

# SPIRITUAL ARCHAEOLOGY:

## UNCOVERING MOTIVES OF THE HEART

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## **DEDICATION**

I am indebted to my wife Londa, who since we were married in 1989 has had the challenging burden of putting up with me. I have taken her on many roads that we probably never should have been on. Yet, we are who we are today because of the journey so far. She has been a faithful, strong, enduring partner, and my best friend in the world. The wisdom and discernment that God has gifted her with has, without question, been a gift to me.

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*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Philippians 4:11

*A contented mind is the greatest blessing a man can enjoy in this world; and if, in the present life, his happiness arises from the subduing of his desires, it will arise in the next from the gratification of them.*

Joseph Addison

*The mind is a river; upon its water thoughts float through in a constant procession every conscious moment. It is a narrow river, however, and you stand on a bridge over it and can stop and turn back any thought that comes along, and they can come only in single file, one at a time. The art of contentment is to let no thought pass that is going to disturb you.*

Frank Crane

*There is but one way to tranquility of mind and happiness, and that is to account no external things thine own, but to commit all to God.*

Epictetus

*When God sorts out the weather and sends rain, why rain's my choice.*

James Whitcomb Riley

## Chapter 1

# WHAT'S ON YOUR MANTLE?

What is it that each of us is ultimately in search of on this planet? I've heard it said that whether people are religious or atheist, hardened or kind, young or old, we are basically all after one thing that uniquely binds all of us together as the human race. If you were to poll any given city, town or village, anywhere in the world you might find this one thing to be a common denominator.

In a poor, third world country, you would see and hear the desperation for nourishment, shelter and wellness. In what we might call a second world country, you would find that folks want much the same thing: a better way of life for themselves and their families. Do the same poll in a thriving, wealthy land such as America or parts of Europe or other similar countries, and you'll find the desire to succeed, achieve self-improvement, and fulfill dreams. Granted, where one group's motivation is literal desperation or the will to simply survive, the other may be selfishness and a certain *keeping up with the Joneses*, but what's at the core is still the longing for happiness and fulfillment.

It's a basic desire of mankind. We want to be happy! In fact, one definition of the word happy in Webster's dictionary is "*to be characterized by well-being and contentment.*" Let me cement this for the Americans reading this by reminding you that a primary principle our country was founded on is the pursuit of happiness.

So, what's wrong with that? I submit to you that there is absolutely nothing wrong with it. However, if we go beyond that basic desire, and drill down a little deeper, we begin to see something that may not have been as obvious on the surface, thus the

*Maybe what we need is a good dose of truth to set us free from the bondage of selfishness, and set us on the road to selflessness.*

reason behind the title of this book. Maybe the real problem is our perception of what happiness and fulfillment is all about. Maybe what we need is a good dose of truth to set us free from the bondage of selfishness, and set us on the road to *selflessness*.

I have been on this long, oftentimes frustrating quest myself. As a result of my travels on this long road *so far*, I have had my share of hurts, wounds, disappointments, failures, successes and rewards, but I have one thing now that I would not trade for all the riches of the world. It is this priceless treasure I want to share with you. It is a wonderful treasure that is available for anyone who will grasp hold of it. It is a liberating, timeless treasure that you must experience—especially if you or the one you love is searching for true happiness and fulfillment in life, and by the way, that includes everyone.

What I am speaking of is *contentment*. It is finding joy and peace that simply boggles the natural mind and baffles the world, even if what you are doing in life is not quite what you had in mind when you were preparing your *five year plan*. Even if you aren't experiencing what the world or even the religious circles would call success or prosperity. It is living the life that you are called to live with the proper motivation behind it.

Paul said it best in Philippians 4:11, 12 when he said:

*... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

The secret? What's he talking about? Look at the very next verse for the answer (verse 13). He says, "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" So, it appears that the secret of being content (pleased, satisfied) in any and every situation is taking the ability to be content given by God Himself. In essence, God provides you the contentment if your relationship with Him is properly and selflessly motivated. We'll discuss more on that later.

Forgive me for using an old movie that is considered a classic as an illustration. In the movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, the main character George Bailey is led down a difficult chain of events that

serve to shape his future, whether he thinks he likes the outcome or not. He becomes a frustrated, bitter and angry man, always envious of his friends who have made it big or found fame, fortune or success. His good nature always seemed to get in the way as he continued to give up opportunities for himself in order for others to have a chance to get out of his miserable little town. His dreams of living the adventurous life, and traveling to far away, exotic places never came to pass.

After a long, God-sent experience in which he sees what things would have been like had he never been born, he realizes the reality of it all, and how wrong he'd been. At the close of the movie, his younger brother, who in the eyes of the world had achieved success and fame, made the incredible statement for all to hear as he held up a glass of champagne and toasted to his brother George. "To my brother George, the richest man in town."

Now, in light of biblical truths, let me throw in a criticism that you would never here from Hollywood's movie critic corner. Had George's motives been in the right place from the beginning, he could have been much happier and could have enjoyed the life he was given much sooner than he did. He was so obsessed with himself and his own happiness, that although he was doing so much good for so many, it was all for nothing in the great scheme of things until he had the personal revelation of that truth.

That's not to say that desiring happiness for your self is wrong. Of course I don't believe that, so please don't misunderstand or misquote me. But, there are truths about motivations of the heart that must be understood or else there will be many surprised souls in heaven at the judgment when everything we have done or said is passed through God's holy fire. Will our deeds be recognized and rewarded or will they burn?

*The secret of contentment is knowing how to enjoy what you have,  
and to be able to lose all desire for things beyond your reach.*

Lin Yutang

*A harvest of peace is produced from a seed of contentment.*

Anonymous

*A man who finds no satisfaction in himself, seeks for it in vain  
elsewhere.*

Francois Duc de la Rochefoucauld

## Chapter 2

# THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The root word “motive” is defined as something that causes a person to act. It’s also defined as an incentive. In other words, what makes you tick? What makes you do the things you do? Why do these things make you tick? These questions are so important to the body of Christ, but they often get glazed over or swept under the rug. Each of us must realize that everything we do affects everything and everyone around us in some way. Why we do certain things can either be a positive or a negative influence on circumstances around us. It may not be apparent what the influence is right away, but sooner or later it all will be revealed.

The fact of the matter is there is a god that has the rightful place of the one true God in the lives of many people—yes, even Christians—around the world. This god has been elevated slowly, methodically, but surely, to a place on a high pedestal so that it now sits prominently and proudly in full view and grandeur for all to see. In many cases the worshippers of this god do not even know to what extent they worship it, or that they even worship it at all. It has happened over a period of time much like the slow death of the proverbial frog in a boiling pot of water. In this scenario, a frog is placed in a pot of normal, room temperature water. Slowly and methodically the heat is turned up. Before the frog knows it, the water has begun to boil and it’s all over but the crying. It happened so gradually that he wasn’t even aware of the change in temperature. He didn’t even know he was dying.

Of course, the god I am speaking of is the god of *self*. Call it what you will—pride, selfish ambition—whatever title you give it, it is still an idol that must be brought down and destroyed completely. Put simply, when the quest for true contentment in Jesus becomes the drive to make one’s self happy for selfish, yet *seemingly* godly

reasons, the god of self has found a place on the mantle of your fireplace.

There is much talk these days of revival in the Church, and I fully embrace the deep need for it. In fact, my family and I had the privilege of being personally involved in what has been hailed as one of the great spiritual revivals of America's history. Change must happen in the Church (the Body of Christ as a whole) in order for change to happen in our nations. We must become a separate people the way God intended it. Separate not only from the world's way of doing things, but also separate from the unholy lifestyles taking place within the walls of our places of worship.

What I am NOT talking about is separating oneself from the Church "system" just because of the problems you see in it. It's not stirring up animosity in your self or others towards things as they currently are. I firmly believe God can and does work with what He has available to Him. He's not going to just throw out the current Church, and recreate it because it didn't work out quite like He planned. No, He loves His Church, and all the people who are a part of it. After all, it was He who through the apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the Church. The answer my friend, is not to scrap it and start over. I don't believe that's His plan. As my friend, David Ravenhill said, "Nobody naming the name of Christ has the right to dogmatically oppose what Jesus Christ Himself is committed to restoring." He further comments, "No believer has the right to 'give up' on the Church, or on any part of the Church... If God considers people to be His true Children, our work must be what His work is to '... strengthen the things that remain.'"

What I am talking about is simply living life like Jesus did. Not conforming to the world and its ways, but being separate from it while living in it, thereby affecting it. It's being salt and light. I have more to say on this subject, but I'll have to save that for another project.

Many consider this age to be the choicest of all times in history to be alive in Christ. I am glad that I was given the great privilege of being alive in this age, and I'm fully aware that we have a great host of heaven watching for the fulfillment of the ages. This is the age in which society could possibly see the movement of God's Spirit like never before. I think it could be different than any other revival or

reformation period in church history. It will not taste the same or smell the same. It will not look the same. It could be that it will make the history books jealous. I believe the great cloud of witnesses have been waiting for this generation as the one to pick up the baton and run with it to finish the race in victory.

We are now witnessing a generation of people that is not afraid to lose its lives for Jesus, or to live all out for Him. I consider it a joy to be among them—those “normal” Christians who may actually be on the edge of living the Christian life the way it was meant to be. I use the word normal because to live what is considered a radical, extreme life for Christ is simply what is expected of a follower of Jesus Christ. To live any other way is to be *ab-normal*. I would much rather be considered radical and extreme, or perhaps even strange to some, and actually be considered normal in the eyes of God than be anything else. There is no other choice for me and my family.

There is a common thread that runs from those in history like the Puritans, the Anabaptists, the Moravians, the Quakers, and many who are a part of the new generations today—motivations largely untainted by selfish desire or ambition. By life or by death—we will serve the Lord! That’s a motto being sung and proclaimed in some circles today, but it’s only a selfless generation that can actually live that out, and anyone making that claim had better be ready to be held accountable for it when it really counts.

However, all that being said, the minute the focus gets shifted from Jesus to self in any way, an entire movement—and yet another generation—is in danger of being critically tainted. Painstaking care must be given to ensuring that the innocence, integrity and purity of motivations remain intact in any movement or holy endeavor. This requires an absolute jealousy for what God is doing. What we need are people who will be jealous for what God wants to do in this great age.

We need a type of watchmen on the walls who will stand guard against any leaven that might try to come in and spoil the mixture. People who are not afraid to stand up, and boldly cry out a warning against it if they see something wrong. Even within a spiritual movement, it can be costly to take a stand. The difficulties may not only come from the world. In fact, it’s very probable that one will

experience as much or more hardship from within the safe walls of the church than from without. This is where the rubber meets the road! It may very well be that you must warn the leaders that there may be impurities involved which are endangering the very fabric of what everyone is working for. As watchmen on the wall, we are not only on the alert for the enemy outside the walls, but from danger within.

The beginning stages of a movement or a church plant are so critical. Once it has been birthed, it can't yet stand on its own. It needs proper care, nourishment and support. It needs constant attention. Mostly it needs patience from those that are raising it. It does no good to try to force a newborn baby to walk. It just can't do it. To try and force it means obvious harm to the infant. In order for the infant to survive, it must grow healthy and strong—it must be given proper and continuous care. Babies are like that! On a personal level, as the dad of three young boys, my attention must always be directed toward them first rather than my own welfare. They come first after my own relationship with God. Their needs come before my own, and I am only too happy to have it that way. If I were down to the last can of soup in our cupboard, of course I would willingly go without to ensure they were fed.

