



Life Group Discussion Guide
“The Right Motive”
Sunday, August 20, 2017

Open in prayer

- **What are some things that motivate you in life?**
- **Have you ever found yourself doing something -- even the right thing -- for the wrong reasons?**

The Big Idea: Motives are a matter of the heart. Jesus tells us “why” we do something really does matter. Our Heavenly Father sees what no one else sees and rewards us accordingly. It’s time to take a closer look at the motives of our heart.

Read Matthew 6:1-8

We are told repeatedly in the NT that our righteousness does not come from our good works, but through Jesus Christ.

- **Have you ever gone out of your way to make a good first impression?**
- **When are you most aware of other people’s opinions?**
- **How have you/how do you avoid being controlled by other people’s opinions of you?**
- **Whose applause are you living for? The applause of man, or the applause of Heaven? Do I want the approval of God, or the approval of others?**

Jesus’ point is clear: God cares about how we do our good works, and with what motive we do them.

**“All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord.”
Proverbs 16:2 NIV**

Look again at Jesus’ words in verses 1-2 - “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

Pastor Loren said, “Part of our sinful human condition is trying to find our identity, our value, in what people think of us, rather than in Christ.”

- **How does this lead to spiritual crisis?**

Any motivation that originates in our sinful flesh is not pleasing to God. “Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” - Romans 8:8.



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1. Give in secret

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:3-4 NIV

God does see in secret. We should ever remember that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and that he sees not only the act, but also every motive that led to it.

- Is it comforting or disconcerting to know that Jesus sees all our motives?
- How can we test our motives?

2. Pray with sincerity

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:6 NIV

Jesus is condemning two kinds of prayer:

- Pretentious public prayer
- Meaningless repetition

3. Fast with humility

"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:17-18 NIV

Fasting is an important spiritual discipline. It is neglected by most Christians because it is one of the most difficult to do. Fasting is a way to bring our whole being before the Lord. It is denying what we want the most in order to completely rely on the Lord. Fasting increases our spiritual alertness.

- What are your inward motivations?

Questions that help us discern our motives:



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- If no one ever knows what I am doing (giving, serving, sacrificing), would I still do it?
- Am I doing this for the praise of others or how it makes me feel?
- If others misunderstand or criticize my actions, will I stop?
- If those whom I am serving never show gratitude or repay me in any way, will I still do it?

Ultimately, true motives are revealed in prayer. The Holy Spirit is faithful to speak to our heart about our motivations. In prayer we repent, change course, and express our gratitude for God’s work in our lives.

So what is the right motivation?

“For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.” (1 Thessalonians 2:4 NLT)

God wants us to know that He sees what no one else sees. He knows why we do what we do and desires to reward those whose hearts are right toward Him. We can keep our motives pure by continually surrendering every part of our hearts to the control of the Holy Spirit.

“...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 NIV)

Remember this truth: God gets the glory...We get the joy!