

What Motivates You?

CONCEPTS

The various forms of pride in humans are satan's sneakiest sins. Pride creeps into our lives, minds, and hearts in many ways. Trying to parse good and evil when we seek glory for ourselves or others is brutal and often spiritually unhealthy. The good ones can turn nasty and become sins. These are sins we rarely account for, and often they are sins of omission because we don't even consider them, ask for forgiveness, or repent from them. Yet they hurt our relationship with our Lord. Consider this in your next prayer time.

PURPOSE

From childhood, we are motivated to _____—whatever, you name it. Who motivates us? Motivation comes from parents, peers, teachers, pastors, enemies, coaches, drill instructors, bosses, spouses, family, children, work associates, competition, self, and God's Word. All of these motivators can be good. Some can be bad, and some are both good at times and bad at others. Pride, pleasing man, and pleasing ourselves are motivating issues we must address according to God's Word.

SCRIPTURE BASE

Colossians 3:2, Deuteronomy 8:17–18, Proverbs 16:2, Proverbs 8:13, Romans 12:2, Matthew 6:1, Psalm 139:23–24, Philippians 4:20

BACKGROUND

I sincerely doubt I am the only one who has trouble when I pause to consider my motivations before I embark on a project or even while I'm in the middle of one, especially ministry projects. Many people don't even pause to consider it, but that is precisely what we need to do. We need to test ourselves on why we do what we do. Are we in God's will? Are we humble enough to give God glory in all we do?

SPUR

What drives you to do what you do? Let's begin with a few questions, and you will soon figure out where this Spur is headed.

- Do you volunteer to serve so you will become noticed or recognized by others for your work?
- Do you want others to congratulate you on your completed job?
- Are you looking for a promotion when you strive to outperform your competition?
- Do you enjoy being on stage for the applause and cheers of the crowd?
- Do you speak or perform so that others will praise your ability and talent?
- Do you dress for success or to attract the looks of others?
- Do you tell stories of success and boast of your experience and achievements so others will look up to you?
- Do you drop names of notoriety or of influential people you have worked with, related to, or met so others will consider you their peer or to become more popular?
- Do you seek recognition, congratulations, or aggrandizement after leading a successful project?
- Do you seek leadership roles because you want to be in charge?
- Do you want others to look up to or idolize you to make you feel good?

Get it? One or more of those might have hit you between the eyes. You have already begun to rationalize with “What’s wrong with that?” The answer to that question depends on why you do it.

Colossians 3:2

Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth.

Can you define the following words: *pride, arrogance, narcissism, egotism, conceit, and vanity*? I can with one word ... sin. Do any of these sins cloud your judgment? Do any of these sins separate you from God as you become your idol? These are dangerous grounds, and satan uses these sins to slip in the cracks of our mentality and thought processes. You may get praise, make more money, get a raise, applause, or recognition for your talent, looks, performance, or work. But is that why you do it? That’s the tricky question for yourself. Here’s why.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18

And lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day.

Ever since we were very young, the world has drilled these attitudes into our heads. You've been told you need to compete, you must get the prize, you have to be first, and you have to be better than the next person. Ever feel that pressure from your parents, peers, coaches, or teachers? We all have it at some point in our lives. We see it as encouragement and love from those who want us to succeed and produce. To become the best we can be. But then, the praise becomes a drug, the desire to receive it becomes our addiction, and soon the talents and gifts we received from God to glorify Him get lost in even thinking about Him at all.

Proverbs 16:2

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; But Jehovah weigheth the spirits.

Related story: remember Whitney Houston? One of the most talented voices people have ever heard. Her story is tragic, but she falls right into this narcissistic kind of pride and gets sucked down by satan. An entire world watched as she rose to heights unseen before her time and then self-destructed and died from a drug overdose. She used her God-given talent and beauty at the beginning of her career as a Gospel singer, glorifying Jesus. Then came fame, money, pride, more fame, and ultimately, death. How did she lose her way? Her story is on LiveAbout.

How do we unload all this programming? We have all received it, but has satan reinforced it into self-destructive pride? Note that God hates pride and those who become haughty in serving Him.

Proverbs 8:13

The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, And the perverse mouth, do I hate.

The gifts He gave you are meant to glorify Him, not you. He deserves all the praise because, without Him, you are nothing. He is first, every time, and you must keep Him first in every aspect of your life. Remember ...

Matthew 22:37

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

You may think you should quit all that work, performance, ability, reward, acceptance, and praise. Not at all. You can be all that and humble too.

Romans 12:2

And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Your humility can show through, and you will receive even more blessings. God gives all good things, and everything He gives you is good. Give God the credit. Glorify Him in all that you do and the reason for doing it. Praise Him! Shout to others for what He has done for you and how He has blessed you. He gives success; you didn't earn it. He provides. We have heard this many times in our Christian discipleship education. Remember that the shining glory belongs to God whenever you embark on a project that will thrust you into the spotlight.

Matthew 6:1

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

We motivate others when we continually give praise, adulation, and rewards to others around us. We are supposed to. But are we complicit in making them eager for the attention and wrong reasons? Let's pray we are not. We want to lift up others, and we should like to promote those around us and remind them to give credit where credit is due. We motivate and encourage our children, friends, and fellow workers. Shape your praise of others in a way that reminds them it is God who blesses them for having made the achievements or done so well in their performance. We can do our part to remind ourselves and others we love that God is first in all our lives.

PRAYER

Lord, God and Father, today I pray that You would show me where my heart is when it begins leaning toward the wrong motivations. Lord, I ask that You remind me and prick my heart when I motivate others to think wrongly about themselves or others. Guard me against these sins and lies that satan whispers in my ears or when my tongue gets out of control. I don't want to be this kind of sinner. Thank You, Lord, for knowing I can ask You for anything in Your will, and You will grant it. Grant these to me today and forevermore. Amen.

Psalm 139:23–24

Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

CREDITS AND/OR INSPIRATION

My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, sought glory for our Father, God, in obedience unto death.

Philippians 4:20

Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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