If you were wondering over the last few paragraphs if I was leading you on some rabbit trails, they actually lead me back to that idol I mentioned earlier that sits proudly on the mantle of many hearts. The god of self must come down and be destroyed. We can't properly care for what has been entrusted to us if something else is hoarding all the attention.

Personal ministries and personal agendas must not be allowed to become priority. In fact, it's quite possible the word *personal* is contrary to the very nature of a movement that intends on sweeping the world for Jesus. Did Jesus train His disciples to run personal ministries or to carry out their personal agendas? No, they did not *own* the ministry. It was a corporate effort, for Jesus' sake, not their own. It would be hard to imagine Paul—after becoming a widely known minister of the gospel—working under the name of *Damascus Conversion Ministries*, or better yet, *Blinded by the Light Apostolic Ministries*. On the contrary, his introduction was always something similar to, “*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be*

*an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God...*” He put the emphasis on Christ Jesus and the gospel, not himself. Now, I understand the practical necessity for ministry names and titles, and I’m certainly not against them. What I am cautioning about is a shifting of the focus from the ministry that you have been entrusted with over to the individual(s) in the ministry. When this shift in focus occurs, there’s a danger of *doing the work of God, but not being in the will of God.*

I am hoping to show how easy it is to elevate that god of self and become self-absorbed and yet call it something it's not. When you're in that condition, it's not a calling that is compelling you any longer—it's sin—the sin of pride. Does sin not separate us from God until it is dealt with? I believe it does, and the Bible is full of text to back that up. Look carefully, and you'll see a pattern

*When this shift in focus occurs, there's a danger of doing the work of God, but not being in the will of God.*

forming here. To be consumed with self, whether you call it wrong motivation or anything else is still idolatry and that is sin, plain and simple. Thus, you have a separation from God. What is the answer? A broken, humble heart before God that is willing to be searched. Repentance! Death to self! It can be a painful, long, drawn out experience—depending oftentimes on how one reacts to God’s probing finger, but the results are worth it. I pray it won't be as long, painful and drawn out for others as it has been for myself up to this point in my life.

Am I claiming to be dead to sin and self? Do I think I have finally achieved death to self ultimately? Not by a long shot, but I have tackled that god in my life and have gotten a good stranglehold on its throat—and I’m a different man now than I once was. Of course, it's a daily struggle. Self wants to live and be in control. Some may argue with this, but I believe that death must occur on a daily basis to some extent.

I pray this speaks to your heart and in some way helps the Church to rise up out of the muck and mire of stale religiosity, and to change the world in love, humility and power as she was created to do. My heart yearns to see the tide change. It's time! Let the true Church arise and show forth the glory of the Lord as she was

intended to do! It's absolutely necessary. It must happen. Let's all do our part.

*Resign every forbidden joy; restrain every wish that is not referred to God's will; banish all eager desires, all anxiety; desire only the will of God; seek Him alone and supremely, and you will find peace.*

Francois de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon

*Dig a hole in the garden of your thoughts. Into it put all your disillusionings, disappointments, regrets, worries, troubles, doubts and fears, and forget. Cover well with the earth of fruitfulness. Water it from the well of content. Sow on top the seeds of hope, courage, strength, patience and love. Then, when the time of gathering comes, may your harvest be a rich and fruitful one.*

Anonymous

*Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor.*

Benjamin Franklin

*It is right to be contented with what we have, never with what we are.*

Sir James Mackintosh

### Chapter 3

## **CONTENT, YET NOT SATISFIED**

I have always loved the mysterious, the unknown. I have always had a searching mind that wanted to know and do things that were out of my reach. If it was just beyond my grasp, I was sure to try that much harder to get to it. My childhood consisted of the dreams and fascinations of many a young boy or girl who had an ultra-vivid imagination. In fact, because of this longing to want to reach beyond the borders of the here and now, and to have the adventure of a lifetime, one part of my personal testimony is that of becoming consumed and caught up in the dangerous world of sci-fi, the paranormal and fantasy—but that's another story altogether.

One of my childhood heroes was Indiana Jones, from the popular movie series about an archeologist whose exciting adventures led him to many exotic places and into exciting, precarious situations. This fed my overactive imagination. I've always had a vivid imagination. My ultimate dream as a child and even into my adult life was of living an adventurous lifestyle. As far back as I can remember I had secret dreams of being a space traveler, an archeologist, or an adventurer who traveled the world, or even a daring spelunker who explored dark, mysterious caves.

The thought of keeping office hours has always bored me. Sometimes it still does! I've never lost that ability to dream or imagine. I do it all the time, just ask my wife, and watch the weary look of anguish on her face as she confirms this. After all, it's not just something you decide to suddenly shed. It's something that is a part of me, and if it's a part of me then I must assume that God put it there for some reason. It simply needs to be redeemed for His purposes, in His ways and in His timing.

After years of searching, and making many mistakes and blunders, I believe I am on the threshold of a grand adventure of a

God kind. One that I have always dreamed of yet never quite knew what it was I was really looking for. This adventure starts when you begin to discover contentment in life through proper motivations of the heart. It's at that point that you can partner with Jesus. It's at that point that He's able to chart your course. I can guarantee that with God, it won't be dull. It's exciting to see bits and pieces of it being revealed at different times. The superb part of this is that you too can embark on this journey with me if you haven't already gotten a head start. I'm not talking about caves, castles or dark, haunted forests filled with Robin Hood's band of merry men. I'm talking about the journey of the believer who is following Jesus in a radical way that leads to experiences worth writing about. I'm talking about experiences that the biblical fathers of our faith only dreamed of. Experiences with godly purpose, and selfless motivations focused on Him, not ourselves.

This is a journey that every man, woman, boy and girl is invited to make, but like any grand adventure, can only begin when certain conditions are met and the necessary preparations made. You wouldn't set out on a journey across the Sahara desert without a camel, water and other life-sustaining supplies. It is for this reason that I feel strongly that God would have me express what I believe is His longing for every human soul. Let's journey on the quest for the unknown that need not remain unknown. Put on the garments of the archeologist—the spiritual archeologist, as we travel the road less traveled in search of that which has been lost to us.

In his book *Churchquake!*, C. Peter Wagner quotes this statement by Wolfgang Simson: "Yesterday's despised revolutionaries have often become today's trusted pillars of the church. Are you ready for this? The unbalanced ones, the ones who are called by God to do the ridiculous, the unbelievable, the never-heard-of, the ones that break the rules, the spiritual pioneers inventing new ways and breaking through the walls do change the world. The play-safe, normal, balanced, spiritual middle-class maintains it."

What does this have to do with the search for the unknown? And what does it have to do with being properly motivated? To explain, let me simply repeat that there are those in Christianity today who are part of a radical generation wanting to answer the call of God to be what we would call radical, extreme Christians, but what God

would actually call normal. Those Christians, much like those of the past, may often be despised or misunderstood by the political, mainstream, and religious, but actually are simply reinforcing the original foundation of Jesus that the apostles and prophets of the Bible set in place. May we all join together in their efforts by digging away at the layers of sediment and corrosion that have built up on top of that original foundation. In this holy expedition, as we take on that role of spiritual archeologist, we will carefully uncover the truth that has been lost to the world. But the thing to always remember while on this incredible journey is that it must never be digging just for the sake of the adventure. We dig ultimately for the glory of God. While we may be radicals, living on the edge, let's not lose our focus, or let our motivations become tainted. We live all-out for the glory of God!

Archaeology, one of my favorite subjects to study, is a time-consuming, careful, painstaking, but rewarding process that the whole of humanity enjoys the benefits of when that which was lost due to time is recovered. In this process, the treasure we are working to uncover is that which was "*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone*" (Ephesians 2:20). In this archeological dig, the spiritual tools are comparable to the typical tools of the trade; spade, shovel, and brushes of different types for careful, intimate excavation. All used to uncover what has been covered over with time. For us, our tools are used for the same purpose, but there is one spiritual tool among the many that is absolutely fundamental to success—TRUTH. Truth will uncover, confront, and challenge. It will reveal true motives. Are you ready for that?

My wife and I have often commented to each other on how life reminds us of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Perhaps you could look at it this way; every single piece is a season, an event or something else significant that has its place in the overall picture of our lives. One particular piece will not fit where it does not belong, no matter how you may force it. Forcing a puzzle piece where it does not fit will only prolong the completion of the overall picture, not to mention the fact that the picture will look awkward and incomplete or even become damaged. On the other hand, leaving out a piece leaves the whole picture unfinished. What has *puzzled* us over the years is that

just when we thought the pieces were actually coming together, it seemed like God would take the board and just flip it up in the air. It's as if He says, "Well, that's a nice looking picture but it's not at all what I had in mind. I prefer the picture of who you are from my perspective—my way of looking at things. After all my child, it's not about what you want your life to look like. It's about me and my plans."

Maybe you've been in that same situation, and had those same feelings—like the puzzle pieces have been tossed up into the air. Maybe you're there now. If not, I can confidently say that you will experience this in your own life one day to some degree. You may as well prepare for it now as best you can, and then take it on with the grace He provides to see you through. He *will* see you through it my friend. I am most confident of that.

You may ask; why would God do that? Doesn't He love me? Doesn't He care about my happiness? Doesn't He want me to succeed? These questions and more have caused me more than my share of unnecessary anguish in the past. "God!" I would pray, "Why are you doing this to me? Why must life be so confusing? Where are you? Why are you allowing this to happen?" Then there are the ultimate questions: "Just who am I, where am I, and where do I fit in this great big stupid world?" Be honest, you've said those same things. Maybe you didn't use those exact words, but something similar. Those thoughts however, were my very own.

You know, it's funny how we are so quick to blame God for our own messes. Is God blameless or isn't He? Is He sovereign or not? Is He in control or not? Is He God or isn't He? If we really believed He was, we wouldn't be so quick to pray some of the things we pray, or issue some of the complaints we make. If we actually trusted Him with our whole hearts, we would see that when His hand reaches down and takes our puzzle board and tosses the pieces back into the air to scatter them, it's only for our good. It isn't some cruel prank played by a bored entity in the heavens.

Hindsight really is closer to 20/20 than we realize. I can look back now and see that those times in my life were actually sparing me from certain disaster. It was the mercy and kindness of a loving Father that was only looking out for His spoiled rotten, prodigal child. Like George Bailey from that classic movie, if only I wasn't

so prideful and stubborn! How I could have also been spared much frustration. I know that there are situations that you have experienced that I have not been in, and traumatic experiences that I haven't been through, but my prayer is that I could say regardless of what I am going to go through, that God is still God and I am not. It's about Him, His purposes and His will, not my own. Consider this: *I am a piece in His puzzle; He's not a piece in mine.* How illuminating!

I can certainly understand when someone says, "Well, you haven't lost a child. You haven't been sexually molested. You haven't been physically beaten by your dad." You're right. I've had my own sort of emotional trauma that was difficult, so I can understand the pain and the hurt to a limited degree. God understands completely, and of course He cares and feels the pain also, but what I am saying is that ultimately, God is still God and we are not. Problems and wrongs done to us are not His fault. They are the fault of a fallen, corrupt world, to which He has given the ability

*I am a piece in  
His puzzle;  
He's not a  
piece in mine.*

to choose wrong from right. I have often shared that when things are at their darkest, and it all looks hopeless, and you can't hear God or see Him in your life in any way, He's still there. Put one foot in front of the other, even if it's very small steps. It's a straight and narrow road we are walking. If you are careful to just take it a step at a time during those difficult, *desert* times, you'll be just fine and you'll have a better chance of staying on the path and coming through it into the season of refreshing. Seasons follow seasons. Spring always follows the dead of winter. I pray that we all find peace in that somehow.

