things because you love people.

2. It pleases God when you do things for His glory.

Feeding, etc.

- Matthew 5:14-16

14Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

To help folks to get glory for ourselves is wrong. To minister to folks because we love them and because we want people to see God's love in what is being done is good.

You and I are called to be ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. We represent Him in the community and sometimes we do things simply because it reflects well on Him.

3. It is fine with God if you do things knowing you will be rewarded in heaven.

- vvs 4, 6, 18-20

The Bible often mentions Christians receiving rewards in heaven and often mentions that as a motivation for doing some of what we are doing. As a matter-of-fact, in this passage Jesus specifically discusses us storing up treasures in heaven.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9 we read, But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

God loves it when our hearts are set on working on a retirement plan that we will not receive until we leave this life. For in that place we will walk on streets of gold. In that place we will receive responsibilities, and crowns, and rewards for the lives we lived here.

Motivation is literally the desire to do things. It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all day. It's the crucial element in setting and attaining goals—and research shows you can influence your own levels of motivation and self-control. So figure out what you want, power through the pain period, and start being who you want to be.

You can attain higher goals, you can make a difference and impact lives. You can store treasures in heaven, if that is your motivation.

Make a difference. Glorify God and prepare for the future. It's up to you.