

What Motivates You?

To narrow the subject matter, perhaps it's necessary to ask, "Motivates me to do what?" We all have differing motivations to do many things depending on the task at hand. Herein we ask, "What motivates you *do the right thing*?" What keeps you on the straight and narrow, not turning to the right or left from what is actually good and proper. What motivates, deep inside, to help you make godly decisions and carry through with them?

I submit that there are at least three major categories of motivation that help us walk righteously:

1. Inner motivation of shame vs. peace. "I wouldn't do that, I'd be ashamed of myself. (The opposite, of course, is the self-centered pleasing of self.)
2. Desire to please my family and friends. "I love my parents (peer group, etc.) and I find great joy in meeting their expectations."
3. Higher motivation that comes from loving God and desiring to please Him. "I love Jesus and find deep satisfaction in keeping His commandments."

Each of these positive motivations has a proper time and place. Each is important and each is a foundation stone in the building of mature character traits. But often we fail to recognize and use them in our daily lives.

I've known socially mature, self-disciplined atheists. I've also known rather immature and self-indulgent Christians. I believe much of this seemingly contradictory situation can be explained by which of the three motivations above are at work in an individual's life.

Number ONE, above, can guide a person into a fairly responsible and even successful life on earth, but it does nothing to prepare one for eternity.

Number TWO, above, can build a personality that becomes a successful employee spouse and parent, but again does little to prepare one for the heavenly home Jesus has for us (John 14:1-6). People who do quite well with both number ONE and number TWO above can seem to really have it all together. They might be at the top of their game at work, at home and in the neighborhood. They become respected community leaders who really do help their local cities.

But when serious temptation comes and they fall (for lack of biblical faith and self-discipline) everyone wonders, "What happened? He / she seemed to have it all together. I just don't understand!"

In reality, we need all three types of motivations to keep us on track - personal, family, godly. And each of motivation should be fed and nurtured by love; proper love of self, proper love of family, proper love of God! Jesus **never** said, "If you are tough-minded, you will keep My commandments." He **never** said, "If you are afraid of social rejection you will keep My commandments.

But Jesus **did** say, "If you love me you will keep my commandments," (John 14:15). Our American culture values discipline and hard work. We almost revere the mental toughness that simply *does the right thing*. But God has made us body, mind and spirit and we need all three motivations to be truly mature on earth and heaven bound for eternity. Think about it!

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