I grew up with the idea that if I wasn't doing what made me feel fulfilled and happy, then life was not playing me a good deck of cards. What foolishness! Career, wife, salary, houses—all of it! The American dream at its best (or worst) had my number. I am not saying that any of these things are wrong in and of themselves, but what about all the people who although seem to have it all, aren't really so happy underneath the facade? I convinced myself that if I wasn't doing what pleased me, or what kept me interested all the time, then I wasn't in the right place and should search for the next thing that would please me for the moment. I'll be totally honest and

transparent with you; God is still working in me in these areas.

I am not claiming to be an authority on this issue, but rather I have a deep passion and burden to see the Body of Christ as a whole, and each individual member of that body set free from bondage and discouragement brought on because of him or her misrepresenting God. Some may call it a pastor's heart that causes that type of burden—the longing of a shepherd to see the foal safely led out to the pastures and home again without getting lost along the way or eaten by wolves. I long to see the church, and all who make up that body as living stones, free to be the effective force it was meant to be to a lost and dying world.

Whatever you may call it, I call it the heart of God, and it's my prayer that each one of us will find it possible to place our own hearts, with all its deceptive motives and intentions, on the altar, and have it replaced with His own. It's a heart transplant that each of us needs. Willingly place your heart, that inner part of you that holds the intimate, secret parts of who you are, on the altar and ask God to put His fire to it. Watch the garbage burn away, and watch him replace it with His own loving heart. You'll probably have to repeat this process many times over, but I promise you will notice a difference as you take on more and more of His characteristics.

Ah my friend, motivation... Let's get back to the question at hand. What drives you? What makes you tick, and why? My motivations in past years have been tainted with self-gratification, self-service, and selfish desire. A true call of God on your life, mixed with wrong motivation will inevitably lead to dissatisfaction, confusion, frustration, or worse. Don't go there! Believe me, it's not worth it. Oh sure, you'll likely still bear some fruit because God can and will bless our labors even though they might be impure—for His sake, and His own glory. But the pain and inner turmoil you're likely to go through as He reveals the impurities to you are not pleasant, and actually could be avoided upfront.

For the majority of my teen years and my adult life, I've known that God had something for me to do for Him. I knew He had set me apart and called me from an early age. From the beginning of my realizing that calling, my imagination and pride got the best of me. When I was a young boy, I gave my life over to God for Him to use me in any way. It happened during the altar call, after an old,

seasoned missionary presented his slide-show presentation to our church. Normally, these slide-shows barely held the attention of us youngsters, but this time God had my number. Now, I don't come from a long line of ministers, but for the next several years, I spent my time creating various ways to pursue my calling into the ministry. Although there has been fruit, especially after I teamed up with my wonderful, godly wife, it just didn't satisfy or bear the kind of fruit it could have had I done it God's way.

Over the past several years, I've served in many capacities: as a volunteer youth leader, as a paid staff youth pastor, a Sunday school teacher for both children and adults, Sunday school superintendent, and even as an ordained associate pastor and a pastoral care counselor in a school of ministry for a season. I've done evangelism on the streets, knocked on doors, been on the mission field short term, preached, taught, led intercessory prayer teams with my wife, and even seen a miracle or two from laying hands on people and praying the prayer of faith. I promise you none of this is to blow my own horn in any way. It's to make a point. Thank God He has been faithful, patient and gracious with me. Because of His mercy and kindness, He has seen fit to bring forth some fruit despite my foolishness. As I explained previously, He did it for His glory anyway, not my own.

There is one thing I have often lacked in my years of ministry: contentment. I thought that just because I was called into service to the King of Kings, that it had to be either on foreign soil, in exotic places, what we often call *full time*, or in the spotlight. I could blame it on lots of things, and you would probably agree with me on most of them, but the simple truth is that it is I who carries the blame. Yes, I've always had a burden for souls. I've always loved missions with a passion. Those things are a part of me, as much as my deep burden for the condition for the Church. But as pure as those burdens are, I have been guilty of an impure motivation mixed in that spoiled the whole batch in the past. A little bit of the wrong ingredient can ruin the whole recipe.

It has been these motivations that God has dealt with in me in some interesting ways over a long period of time. I now check my heart almost daily for wrong motivation in everything I do. I believe He allowed me to take some journeys that were necessary only to

get my attention. Journeys that were not necessarily in His plan for my life, but that He allowed to take place in order to teach me. It's a wonderful feeling once you're finally in that place where you have the assurance that you're in His will. In no way does this mean that things could not change again. Of course they could. Seasons change. We should learn to expect, watch for, anticipate and prepare for changes in the seasons. We know to watch for signs around us that show us a change in season is coming. If we see the leaves changing colors, we know warm weather is on its way out, and we make sure we have the clothing for what's ahead, and we prepare our vehicles by winterizing them.

I am still learning to watch my words. I have been quick in the past to say things like, "I have no intentions of leaving this place" or "No way am I leaving since I know this is where God wants me." If you're like me, you've done the same thing, and you've learned that those words can come back to haunt you. Listen, God is still God and we are not. If He says go, you go. If he says stay and dig in, you stay and dig in—*until you hear further word*. The real test is when you've convinced yourself that you have learned your lesson, and are content to stay where you are, and He tells you it's time to pull up your roots and move on. This can fly in the face of those you love and those you work with, but if it's truly God, you must obey or suffer the consequences.

*A little bit of the  
wrong  
ingredient can  
ruin the whole  
recipe.*

I believe the safest place in the world is to be in God's will, wherever that may have you. You see, it goes both ways—contentedness in Jesus, not just contentedness in location, ministry, position or status. We're a pilgrim people. At least, I believe we're supposed to be. We should always be ready for change, but we should also be able to be content where we are at the same time. How can this be? How can you be content with where you are, yet be ready for change at any time? It comes from Jesus!

I also believe leaders should be able to anticipate the winds changing the directions of not only their own lives but also those that serve under them, and then let them take their course when they recognize it. Leaders in ministry should anticipate and prepare the workers for a changing of the guards, even if it comes at seemingly

inopportune times. It doesn't mean they are traitors to your cause or your ministry, or that they are *jumping ship*, it means they are really trying to obey God, and they need the encouragement of their leaders to do it, IF it really is God telling them to go. That's where you as the spiritual leader come in. Help them to be sure they are discerning the word of the Lord for their lives. You as the mentor, the pastor, the shepherd, the elder must be there to help them during these difficult, decision making times. Just be sure your own motives—as the leader—are in the right place as well. It would be easy for you to tell them they're missing God, all because the change would mess with your own plans, or because losing them might be difficult for whatever reason. When you've done all you can to help make sure they're hearing from the Lord, and everything seems to be indicating they really are, then bless them as they go.

When one gains a certain level of contentedness in life, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities. Again, I'm not saying

necessarily that one must be satisfied that there  
*The safest place in the world is to be in God's will.* will not be change in his life, or that his dreams and visions are wrong. That is just not always the case. In fact, dreams and visions must see fulfillment if they are indeed from God.

Sometimes they have to die and be resurrected again later on. By dying, I mean that one may have to let the dream go, and see if it revives in some way somewhere down the road. If they (the dreams and visions) point to the gratification of self, and the neglect of glorifying God, then they are flawed, and need to undergo the fire of God for refining.

I am also not saying that one must not have dreams of providing for the welfare of his family in better ways. We must not get into a wrong thinking that this kind of dream is carnality. That kind is only natural and right. I am saying that should that dream ever become one of *keeping up with the Joneses*, then again it is severely flawed. What's the motivation? What's driving you to succeed? Is your dream/vision God inspired or do you want more because your co-worker was blessed with more? Do you want your children to have a wider video game selection because their friends do? Does it make you appear less of a dad if they don't compare?

What we need are more people in the family of God with God-

inspired visions. T. Austin-Sparks once said, "... we have to get before the Lord on this matter and ask Him to put us into His vision and His vision into us; otherwise we shall be mere passengers to be carried along, mere parasites living upon the life of others, and contributing nothing." In fact, he goes further in this vein of thought on the subject by stating, "No one can give you vision but the Lord... There are going to be many of the Lord's own children and servants wondering where they are. They are going to have to leave their fields of service, and have all their work taken away and they will be standing saying, 'What is the meaning of this? What does the future hold? Where are we?'"

I use those statements because they serve to back up my own thoughts on the subject of motivation. Will you one day be standing in a difficult place asking those same questions when you realize that something went terribly wrong? Will it be because your motivation was wrong in what you were doing? Don't try to justify it. It's too easy to do that. You might say, "I'm only doing this because I was called to do it." I'm not saying you weren't called. That's not for me or anyone else to decide, unless someone happens to be shown by divine knowledge for your own sake, which by the way is entirely possible prophetically speaking. Just check your motives. That's all.

Whose Kingdom are you building, yours or God's? Again, it's good, right and necessary to dream and to have vision. Without them, prayer becomes routine, and your walk with God becomes increasingly tiresome. I think that much ministerial burnout has its roots in this scenario. Again, contentedness in where God may have you at present is necessary, with the understanding that where He has you is for a purpose, and may very well be just for a season. Hang onto the vision, and remember, seasons do change. Just don't despise the season you're in. It's part of the adventure. When you can really grasp hold of that, it can be a great influence on how you handle the particular season you happen to be in.

Have you forgotten that God has a plan? Of course not! So, why get frustrated with where you are now? The answer is because of that pesky human nature we have to confront and do battle with on a regular basis. It wants its own way, and

*Whose  
Kingdom are  
you building,  
yours or  
God's?*

it wants it now regardless of what God says. Sure, we can nail our flesh to the cross, but watch out! It does not die easily. I once illustrated a sermon by shining a spotlight onto a huge cross up on the wall behind the pulpit while I was preaching. The spotlight signified the fact that the dying flesh was receiving attention. As long as it was getting the attention it wanted, it would cry out all the louder, wanting to come down off the cross and take over again. It would beg me, taunt me and haunt me. When I had the spotlight turned off, it signified my redirecting attention from self to Jesus. Maybe that's why Paul said we must die daily. It's a battle we must continually win until we ultimately experience the victory that was won at the cross of Calvary. I believe that the victory exists now and that it is ours. We just have to walk in that understanding and continue fighting until we fully have that victory for ourselves by our departure from this world through physical death or the return of Jesus Christ, whichever comes first.

Let me throw something in before switching to another thought. What if we have to allow a dream or vision that God has given us to die? Why would we do that? The answer of course is out of obedience and trust. He has His purposes. Remember, He's God and we're not. Maybe it's because He wants to see if we trust Him. Maybe it's because we've gotten things out of order somewhere, and He must put them back in proper alignment. If it's a God-given dream or vision, then He'll resurrect it again. Did God not promise Abraham a son? He had to wait many, many years. In fact, most of us would have given up on it long before Abraham did. We might convince ourselves that it must not have been God we heard after all.

A promise is a promise, and we must trust Him for fulfillment of it. When God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his son of promise as an offering to Him, Abraham surely must have felt some pain of some kind. Some may believe differently than that, but I believe that as a father, Abraham felt intense pain and grief over the fact that he had to physically lay his son on the altar and kill him with his own hand. What loving father wouldn't?

