

"Our Motives Are Important"

1 Corinthians 4:5

Sunday, February 27, 2022

Introduction: In my early morning Bible reading a few weeks ago. I felt that God put in my heart to preach a sermon about motives. Some days later in my morning Bible reading I felt more strongly that God put that on my heart again.

As I thought about it, the first thing I did was look the word motive up in the dictionary and found the following definition:

" Something (a need or a desire) that causes a person to act (do something or not do something)"

The second I did was to look the word motive up in the Bible and I discovered the word "motive" is not in many Bible translations.

- In the KJV, NKJV, and ESV the Greek word is not translated "motive."
- In the NASV and NLT, the Greek word is translated "motive" is in five verses (Proverbs 16:2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 1:17; James 2:4; James 4:3)
- The CSB the Greek word is translated "motive" two times.

Text: 1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV)

"Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose **motives** of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come from God" (1 Cor. 4:5 NASV).

"So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For He will bring our darkest secrets to light and reveal our **private motives**. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due" (1 Cor. 4:5 NLT).

T.S. What are some wrong motives?

1. Selfish ambition is a wrong motive (Phil. 1:12-18).

- I fear our motive for some things we do is selfish ambition.
- I read a story about a man who did something that he did for himself. Let me read the story.
- The apostle Paul talked about selfish ambition in his letter to the Philippian Christians (Phil. 1:12-18).

Application: Even in doing good things, our motive could be selfish ambition. Things done out of selfish ambition will lack God's anointing. We must guard against this.

2. Legalism is a wrong motive (John 5:39-40).

- The devout Jewish people thought knowledge of the Scriptures made them right with God (John 5:39-40).
- The Jews had 613 commandments (Mitzvah) they tried to obey each day thinking this was what made them right with God.
- Legalism is the wrong motive.

Application: Reading our Bible, going to church, serving at church, and giving to the church because you feel it is a duty is the wrong motive. It is legalism.

Observation: I have noticed two things about legalist.

1. They are not happy people.
2. They are often mean spirited.

3. Fearing God is a wrong motive (Matthew 10:28).

- The word "fear" is used over 300 times in the Bible.
- Matthew 10:28 is one of those times.
- The phrase "fear of the Lord" used throughout the book of Proverbs is different from "fearing God."

Application: Some people are afraid if they do not do something that God will "ZAP" them.

Illustration: Come to church, give to the church, read the Bible, or something bad will happen.

T.S. What are some right motives?

1. Love for God is a right motive (Matthew 22:37).
2. Making God look good look good is a right motive (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Conclusion: My mother ingrained in me growing up and reminded me when I was grown to never judge people's motives. She would say over and over, "Judge your own motives." That is some of the best advise my mother ever gave me.

As you make decisions today ask yourself what your motive is. Tomorrow do the same and keep doing it until it becomes how you live your life and do what you do. If your motive for whatever you do is not because you love God, you are doing whatever it is with the wrong motive.

Invitation: When you have the opportunity, do what you can to make God look good. You have the opportunity this morning to settle your salvation and then stand up if you have never confessed Jesus publicly.