Even God was grieved at the death of His own son Jesus. We're told that God the Father had to actually turn His back on Jesus the Son as He was at the threshold of death on the cross. I believe the

reason He turned His back was two-fold. On the one hand, when Jesus was on the cross, He was dying for the sins of the whole world by actually taking those sins onto Himself. Because of God's holiness, and His nature, He will not—can not—allow sin into His presence. Thus, He had to turn His back on His son. On the other hand, I believe that God's love for His own son caused Him to have to look away as He was dying on that cross. The pain and the grief were so great, but He knew that on the other side of death was His own promise of resurrection, life and victory.

Abraham must have known the same thing. On the other side of the pain and grief must be resurrection, life and victory. We know that God ultimately provided an alternate sacrifice because He was satisfied that Abraham loved Him enough to sacrifice His own son out of obedience to His command. God saw Abraham's heart. For us, we must understand that if God gives us a promise, and we're told by Him to let it die, it will be resurrected. We must also understand though, that in the death of a vision or dream, anything that wasn't of God will not be raised up again, and we must be willing to accept that if it happens. Wrong motives, selfish ambition and pride must not rise again. The resurrection must bring forth a clean, pure promise. When Jesus rose again, He rose without the sins that He died with. See the parallel? How wonderful!

*We'll therefore relish with content,  
Whate'er kind Providence has sent,  
Nor aim beyond our pow'r;  
For, if our stock be very small,  
'Tis prudent to enjoy it all,  
Nor lose the present hour.*

Nathaniel Cotton

*A man whose heart is not content is like a snake which tries to swallow an elephant.*

Chinese proverb

*Fit thyself into the environment that thou findest on earth, and love the men with whom thy lot is cast.*

Marcus Aurelius

*An ounce of contentment is worth a pound of sadness to serve God with.*

Thomas Fuller

*Great tranquility of heart is his who cares for neither praise nor blame.*

Thomas à Kempis

## Chapter 4

### MEASURING UP

“I just don't measure up to my friend. He seems so happy, so inspired, and so full of life. He really has it together. His ministry is touching so many. His preaching is inspired. How can I possibly be pleasing God like he is?” Does that sound familiar? What a trap that can become! It really burdens me to see people caught up in it, because I've experienced it myself. You know what the root of those questions is in many cases? It is pride and envy. In reality, what is really being asked is, “I wish I had what he had. Why can't I be like him? Why does everyone look at him and what he's doing, and not appreciate me and what I'm doing? I wish I could take the pulpit for once. I want people to look at me.” The last time I looked, covetousness was still a sin. Ouch! Did that hurt? If it did, then you've just experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Listen, I understand how it feels, but respond to it appropriately. Don't ignore it. Confront it. Deal with it. Repent of it, and then get past it and get on with it.

Why do we try so hard to be like someone else? We can't possibly measure up to someone else, because God is not measuring us by that standard anyway. He doesn't compare us to one another in that way. In fact, the measuring stick He uses is covered in blood. The saving, cleansing blood of Jesus. If you are washed in it and living the daily consecrated life of obedience, then you measure up already. Without it, you haven't any hope of measuring up to His standards. The late John Wimber once said, when preaching on the subject of holiness, that we are unable to do anything to attain holiness before God. It's an act of God, not of ourselves. In like manner, measuring up is impossible for us if we are trying to do it on our own. Don't try to do it, just live in it. However, don't misunderstand this as a license to live an unholy lifestyle without

restraint. That idea is as wrong now just as it was when first written about in Jude verse 4 where he writes, "... They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord."

God does not desire clones or robots. If He did, He would not have created us the way He did. We have our own individual personalities, characteristics and styles. Why can't we just appreciate what He's doing in and through the one who happens to be on the platform at the time? Your turn may come in due season—then again, it may not. Why can't we realize that the personality and giftings of the one on the platform need our personality and giftings to complete the picture? If a person with a unique ability to address a large crowd is being greatly used by God, we should be thrilled that the Body of Christ is being more equipped, and that the lost are hearing the message of the gospel depending on the crux of the message. Instead, many are so quick to harbor envy and bitterness over the fact that they are not the ones being used at the moment.

It is my conviction that God is an emotional God, and that He experiences pleasure, sorrow, joy, anger, and so on. Because of that I believe that it is possible to either please Him or displease Him to some extent. I am not talking about earning His approval based on our works or deeds. I'm not entirely sure that is possible. Only through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ is the washing of our sins made possible. What I am speaking of has more to do with pleasing Him.

Yes, I believe it's possible to please God. Not only that, but I believe it is right to want to please Him. As a father, I enjoy it when my children do things just to please me. It makes me proud, in a positive sense. Why wouldn't God enjoy the same thing? He's a loving father isn't He? We're made in His image, and if I enjoy it when my children try to please me, then wouldn't God enjoy it too? All the more reason to resist the envy that tries to set in when someone else is being uniquely used by God for a season. When we give into that envy, our motives are really to please those around us (or worse, to please ourselves) more than pleasing God.

*Happy the man, of mortals happiest he,  
Whose quiet mind from vain desires is free;  
Whom neither hopes deceive, nor fears torment,  
But lies at peace, within himself content.*

George Granville

*Submission is the only reasoning between a creature and its maker  
and contentment in his will is the best remedy we can apply to  
misfortunes.*

Sir William Temple

*Then be content, poor heart!  
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart.  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold!*

May Louise R. Smith

*Do not despise your situation; in it you must act, suffer, and  
conquer. From every point on earth we are equally near to heaven  
and to the infinite.*

Henri F. Amiel

## Chapter 5 **IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU**

One of the most life changing messages I've ever heard was called, "It's Not About You." Does this sound like another message on pride? Lucky you! It is. This message drove home the fact that our lives are usually centered on ourselves. We seem to think we're the center of the universe. In fact, here in the United States we have that very problem as a nation. Just look at many political maps of the world. In many cases you'll find the continental U.S. in the center as if we are actually the center of the world. Who do we think we are? We're actually trained to think this about ourselves from an early age. From the old fast food restaurant commercials that tell us, "have it your way" to the many self-help books and videos that promise to improve our self-image, we're taught that we deserve the very best. Please don't get me wrong or misquote me. I believe God desires good things for His children, but we often take it to the extreme and become self-aspiring, selfish people and call it scriptural.

How easy it is to get our attention off of Jesus and onto ourselves. MY ministry, MY calling, MY giftings, MY burden, MY experience, MY feelings, MY needs, MY future.

*Just as  
prosperity does  
not necessarily  
equal the  
blessing of God,  
so too apparent  
blessing does  
not necessarily  
equal His  
approval.*

Is it not actually God's ministry, HIS calling, HIS giftings, HIS burden that He has entrusted to you? It's not about the success of your international ministry. It's about the heart of God that longs for His creation to worship Him. It's about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Sir/Ma'am, if you are so busy promoting your ministry that you forget who gave you that platform in the first place, and why He gave it to you, then you are on a dangerous path. Pride can

spoil a godly ministry in a flash.

I want to address the motivation behind ministry. Perhaps your preaching is reaping a bountiful harvest. Perhaps your servant-hood behind the scenes is enabling others to go to the world. Perhaps your unseen financial offerings are enabling a missionary to do the work of the gospel on another continent. If your motivation is not pure, you could be looking at a pile of ash when your works are passed through the fires of judgment. Hay, wood, and stubble burn quickly. Do you do things that get you noticed for the express intent of getting noticed? Yes, it's even possible to work behind the scenes and receive the praises of man. You may do an incredible act of obedience that demands great, personal sacrifice on your part, but if you secretly are enjoying the fact that someone has commented on how impressive, kind or sacrificial it was, then what was the point in it? One day, it's not going to be about all that you did, or all you supported. It's going to be about you and Jesus and the relationship that you did or didn't have with Him. You'll be standing before God alone, and He will judge your heart, and your motives. What will you say? What will He see? Sure, you may very well be saved, but what will you take with you? What will you have to offer Him? Listen to me, just as prosperity does not necessarily equal the blessing of God, so too apparent blessing does not necessarily equal His approval.

Whether you are an evangelist with a well-known name or an accountant working in the back office of a thriving (or struggling) ministry, your motivation must always be about Jesus, the promotion of His name and the gospel He preached. Out of that pureness of heart, the seeds will get planted, they will get watered and the harvest will be reaped in due season—and you will be rewarded with the opportunity to offer your works as an offering of love for the Master. What a reward that will be! The opportunity to present to Jesus the fruit from your own labors—all done for Him and for His glory. Do you see it? It's not about you at all! It's all about and for Jesus.

*Happy the man whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air  
In his own ground.  
Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in Summer yield him shade;  
In Winter, fire.*

Alexander Pope

*Contentment is a pearl of great price, and whoever procures it at the expense of ten thousand desires makes a wise and a happy choice.*

John Balguy

*There is a jewel which no Indian mines can buy,  
No chymic art can counterfeit;  
It makes men rich in greatest poverty,  
Makes water wine; turns wooden cups to gold;  
The homely whistle to sweet music's strain,  
Seldom it comes; to few from Heaven sent,  
That much in little, all in naught, Content.*

John Wilbye

## Chapter 6

### LIVE AND LEARN

So, what is it that happens when you labor out of wrong motivation? Allow me to share briefly a personal encounter with the god of self that was hiding as a wolf in sheep's clothing. As I said previously, I surrendered my life to the service of the Lord as a young boy, approximately eleven years old. As many do, I searched long and hard for many years for the way in which I could best be used by God. Unfortunately, mixed in with that batch was the leaven of "what will make me feel good, loved and appreciated?"

I have always had a heart for missions. I always wondered if I might be a missionary someday. Then one day, for this husband and a father of three young boys, an opportunity to pursue missions came my way. Was it God or wasn't it? Surely, *the need was the call*. Ever hear that one? While there may be some truth to that statement, I don't believe it can be applied in every circumstance. A ministry that we were familiar with had a need for house parents to go and help establish an orphanage in Mexico. What an opportunity! Hadn't we had some prophetic "words" spoken over us about ministry to orphans? Hadn't we had some dreams and visions about it? This must be it. It must be the open door.

What about that seasoned, wise, god-fearing, spirit-led woman who had told me to consider that perhaps God wasn't calling us to a literal ministry to orphans, but that He might be calling us to help an orphaned people find their way back to God the Father. "Surely not," I said. It had to be literal—not symbolic, right? As much as I wouldn't admit it, her comments did leave some questions in my mind.

Oddly enough, door after door opened for us as far as we were concerned. Confirmation after confirmation came our way. I just knew it was God, or did I? What about the fact that my godly,

discerning wife had gone to the orphanage site in Mexico to visit and to get a feel for everything. What about the fact that she had come back feeling very strongly that it wasn't right for us and that we weren't right for it. Surely this was just doubt and fear, and we just needed to endure and persevere through the *attacks of the enemy* and continue on with our preparations.

The support was coming in, and in fact, people were very supportive, and things were going our way. We sold all of our possessions, began living out of suitcases and began to study the language. It wouldn't be long now before we were missionaries on the foreign field for God! Why then did a respected friend of ours who has years of missionary experience on the field and who was a teacher of ministry students feel a certain uneasiness about us going? Why then did I not listen when a godly mentor in my life suggested—quoting the late Leonard Ravenhill—that “every soldier of God deserves His own marching orders” when I told him I was going because of the apparent need? (By the way, this opposes the notion that the need is always the call.) Why then did I feel so uneasy in the pit of my stomach? Why then did our biggest supporter cut most of their monthly support enormously just as we were ready to go? Why then did my wife fall and break her foot just days before our departure date? Surely, it's still God and these are just attacks of the enemy. Live by faith and press on!

Moving day finally came. In less than a couple of months, we had announced our decision to become missionaries, we had been accepted by the host ministry as the house parents for the orphanage, sold everything to relocate, raised monthly support and were now making the life changing move to another country.

*Every soldier  
of God  
deserves His  
own marching  
orders.*

After the long, exhausting journey we arrived at our destination. What a nice little Mexican town it was. What a beautiful, enormous house the ministry had purchased in order to build the orphanage. Six thousand square feet of space, with its own orange orchard sitting on several acres of rich, fertile land, set in the midst of tropical surroundings not far from the base of beautiful mountainous regions. What a perfect setting for ministry. I had visions of driving my four-by-four Suburban up into those mountains and pioneering great works in the remote, hard to

reach villages. Why not? I was even invited to preach in a local charismatic, Mexican church, and God moved powerfully with a spirit of repentance in the hearts of all present, including the wonderful pastor and his wife. It was a beautiful experience that I will never forget.

Why then did I feel literally nauseated all day, every day at our being there? It wasn't the food or the water. It was in my spirit. Why could I not beat this supposed "demonic Jezebel spirit" that was trying to drive me away? Let me tell you why. It wasn't a so-called Jezebel spirit at all! I was doing the work of God, but was out of the will of God. Although God would have continued to use us to accomplish His will in unique ways, we were not His choice for that ministry. I forced myself on Him, and out of His patience for me and His love for my family, He saw fit to allow this to happen and to bless it to some degree. Remember what I said? He may have blessed it to some degree, but that doesn't mean he approved of it. He does not want His work to be in vain. We do have fruit from that season in our life, but at what expense?

After weeks of trying to convince myself that I was the problem and that I just needed to deny myself and press on, I finally had to admit that I had made a terrible mistake. Out of sheer determination and stubbornness to see myself be something I wasn't, I made happen what shouldn't have happened. Once I confessed this to my wife openly, God flooded me with the truth of all that I had become—a self-righteous, self-seeking, self-motivated jerk—doing it all in the name of obedience to the Lord. Ha! It stunk, and I knew it. God chastises those He loves. He did a number on me, and I willingly accepted it and the consequences.

I had a good helping of humble pie when I approached our leadership about the error of my ways, and made clear my need to correct my mistakes. Unfortunately (and understandably), my decision to leave Mexico and follow what I knew God was telling me to do was not accepted with great joy on their part at first. I understood why, but when God gives you the mandate, you act on it. He told me to get back to that place where I last heard His voice a year earlier. For me, that meant going back to a physical location and waiting on Him. That was all I had to go on. He promised me that if I would be obedient, even in the face of ridicule and shame,

that He would restore everything I had nearly ruined in our lives and ministry.

It was better for everyone involved that we depart the scene in Mexico when we did. There were no orphans as of yet, and to wait any longer would have only put us in a position where it would have been more difficult to leave. I believe it's because of my willingness to admit my mistakes, humble myself and seek forgiveness that we were finally released by our leadership. We arrived back at the location God told me to go, and I took on the difficult task of contacting each of our supporters and explaining the circumstances. The positive responses from each one were wonderful and supportive. That was my first sign that I had made a right move back into His will. By the way, that orphanage is now thriving, and has several boys and girls living there, with godly, local house parents who love what they are doing, and are doing it well.

With no guarantee of anything other than His promises to restore us, one thing after another happened in such incredible timing, with incredible circumstances to bring us to the place where we are right now. I can tell you without a doubt that we are right where we belong because it was God that made it all happen, not me. I didn't have to force anything this time. Whether or not He ever moves us again—stateside or overseas—remains to be seen, because I understand the seasons of God better now. I also understand the importance of serving Him out of a pure motive.

Why have I taken so much time to share this very personal, true story from our lives? With the hopes that from my mistakes, and my own selfishness you might avoid a similar path one day. My apparent missionary motives were actually masking a heart that sought grand adventure, and spotlight ministry. Even though I did truly desire to see souls saved, and orphaned children to be provided a good home environment, just a small tainting of it by selfishness was enough to ruin it all. It's possible to be in error in ways that we are not even fully aware of, until God puts His finger on it and points it out, demanding an obedient reaction from us.

Save yourself the heartache and humiliation. Check your heart continually—let God check it. He alone knows the deepest recesses of it. Let Him purge you of any wrong and impure motive. Become a servant, but do so out of love for Him. He will take care of the rest

in due season. I believe it's time for many in the Church to start going up the mountain, not just around it continuously. Even if you have to take it at a gradual upward slope, at least you're traveling up. Learn from mistakes, and then don't go back to them. Don't wear yourself, your family, or others out by covering ground you've already covered in the past.

*He will easily be content and at peace, whose conscience is pure.*

Thomas à Kempis

*My crown is in my heart, not on my head;  
Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,  
Nor to be seen: my crown is called content;  
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.*

Shakespeare

*Contentment with the divine will is the best remedy we can apply to misfortunes.*

Sir William Temple

*Envy deserves pity more than anger, for it hurts nobody so much as itself. It is a distemper rather than a vice: for nobody would feel envy if he could help it. Whoever envies another, secretly allows that person's superiority.*

Horace Walpole

Chapter 7  
**THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF  
PROPER MOTIVATION**

There is much discussion these days about the need for godly community. We can call it by many names; the Body of Christ and family just to name two. For our purposes, we'll use Community. Community, as defined by Webster's Dictionary *is a group of people who reside in a specific locality and share government; or a group sharing common interests*. With this definition in mind, New Testament Christian community could be loosely defined as:

*God's people living as a group, sharing common godly, spiritual, multi-faceted interests and sharing a government, which has Jesus as the head (the chief authority), and serving Him and one another in multi-faceted ways, accomplishing a common goal.*

My definition of a community sounds a lot like a body to me. Again, call it what you will, a community and a body are essentially the same. In your own physical body, your thousands of parts are all working together for one common goal—to live, to function in a healthy way. Isn't that exciting?

We have been robbed! We have not been taught the importance of community. We have not had the privilege of living in God's intended way of life for His Son's followers. We have lived independently and as individuals. How we have missed out on a more abundant level of life. Fortunately, God is now speaking through His Spirit to the Body of Christ around the world about putting things right. We must listen and recover the artifacts that have been covered over throughout the years. As I described previously, we must take on the role of the spiritual archeologist and begin carefully uncovering the ancient ways of God lost to us over the centuries. The old bones of community have not rotted away.

They have been preserved. We have to delicately uncover them with the proper tools, including but not being limited to training, experience, prayer and patience, and put them back into service.

It is a delicate process because we are unfamiliar with it. We have never seen it done before, and we don't exactly know what it looks like. There are many books on the subject of going back to the ancient ways, and while there are good opinions and motives, we simply don't have the whole picture to go on. Similar to an archeologist or a paleontologist (or some other related "ologist") who has never actually seen a dinosaur or an ancient habitat intact, we must put the pieces together carefully, with the full understanding that we may be doing it wrong. If we find that something doesn't quite fit where we are trying to put it, we learn from the mistake and try again. Eventually, we end up with what we hope is a complete picture of what once was. One day, we'll see Jesus come and bring total restoration to His temple—us!

Again, I refer you back to the previous reference to the puzzle with the many pieces. When we try to force the pieces to go where they do not belong, we can end up with a mess that doesn't look like it's supposed to.

I wanted to spend some time explaining community from that perspective to bring out the point of how community can be positively or negatively affected by our individual motives. Selfish motives do not benefit the community. We must begin considering the Body of Christ and even the local Body of believers where you live as a collective whole. What one person does affects every one around him. When we take on that perspective, everything changes. Collective mentality means we don't live strictly as individuals with individual needs or desires. What one does, as an individual will always affect the rest of the community (or family, or body) in some way. It may not be evidenced right away, and it may not be obvious, but it will eventually manifest in some way affecting the community somehow.

I am in no way saying you should forget your own needs or desires, but somehow we have got to put them in the perspective of benefitting or affecting the entire community. If a person wants to pursue a life-long goal, it's done with

*What one person  
does affects  
everyone around  
him.*

more than just self-improvement in mind. It's done with community-improvement in mind. This requires a change in mindset, and it's not an easy change to make. Will the thing you are pursuing bring you personal satisfaction only or will it advance the community you are a part of, thus advancing the purpose God has for the community in the overall plan for the Kingdom? With that mindset, we can take great satisfaction in knowing that the goal we have set and accomplished has not just served to inflate our ego or given us a new level of status or position.

In the passage familiar to us all, Paul explains that one part of the physical body is affected by another part of the body. What if a foot wanted to be a hand? A foot should not seek to be a hand, but seeking to be a better foot benefits the whole body by providing more stability. In his book *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, the author, Gordon Lee, when speaking of the lack of looking at each person in God's family as part of the whole (as a people of God, not as individual persons), quotes C.D. Ewert as saying that, "by starting with the individual one may skew the data, but that if one does not take the individual into account, one will also skew Paul's overall theology... It is typical of the pietistic tradition of all strands (that is, those movements in the history of the church that have focused strongly on individual spirituality) to read Scripture as if it were primarily written to individual believers." Let me paraphrase what he is saying in this way: He claims that we tend to focus strongly on individual spirituality, rather than to understand that just as one's individuality in Christ is important, so the collective Body is just as important, if not more in some ways. Each part of the Body of Christ is important. I am not just a man of God. I am a part of the people of God. Each part is unique, yet each is a part of the whole. How exciting and amazing is that? This leads me to the next chapter.

*Contentment produces, in some measure, all those effects which the alchemist ascribes to what he calls the philosopher's stone; and if it does not bring riches, it does the same thing by banishing the desire of them. If it cannot remove the disquietudes arising from a man's mind, body, or fortune, it makes him easy under them.*

Joseph Addison

*It is our duty to compose our character, not to compose books, and to win, not battles and provinces, but order and tranquility for our conquest of life.*

Michel de Montaigne

*Tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,  
And wear a golden sorrow.*

Shakespeare

Chapter 8  
**EVERYONE IN THEIR PLACE,  
BUT NO ONE TAKES THE CREDIT**

All for one and one for all! What a great sentiment to keep in mind when considering the body mentality of the Church. One story of King David and his army provides a great illustration for our benefit. Allow me to paraphrase this story. When David was in pursuit of his enemies that had ransacked his camp, killed his people, and stolen their possessions, wives and children, he experienced something that is a great lesson for us today. Many of his soldiers became exhausted to the point of not being able to go on. David allowed the ones who could not continue to pitch camp while he and the rest of the army went on to pursue their enemy.

He eventually defeated the enemy, retrieved all he had lost, and even plundered the enemy's own riches. However, when they made it back to camp, the soldiers who went on with David to get back what was stolen refused to allow the ones who stayed behind to share in the spoils. They were motivated by greed and selfishness. They were thinking more of themselves than of the whole. David quickly and decidedly corrected that situation by declaring that all would share in the spoils whether they had actually fought or not.

The lesson for us is that whether we are called to the front lines of missionary service or public ministry, or we are called to provide the critical labor of support ministry behind the scenes, we all have our place, and we all share in the spoils of victory. We're not in it for ourselves, and we are not after personal gain. We are not simply individuals in the Body of Christ, although again I should stress that we would do well not to negate the importance of one's own individualism in our personal walk with God. We, as members of the Church, are a unit, a family, and a community. Everyone has a place and a role. We should be knit together in a way that we can't

properly function without one another.

Unfortunately, there are hidden treasures that go unnoticed and unappreciated in the Body of Christ. They are the dear saints who work diligently and tirelessly behind the scenes to not only support the labors of those that are on the frontlines, but work to provide a place of rest and healing and growth and training for everyone involved. It's true that some will give all for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, forsaking even their own lives, but there are those who won't. This is where we have to be careful not to place a higher regard on the frontline warriors than on those who aren't. In reality, it may very well be that the person who has stayed behind has done so because they were called on by God to do so. Take the story of David and his men again. See the relevance? If we look at it in proper perspective, it's easier to see that everyone is called to give their all, by life OR by death.

I wonder how many moves of God, whether it is revivals, renewals or whatever name you may call them, have failed or fallen short because of the way Christians tend to put a certain man or woman up on a pedestal, but forget about the ones God is using behind the scenes. (Those are two strikes against a move of God—1. putting someone up on a pedestal, and that person on the pedestal allowing it to happen, and 2. failing to recognize that God is using many in various ways—seen and unseen). A person working behind the scenes in the safety and comfort of an office may be every bit as called by God to “give it all” as the person who is called to face the jungles of Irian Jaya. Again, it's a matter of perspective.

We must get the mind of God in these things. What God is looking for is the willingness of your heart to “go” or to stay behind, and to put everything you've got into the task at hand. On the flip-side of the coin, if a person is actually called to go, to leave the comforts of home, and go to the nations, but neglects that calling, then no amount of claiming to be doing the will of God will make it right. He/she must go. Ask the questions—Why am I staying? Why am I going? What's motivating me to go when I should stay? What's motivating me to stay when I should go?

There are a couple of things that have really made an impact on me as I was sorting out the will of God for my life concerning missions work. An experienced woman in the field of world

missions once told me that a sure way to know whether or not you are called to foreign missions is if you are miserable NOT doing it. Another statement that affected me was by Keith Green who said, “Everyone is called to go to the mission field, UNLESS (*my emphasis*) you are specifically called to stay.”

On the subject of those called to stay behind, I am reminded of Stephen. Here was a man who was a faithful servant of God, waiting on tables for widows. The Bible describes him as a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and full of God’s grace and power. We’re not told of great missionary journeys he took, or of churches he planted. We’re only told of his service to the widows so that the apostles could more appropriately spend their time in prayer and the ministry of the word. He and seven select others relieved the apostles of a great and necessary need that was lacking in the fast increasing church community. Here’s the part about this story that I love. While he may not have made great exploits or enlightened dark parts of the known world with the gospel of Jesus, he was faithful in what he was given to do. Because of his faithfulness in the seemingly little things, he was given the great privilege of being the first recorded martyr of the newly formed Christian community.

A friend whom I greatly respect told me once that when we are found worthy, we too might experience this great privilege. That’s an awesome thought, and while we’re certainly not called to live with a “martyr mentality” or to believe that dying for Jesus is the only honorable way to die, it’s an interesting way of looking at martyrdom. What’s my point? Stephen was a man who was faithful in the humble place of service God put him, yet he is still considered among the great heroes of the faith. He had unselfish motivations. Otherwise, God might not have used him in the way he did. How many heroes are we sitting next to in the church, yet we are failing to see them the way God does or they don’t see in themselves the great potential that God put in them. May God open our eyes to see the heroes and giants of the faith that are among us. It may even be you!

Some of the best stories I’ve ever heard out of my own experiences in revival have been by those who were not even paid staff in the church. Stories of witches, warlocks, anarchists, atheists, runaways, prostitutes, and drug dealers encountering the life

changing power of God on the streets (not in the church building) by men and women who answered the call of God to live out the writings of the New Testament themselves instead of just sitting in church week after week, getting fatter and fatter off of pulpit preaching. Unlike many (sadly, unlike my own), their motivations were not to eventually be recognized and placed in a place of prominence. The love of Jesus and the commission to reach the lost motivated them. I'm certainly not putting down pulpit preaching, or even paid staff positions. I am a strong advocate of church ministry.

When the five-fold ministry is in full swing and operating as it was designed, the pastor becomes much more than just a powerful CEO, running the affairs of the church club. He is a shepherd, who is led by the Spirit, willingly counseled and mentored by the instructions of apostles and prophets, and is actively loving, guarding, healing, and ministering the Word of God to the flock that has been put into his care. Obviously that's only one view on the proper role of a pastor, and my intention is not to spark a debate on this issue.

So, why would I stray off into this area? Simply to stress the importance of each person finding and being content in his area, rather than always searching for another anointing or calling that doesn't belong to him. If God wants to promote you, then let Him do it in His way and in His timing. To live otherwise will cause misery for you and those around you. Let me also point out the importance of those graced in the leadership roles being diligent to recognize those hidden treasures in their own communities of believers. To not do so is to deal an eventual fatal blow to individuals and even the Church community. We can't become what we're meant to be as a body, or even survive if we don't work together, serve one another and seek to build God's kingdom instead of our own. It's time to unearth the hidden treasures and make them shine for the glory of God.

*Content has a kindly influence on the soul of man, in respect of every being to whom he stands related. It extinguishes all murmuring, repining, and ingratitude toward that Being who has allotted us our part to act in this world. It destroys all inordinate ambition; gives sweetness to the conversation and serenity to all the thoughts; and if it does not bring riches, it does the same thing by banishing the desire of them.*

Joseph Addison

*It is not miserable to be blind; it is miserable to be incapable of enduring blindness.*

John Milton

*When the world trembles I'm unmoved,  
When cloudy, I'm serene;  
When darkness covers all without  
I'm always bright within.*

Daniel Defoe

## Chapter 9

# WORSHIP GOD WITH RIGHT MOTIVES

Although this generation is one of great promise and hope, there is a danger that lurks among us, which if left unchecked could spoil all we are striving for. I am speaking of the quest for that next, great experience. Experiencing God at that new level. Always looking for the next wave of glory. Waiting for that new sound from heaven. Granted, we should seek to go higher and deeper in our relationship with God, but when it becomes more about us than anything else, it has crossed over into enemy territory. Once again, what's the motivation for what you're seeking?

The Christian life is not always about feelings. Oftentimes it's necessary to press on even in the midst of hardship, pain, or even a lack of "feeling" God altogether for a season. In those times of what is sometimes referred to as a darkness of the soul or desert experiences, the best you can do may be to just put one foot in front of the other. It's a narrow road we travel anyway, so if you walk it slowly and carefully, you

*The race we are running is not to see who finishes first, but to actually finish.*

are more apt to stay on the road than wander off. Remember, in proper perspective, the race we are running is not to see who finishes first, but to actually finish. If you can't see anything else for a season, at least you can remember that God is still there whether or not you can feel or see Him. He's not lost, and He hasn't left you or forsaken you. If that's the best you can do, then you'll be ok when you come through it.

In marriage, you don't always have that honeymoon, goose-bump feeling of love for your mate. Regardless of how you feel from one day to the next, you're still married. It doesn't mean that you don't love the person, but if we continually went on feelings alone, marriages everywhere would be destroyed in no time. As a matter of

fact, that's probably why we have so many failed marriages in the world—and in the Church—today.

In a similar way, our relationship with God can't be based on always feeling something extravagant or awesome. Sometimes it will be a stretch just to call yourself a Christian. Yet, you are a Christian—still serving, and still loving. Sometimes worship doesn't feel inspired or wonderful, yet you still worship God because of who He is. *This can be a stretch, but the disciplines of the Christian life usually are. We grow by being stretched.* Let me take this even further by saying that even to worship Him because of what He's done for you is not necessarily appropriate in the sense of what worship really is. Even in this fundamental issue, we can be wrongly motivated. Sure, thank Him for what He's done in your life, and arguably that may be considered a form of worship in itself. But at a grassroots level, He is God, and he is worthy. That is why we worship. As I've mentioned in a previous chapter, it helps to remember what He's done for you. It can rejuvenate your love for Him, but the real reason we worship Him is because of who He is, not what He's done.

I'm not a song leader or an instrument player in a worship band. In fact, about all I can do is to make a joyful noise. It might not be joyful sounding to some, but it is to Jesus. I'm just a worshipper. From that perspective, I feel I can approach this subject in a unique way. Worship, in and of itself is not singing a song or playing an instrument or even taking a certain posture on the floor before God. It is a condition of the heart. Look closely at the scriptures. The Psalms are full of worship. It's the cry of the human heart that touches the heart of God, and as a result takes on more and more of the likeness of Him. It's a heart transplant. In order to worship, you must be in a condition for worship. That is not possible without meeting the requirements of Psalm 24:3-5 where we're told:

*Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.*

Look closely at that passage. Do you see the requirements? In order to come into the presence of God, you must have clean hands and a pure heart. When it comes to worship, to approach God with any motivation other than just the worship of who He is, is to approach Him with improper motivation—with impurity of heart. If you are looking for an experience or a temporary (or even a long-term) emotional or spiritual high, then your motivation for worshipping God is one more of selfish desire than of a pure one. These are difficult words, I know. However, they must be said. If we can get this area right, it will change everything we are involved in. I'm convinced of it, yet I caution you to not even let that become a motivating factor for worshipping Him. How cautiously we must tread when approaching God. No wonder we're told in Philippians 2:12 to "*work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*" It's no light matter to come into the presence of the living God.

With all the talk of revival, renewal, spiritual awakening and other such spiritual endeavors, we must remember that while these are worthy things to strive for, they must not be the basis of our worship. As I've mentioned already, let's not get it backwards. Let's love and worship God for who He is, not to get something from Him. Let's pursue His face, not just His hands. This is not to say we shouldn't seek or long for more, or that He is not an approachable God, desiring to bless His children. Of course we should, and of course He is. But don't confuse the two. It shouldn't be, "I love you and adore you. What an awesome, powerful God you are. Now that I have proclaimed this to you, please grant me my desires. Let me receive power." Do you see? You're doing one thing to get another. Worship should not be used as a means to an end.

I long for more of God. I seek to know Him better. I desire His Spirit to operate more fully in my life in powerful and miraculous ways. This is right and necessary for reaching the multitudes, but it should not be my primary motivation in worshipping Him. Of course, remembering God's goodness and deeds comes in to play when you're praising Him. I can't deny that, but worship is to acknowledge who He is. When Moses asked Him how he should answer when the Egyptians asked who it was that sent him, God said, "*Tell them, I AM has sent me to you.*"

*Worship should not be used as a means to an end.*

God is so all powerful, all consuming, and indescribable that the best possible description for Him is I AM. He is everything. He just... is. Perhaps it will help you to remember that when you go to worship Him. It does me good to stop and consider the fact that I am approaching the one, true God of all creation, who is beyond all possible human description.

We tend to want the power of God, but ignore the God of power. We love to seek His hand, but ignore His face. We do this because we relate the experience of His power with His mighty right hand. Let's climb up into His lap and get His attention by telling Him how much we love Him and how great He is. I promise, as you do this He will turn His glorious face to you and smile on you.

There is a key to being able to do this. You must come to Him with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 23). If you are carrying the heavy burden of unconfessed or willful sin, you won't want to get His attention. You'll want to avoid Him, and run from Him. Do like King David did. When confronted with the sin in your life, run *to* God in repentance. Don't run and hide. Cover yourself with the sacrificial blood of the Lamb of God—Jesus. Your pursuit of His face and His smile will then be unhindered. Your worship of Him will be more properly motivated, and therefore acceptable to Him.

*If two angels were sent down from heaven, one to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street, they would feel no inclination to change employments.*

John Newton

*Joy is indeed a precious quality which very few experience in their lives. The person who knows how to enjoy life will never grow old no matter how many years he can call his own. It is easy to be happy at specific times, but there is a certain art in being happy and contented every day.*

Ora Capelli

*There is a sense in which a man looking at the present in the light of the future, and taking his whole being into account, may be contented with his lot: that is Christian contentment. But if a man has come to that point where he is so content that he says, "I do not want to know any more, or do any more," he ought to be changed into a mummy! Of all hideous things a mummy is the most hideous; and of mummies, the most hideous are those that are running about the streets and talking.*

Henry Ward Beeche

## Chapter 10

### **FALSE MOTIVATION VS. LOVE MOTIVATION**

“I’m a very motivated person.” That’s a statement heard by over-achievers, and success oriented people everywhere, particularly in job interviews. Interestingly enough, it does seem to work. Motivation works. Why do you think motivational speakers are so successful? Those motivated over-achievers do accomplish great things. Maybe you assume I’m talking about people in the marketplace of professionalism. Well, yes I am, but I’m also talking about another group of *professionals*—Christians. Ministers, teachers, preachers, evangelists, pastors, the prophetic, leaders, followers, paid and non-paid clergy alike. You see, something I have learned over the years in my own pursuit of fulfilling the call to ministry is that while having drive and motivation is important to accomplishing great things, what the motivation actually is that’s behind what you are doing for God can absolutely nullify the reception it receives in God’s eyes. Please read that statement again!

Is it possible to still be fruitful in your various works that you accomplish for God, even if the motivations behind them weren’t completely pure? Sure it is. The fruit of works and the reception of them with God are different. Yet, I believe they do go together in an interesting kind of way. Let’s think about this for a minute. Let’s say you know of a young mother down the street whose husband has recently died in an accident. He left behind not only her, but 3 small children as well. Christmas will be quite difficult this year. Emotionally, spiritually, financially there will be scars that remain long after the tears stop flowing. You want to do something to help—in the name of Jesus of course—knowing that she can’t possibly afford gifts for her kids. So far so good, but wait—there’s more. You also know that by giving to her, you’ll be able to get a decent tax write-off, and not only that, but when word gets out about

what you did, you're going to look pretty good to your friends, family and yes—your pastor.

Think this kind of scenario never happens? Sure it does. It happens all the time. But, you might say, “Well, at least the motivation of wanting to help the young widow was there at the root of it all.” Maybe it was, maybe not. We may never know this side of heaven, but rest assured God knows. He sees the heart, and is not fooled by any sort of cover-up. He knows the rest of the story. Now back to the reason for this scenario. What was the fruit of the gift to the widow? She was helped and encouraged, and the kids received that which they may not have received otherwise. Does that negate the fact that God saw your heart in the matter? I say no.

It occurs to me that I just recently lived out another example that I'd like to share. Our next door neighbors have had a difficult past few weeks. They are elderly grandparents, and he recently had a stroke, which seriously impaired his ability to do work around the house, much less even get around with ease. As I was mowing my own yard, I felt the unmistakable prompting of the Holy Spirit to mow theirs too. After arriving home from our evening church service, I knocked on their door and asked if they would mind if I helped them out by cutting their grass. They were grateful.

As I mowed, I prayed, “Lord, let this be for your glory, and may there somehow be fruit from it.” It was almost immediately that I heard the voice of the Spirit again saying, “Why not just do it because obeying my will is the right thing to do, instead of seeking for the fruit that will come of it?” I grasped hold of that, repented, and joyfully finished mowing knowing that what I was doing was simply the right thing because it was the obedient thing to do. Was it totally wrong to want to see some fruit from the simple task I was given to do? Not necessarily, but the opportunity was there for a tainting of the purity of it to take place, and I thank God for the guidance of His Spirit to keep me on track.

Obviously, the Bible has something to say about the motivation of the heart, including what I have just described to you in the scenario above. On one side of the coin, what really matters is that Jesus Christ is glorified in some way through the gift. Paul and Timothy addressed this matter in their letter to the Philippians when they said:

*It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice (Philippians 1:18).*

Wow! Think of it. Paul is in chains because of his service to Christ, and there are those who are preaching Christ just to make him look bad and to discredit him in some way. Yet, Paul recognizes that even though their heart motives are impure, Christ is being lifted up, and He (Jesus) will somehow receive glory from it. In the same way, in my illustration, you gave to the widow and even used the name of Jesus in your giving. The motivation wasn't pure, but Jesus was still exalted by the gift, because in the widow's mind, it came from Jesus through you. She saw you as the vessel of His kindness.

Now, on the other side of the coin we have to examine what the Bible says about the false motivation. Proverbs 16:2 tells us that although a man's ways seem innocent; his motives are weighed by the Lord. God sees, and He knows what others may not. One day, those motives will be tried and tested and may be found wanting. We're instructed in 1Corinthians 4:5 that for the time being, we are not to judge the motives of other's hearts. It says that the Lord will judge you for what you've done and why you've done it. He will expose the motives of your heart, and will reward you with praise from God as He sees fit. My question to you is: what will your reward be? Will your works be received by God? Dear neighbor, employee, supervisor, minister, please check your heart.

Perhaps you're accomplishing great things as a Christian. Maybe you've got real, lasting fruit from your efforts. It could be that the gates of hell are being plundered through your witnessing abilities to populate heaven. In the church's eyes, and even in the world's eyes, you're a success. What about in God's eyes? Did you start out with a properly motivated heart for God's glory, and then somewhere

along the way your eyes were shifted from the exaltation of Christ to the exaltation of self? It's not too late to get it right again. Don't let pride get in the way. Fall on your knees and repent right now, especially if something within you has been stirred by the reading of these words. Ask God to purify your heart. He'll do it in an instant. He desperately longs to. He loves you so much, and is waiting to reply.

It's not all about striving and working and doing things to attain or maintain your salvation. Wrong emphasis on that becomes legalism, but the work that you do is important nevertheless. Faith without works is dead, right? James 2: 14-26 tells us:

*What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has not deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'God, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that— and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteousness for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.*

Make sure it counts, friends. Even so, let me throw one last wrench in there. Do the works you do because you love Him, not because you want something from Him. I'm not saying not to expect good things from our Father. Of course you should, but don't let the good things be the motivation that drives you to serve Him. That

makes it difficult doesn't it? Not necessarily. Here's the answer. Fall in love with God. Fall in love with Christ Jesus. Maybe your love has grown cold with time. Begin again to consider the wonders of the Lord, and His greatness, His generosity, His mercy, His own love for you, His patience, His power, His... His... His... The list goes on endlessly. He's absolutely incredible, and He has done so much for you.

Talk with Him, walk with Him, sit and listen to Him as He talks to you in response. Find a place where you can get alone with Him, and be in His presence. How do you fall in love with Him? Carefully and thoughtfully consider this—God IS love, and to be in His presence is to be IN love. While physically being alone with Him is important, you don't have to be alone physically to be alone with Him. You can be in a church service, in your car, even taking a walk around the block, but again, don't underestimate the importance and necessity of finding that intimate, secret place where it is just you and God without interruption. Take advantage of your ability to enter into the Holy of Holies by the cleansing blood of Jesus, and approach the living God. If your intentions are to be in His presence because you truly miss Him, and you want your relationship restored, you will again fall in love.

Why is loving Him the answer to having proper motivations? Because when you do something for someone because you love them, your motivations aren't to get, they are to give. I love my wife intensely, and that love for her makes me want to do things for her without receiving anything in return. If I buy her flowers, I don't expect anything in return. That would be absurd. It should be the same, yet deeper and more intense with me and God. When it is, then the saying, "love God and do what you please" is wonderfully true. When I first heard that statement, I was shocked and even a little angry at first. Then one day, it dawned on me. If I truly love God, then the things I want to do won't be displeasing to God. I'll be living to please Him out of a relationship with Him. Isn't that awesome? It's so liberating. May it be so for you as it has been for me.

I wonder how many people pay lip service to God by saying they love Him, yet have never really experienced what it really means to actually be in love with Him. I was recently told of a youth pastor

who apparently is burned out, is not enjoying his work, and is basically dreading the day to day task of ministry. How sad! Let me tell you why. It's because somewhere along the way, he put the love of ministry and position above love of God, and eventually his love for God turned cold, or else quite possibly he never really was in love with God in the first place. Apparently, from what I gather this man is questioning that in his own life. Getting the order backwards is spiritually deadly. Love of God must—I repeat—must come first.

You know what? This makes the concluding statement of Ecclesiastes (chapter 11:13, 14) come clear for me. Solomon has tasted of all there is to be tasted in life. He's experienced everything he set out to experience. He deprived himself of nothing he desired. Yet, in the end he concludes that it comes down to this one thing—*“Fear God and keep his commandments... For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”* I believe that the love for God and the fear of God go hand in hand. That being true, a healthy and proper fear of Him has the natural response of keeping his commandments. It's not an effort, it's just fruit. A fruit tree grows fruit because it's a fruit tree. It does it without trying. So it should be with us. It should be a natural response that our works are properly motivated for God's glory because of our love for Him.

I don't write with condemnation or judgment. I write this with love and concern in my heart, and a desire to see others avoid pitfalls and strife in life. I have experienced a measure of the life of self-exaltation from wrong motivation in ministry. My sin wasn't what many would even think of, which is why this book is important. The sin of wrong motivation must be exposed for what it is—sin. My sin was that being looked at and being looked up to, and being in the spotlight looked good to me. It appealed to me. In my eyes, it meant respect and acceptance, even quite possibly the love and adoration of others. Yet, those are all wrong reasons to be a minister of the gospel.

Yes, there is lasting fruit from my years in various forms of ministry. Yes, Christ Jesus was glorified in many ways regardless of my heart. I've seen people healed, saved, revived and restored. People couldn't see the wrongful motivations in my heart. They saw a servant of God through whom He was working. He was exalted

because it was His power, not me doing the work. It was His saving blood, not mine. However, the 20/20 vision of hindsight is a great lesson teacher that I wish I hadn't had to experience, but am grateful for all the same. I don't wish to go that way again. I've been around that mountain, and I much prefer ascending the hill of the Lord (Psalm 24:3-6) rather than going around it. I remember praying to God that if He thinks I have learned my lesson, I'm ready to climb. Save yourself the trouble of making that wearisome journey. If you've already started around that mountain, it's always the right time to stop, look up, and start climbing.

*Serenity comes to the man who lives with an unfaltering faith in an unfailing God. The person who lives with eternity in his heart will find a strange calm in his spirit.*

Joseph R. Sizoo

*Peace of mind may transform a cottage into a spacious manor hall; the want of it can make a regal park an imprisoning nutshell.*

Joshua L. Liebman

*True contentment depends not upon what we have; a tub was large enough for Diogenes, but a world was too little for Alexander.*

Caleb C. Colton

*When Pyrrhus was about to sail for Italy, Cineas, a wise and good man, asked him what were his intentions and expectations. "To conquer Rome," said Pyrrhus.*

*"And after that?"*

*"We will subdue Carthage, Macedonia, all Africa and all Greece."*

*"And when we have conquered all we can, what shall we do?"*

*"Do? Why, then we will sit down and spend our time in peace and comfort."*

*"Ah, my Lord," said the wise Cineas, "what prevents our being in peace and comfort now?"*

George L. Walton

## Chapter 11

### **TAINTED SALVATION**

I thought I was finished with this book when I completed the previous chapter. It was already in the editing phase with the publisher, and I was ready to move on and resume work on my next project. I hope this book has served to cause you to search your heart for why you do the things you do, but allow me to address a subject that is crucial. I honestly hope this doesn't become a point of controversy, because certain issues in Christianity should not be controversial; they should just be basic to our beliefs. I hope this final chapter that almost didn't make it into this book will bring you to your knees in desperation for truth.

I tell you, the very fibers of our salvation and our ministries are under the magnifying glass of heaven, and we would do well to take the message of this final chapter to heart and examine our motives in this crucial matter of eternity. I owe much of the meat in this chapter to the preaching of the late Paris Reidhead, and an incredible message he once preached called "Ten Shekels and a Shirt."

In the 17<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Judges, we have the story of Micah from the country of Ephraim who was given money by his mother to have an image carved and an idol created by a silversmith. I do not know why the mother would refer to the Lord when instructing her son to use her silver for idolatry. Perhaps it's an indication of the depths they had fallen in their obedience to God. Perhaps it's an indication that there was an impure mixture of God and the world in their form of worship.

At any rate, Micah had the image and idol set into place in a shrine he built in his own house. In an effort to have the blessing of the Lord on his house, he saw fit to install one of his sons as his very own priest. How convenient. Keep in mind that we're told that there was no ruling authority at the time, and everyone did as they saw fit.

In other words, whatever works for me is what I will do. Whatever is the best way to get what I want is the best way to accomplish that end. So, in essence we see that the mixture was that people saw the need to have God involved in their lives, but went about it in unholy ways.

Some time later, a young, roaming Levite showed up at Micah's house, and learning that the young man needed a place to live, he saw a way to satisfy both their needs. He knew that this Levite was from a race of people that had the blessing of God. By offering him a paid position with benefits and a parsonage, he could have his very own priest, and in his own words: "Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."

After another period of time, we see that some men from various clans of another tribe in Israel came upon Micah's house while they were doing some scouting. These men recognized the voice of Micah's Levite priest, and after a series of events, they offered him a better position, and he went with them along with the idols, images and worldly influence, to be their priest.

So, there we have the story in a nutshell, and the basis for what I see as an absolutely critical position on wrongly motivated and therefore tainted salvation. Let's look first at Micah and his little priest-for-hire, and then take another brief walk back in time before ultimately coming back to our day and age and dealing with our predicament.

Do you see from the story the situation that Micah had allowed himself to get into? Somehow, probably over a period of time, he and the people of that day had slipped into what I've heard termed *greasy grace* or *sloppy agape*. Micah allowed the world and its ways to crowd him into an awkward position. This is what happens when that line of separation between the world and a Christian gets blurred.

The social condition of the day was apparently in complete disarray, because everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Do you not see the similarities in the days we live in? We may have a system of government established, but in effect people basically still do what they see as right in their own eyes. If something gets in the way of what we want to do, we simply fight it in court, and get a law changed.

In the story, people had slowly taken a little bit of the world and mixed them together, and ended up with a watered down, impure form of worship, yet it was still apparent that they desired the blessing of the Lord. They really seemed to think that this mixture of idolatry would please Him.

Do we not do the same thing in our day, and in our churches? We hire our priests (pastors and staff) to do church in a way that pleases us, and makes us most comfortable, bringing with it a mixture that we seem to think pleases God, or at least we've convinced ourselves it does. On top of that, much like that roaming priest, the ministers who hire themselves out seem to have become quite adept at adjusting to the surroundings, the desires of the people, and the culture for a better salary or higher position.

I am not intending this to be a blanket statement in any way, because I know there are ministers in the Church who have the heart of the Lord and are desperately seeking to please God in all they do. I commend those, and appreciate their efforts. Yet, having seen firsthand the other side, I simply can't sit back any longer without saying something about the impurities I've seen. It's bad for the Church, the ministers, and renders us ineffective when dealing with the world.

When these things occur in the church, we are going from a powerful, effective force in the earth for the glory of God to a utilitarian, expedient religion, which provides for us a useful God. Our day is a day when the ruling philosophy is pragmatism. In other words, if it works it's true; if it succeeds it must be good. The test of all practices, principles, teaching is: does it work? Our church culture is a testimony to that notion. If someone discovers a method that has some measure of success, it gets documented, sold and becomes the standard practice for everyone else. I'm not saying you can't glean certain truths and helpful tools from the successes of others. Of course you can. We all can and should benefit from the knowledge, wisdom and revelation of others, but we must never use that as a complete replacement for what God may want to say to us for our specific situation.

By the modern standards of pragmatism, some of the greater failures were the mighty men of God in our scriptures, and even Jesus Himself. Noah was a fine ship builder, but apparently was a

terrible preacher. After all his preaching and pleading, only his family went with him. Jeremiah was an effective preacher, but didn't have good results. It seems that God was the only one pleased with his messages. Jesus, the very son of God was certainly a failure by modern standards. He didn't build any schools or orphanages, establish mission boards, or even publish a book. He preached to thousands, and fed thousands miraculously, and healed the masses, but could only reveal Himself to a handful of faithful followers in succession after the resurrection. By every standard of our generation and previous ones, the Lord was a failure.

By what standard will we judge our lives and ministries? Is God an end or is He a means to an end? You must decide early on in your Christian life and in your ministry. Our generation is prepared to honor anyone who is successful, whether they have settled that important question in their life or not. What is the ultimate motivation of your ministry and your life? Is it success and popularity, or the absolute glory of God? Are we going to be Levites who serve God for the highest bid? Is your service to God a means to an end?

More than a century ago, just after the great revivals of Finney, open attack on Christian faith erupted in Europe. Theologians applied Darwin's theory of evolution to scripture. The resulting effect was humanism, which was a philosophical statement that declares that the end of all being is the happiness of man. The reason for existence is man's happiness. This resulted in a mixture, which stated that the purpose for salvation is to get all the happiness you can out of life. Hitler took the religious philosophy that we are destined to rule the world, and he took it to the extreme, and said any means we can use to achieve this is our salvation.

A result of this mixture that occurred in the church over a period of time was that there were no absolute standards to point to any longer. The Bible has been discredited and disallowed. God has been dethroned. Jesus is now offered as either a myth or just a man. During the attack of humanism on Christianity, the Liberals fought against it. For them religion had to exist, because so many made their living at it. So, they justified it and said "we don't know if there's heaven or hell, but you need to come to church so we can make your life better while you're living." Later, Fundamentalists

rose up and said they believe certain things that establish one as a fundamentalist (Jesus, death, hell, resurrection, heaven, hell). You were known as a fundamentalist and you were saved if you could agree with those particulars. Salvation became nothing more than a senseless scheme, and the chief end of salvation was happiness.

Here's the crux of the matter. Liberalists say the end of salvation is to make man happy while he's alive, and fundamentalists says the end of salvation is make man happy when he dies. They agree on this: *the end of all religion is the happiness of man. Accept Jesus so you can go to heaven.* Yes, I agree with you that Jesus loves us beyond what words can describe, and that He truly desires for us to spend an eternity with Him, but the previously mentioned appeal is selfishness at its root, and is in total contrast to Christianity.

Back to the biblical story, Micah wanted to have his prayer and his devotion because "I know the Lord will do me good." This is selfishness, and this is sin. The Levite priest comes along and falls right in line with it. They both sell out to get what they want. It's the betrayal of the ages, and sadly it's the betrayal in which we live. The philosophy that says the end of all being is the happiness of man also says that God is God, that heaven exists, and that the angels are in heaven just for the happiness of man. Yes, it is true that God does intend to make man happy, but more as a by-product of His receiving the glory that is due Him.

Often, without even the knowledge of it being the case, the philosophy of a Christian, of evangelism, and of mission is to go and improve the conditions of human life by using the provision of Jesus. This is humanism in disguise. People deserve hell, but we don't want our fellow humans to suffer. The truth of the matter is that the heathen are lost, and they will go to hell not because they haven't heard the gospel, but because they deserve hell. We're not sent to the world primarily for their sake, we're sent for Christ's sake. Christianity says the end of all being is the glory of God. People deserve hell, but Jesus loves them. What a difference! **He deserves the rewards of his suffering.** When this becomes reality, you stop working for ten shekels and a shirt. Are you the Levite serving Micah, or is yours a heart serving God?

Why did you repent? We need to repent on biblical terms. Like George Whitfield said, "we are monsters of iniquity bent on hell."

We don't even see our sin or care about our crimes against God. We only tremble in fear because our skin is going to be singed in hell. Here is the order of things: no one can receive Christ until they repent, no one can repent until they are convicted, but that is the work of the Holy Ghost, and it's conviction that tells us we are deserving of death and hell. It's not simply seeing that you are caught in your sin, but that you see your crime. This is the difference between 20<sup>th</sup> century preaching and the preaching of John Wesley who exalted righteousness of God. He would exalt the holiness, the law, the justness, and the wrath of God, and then he would tell the people of their anarchy and the enormity of their crimes and open rebellion against God. The power of God would so descend on people that they would be lying on the ground utterly unconscious from the revelation of the enormity of God and a revelation of their sins against him. Also in America, John Wesley Redfield, preached the same way at Yale University, with the results of people seeing the holiness of God and the enormity of their sins, followed by true repentance and a change in their lives. Redfield was a man whom God used to awaken both the sleeping sinner and the careless Christian. When he prayed or preached, men and women were touched by Jesus and went home different than when they came. Under the influence of Mr. Redfield's ministry, the slaves of sin were brought to repentance and totally set free. Wherever he preached, church after church seemed to be affected in the same way.

It wasn't trying to convince good men that he was in trouble with a bad God, but the quite the opposite. The consequence was repentance, then faith, then life. There is one reason for a sinner to repent: because Jesus deserves the worship, adoration, and love of man, not because He'll do you good. Why should a sinner repent? Because God deserves the obedience He demands. Sincere repentance is this: Lord, I will obey you, serve you, and love you, whether at the end of this life I go to heaven or not, simply because you deserve it, and not just because I'm trying to make a deal with you for a good end. Can you see the difference?

Why come to the cross? Because it's the only way for God to get glory out of a human being, not because you'll get joy, peace and victory and blessing. I love that! Any reason other than the glory of

God is defrauding Jesus the glory He could get out of your life, and is salvation with wrong motives. Many want to know the fullness of God so they can use God. Many preachers want power for their programs, and that's why they want the fullness of God. Think of the great things we Americans can accomplish without God ever being involved. Many don't enter in to the fullness of Christ because of this mindset.

In repentance you've been pardoned for His glory, and in victory you've been brought to the place of death that He might rule in your life, and in fullness Jesus is able to live and walk in you. At that point, you realize you're only reason for being is the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

To say, "Come be saved so you can go to heaven. Come to the cross for joy and victory, come to the fullness of the spirit so you can be satisfied," this is the trap of humanism. No, you come to Jesus and serve because He's worthy; that's the motivation He's wanting to see in your heart. If you don't know the fullness of the Holy Ghost, come so He can have his purpose in his coming fulfilled in you, and get glory for your life. It's not what you will get out of Christ, but what He will get out of you. Christ is the glorious end, not just the means to getting you into heaven. Let's resign from Micah's service. No more serving for the highest bidder. May the lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering.