

**GRACE BIBLE CHURCH**

*Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries*

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.**

**The Tree of Life for week ending 11/24/02.**

**Part 6**

**Acts 23:11**

**Proper Motivation and Momentum**

The doctrine of the *Angelic Conflict* reveals how God is glorified by man. The fact that God takes care of everything in our lives results in His glorification and gives our lives meaning and purpose. God does not depend on us for His pleasure or His glory; He enjoyed these things in eternity past when no one else existed. God does not depend on us for His pleasure and glory, but rather expresses His pleasure and glory toward us. Because God is to be glorified, we are to be the recipients of His blessings and divine provisions. God is not glorified by our system of human works but by meeting our every need.

**Isa 26:15** *“Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation, Thou art glorified.”*

**Isa 60:21** *“Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.”*

**Psa 50:15** *And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will glorify Me.*

God is glorified when He rescues us, rather than when we do “great things” for Him.

**Exo 33:18-19**, *Then Moses said, “I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!” And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.”*

God’s pleasure is to bless His creatures, to give to His creatures! This is why Elihu said in **Job 36:11**, *“If they hear and serve Him, they shall end their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.”* The only Christian service and production that counts is what results from the perception of doctrine. Christian service and Christian works are not the means of attaining spiritual maturity or of glorifying God. Spiritual growth is not measured in works but in momentum. Where there is proper momentum in the plan of God, there will be production. That production will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**1Co 3:11** *For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it,*

*because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.*

The pattern for glorifying God in the Church-age is based on the three R's—the reception, retention, and recall of Bible doctrine:

- **Reception** of Bible doctrine must be top priority.
- **Retention** is the metabolization of Bible doctrine, where *epignosis* doctrine in the right lobe provides the basis for momentum in the predesigned plan of God.
- **Recall** is comparable to wisdom, the application of doctrine.

These are the only means by which we can learn and understand the problem-solving devices and the unique characteristics of the Church-age:

1. The **baptism of the Holy Spirit**.
2. The unique **predesigned plan of God**.
3. Unique **equality** (equal privilege and equal opportunity).
4. The portfolio of **invisible assets**.
5. The two **royal commissions** given to every Church-age believer.  
The royal ambassadorship.  
The royal priesthood.
6. The unique **“mystery”** doctrine of the Church-age.
7. The **indwelling** of each Person of the Trinity in the body of the believer.
8. The unique availability of **divine power**.
9. The age of **no prophecy**.
10. The dispensation of **invisible heroes**.

True motivation is described for us in **2Co 5:14**, *“For the love for Christ motivates us, having concluded this, that one [Jesus Christ] died for all [the human race, under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement], therefore all [the entire human race] died.”* The Greek word for “controls” is *“sunechei,”* meaning to motivate, hold together, compel, preoccupy, or urge. The passage continues in **2Co 5:15-21**, *“And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Motivation is what is located inside an individual's soul impelling or inciting action. Every decision we make in life has some type of motivation behind it, even when it comes from the subconscious. You do not have to *feel* like doing something to have genuine motivation and produce divine good, **Jam 4:17**, *“Therefore, to one who knows*

*the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.*” You can do what you do not feel like doing because your mental attitude says to do it; this is proper motivation. Mental attitude is the key to motivation (not the feelings or emotions).

A motive is any thought that determines a choice or induces action. Proper motivation can encourage, influence, convince, or persuade individual to do what is right. However, doing what is right is not the ultimate purpose, it is the motivation that is most significant.

**Pro 16:1-2** *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.*

Included in motivation are inducement and *objective optimism*, an attractive consideration held out to persuade an individual to make positive decisions. Objective optimism is rooted in grace and truth, **Phi 4:4**, “*Keep on having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times; Once more I repeat the command, keep on having perfect happiness*”; and **Phi 3:1**, “*Finally, my brethren, keep on having inner happiness in the Lord. On the one hand, to be writing the same doctrines to you is not troublesome to me, while on the other hand, it is a safeguard [a basis of security] for you.*” Objective optimism and proper motivation are something within that brings about an action, the desired result. Objective optimism maintains a cheerful attitude under pressure.

**Act 23:11** *But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his [Paul’s] side and said, “Take courage.”*

The Greek word translated “take courage” is “*tharseo*,” which literally means to be of good cheer or to be comforted. The Jews were determined to kill Paul, but the Lord tells him to be of good cheer. God delights in giving to us in grace, blessing us in ways that we could not possibly earn or deserve, **Job 42:10**, “*And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had twofold.*” **Joe 2:25** is a comforting verse: “*Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust.*” You may think that you have wasted a lot of years, but God can restore them all, and it will all make sense. Here we can have objective optimism and be of good cheer, because He will compensate us beyond what we can imagine, not only in this life, but in the one to come.

Again, a motive is any thought which determines a choice or induces action. Proper motivation can encourage, influence, convince or persuade an individual to do what is right. However, doing what is right is not the ultimate purpose, it is the motivation which is most significant. On the other hand, there is also *impulse* which is an involuntary feeling prompting to act. Many people do things based on an impulse, which is a sudden wish or urge towards a certain action, positive or negative. Even when we have an urge or a feeling to do something, we must always check into the word of God for divine guidance from doctrine before we act. In **Mat 16:21-22**, Peter had an impulse to stop the Lord from going to Jerusalem where He would suffer, and in **Mat 66:23** the Lord said to Peter, “*Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.*” Peter had a sincere impulse but he was sincerely wrong.

Motivation is a mental state or emotional force that induces an act of volition. The Lord will test your motivation even when it does come from the emotions, **Psa 7:9**, “*For the righteous God tests the right lobes [hearts] and the emotions.*” Motivation is the design or object one has in any action; it is one’s intention or purpose. This is important because in **1Co 4:5** we read, “*Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.*” Our *motivation*, our reasons why we do what we do, give what we give, serve how we serve, and learn what we learn, will be evaluated. In the Christian life, the believer is either motivated by Bible doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit, which produces personal love for God, or by the lust pattern of the old sin nature and Satan’s cosmic system, which produces human good and evil. This is why James said in **Jam 4:3**, “*You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your lusts.*” Your attitude toward doctrine and spiritual growth determines proper motivation.

The Word of God is the critic of motivation, **Heb 4:12**. Doctrine judges your motivation. As you sit and listen to doctrine, there are certain areas of your life where doctrine hits you right between the eyes. The Bible is a book that is alive and active, and is said to be sharper than any “two-edged sword.” The living and active Word of God performs two functions; (1) it “pierces” (cuts through the garbage, confusion, excuses, rationalization, and tradition of man), and (2) it “judges” (critiques, discerns, and evaluates).

**Heb 4:12-13** *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [The word of God will critique, judge, discern, and evaluate your intentions and motivations in life.] And there is no creature hidden from His sight. [It is universal in scope, no one is hidden from God’s sight!]*

He knows everything about us including our innermost secrets, all the skeletons in our closet, and all the mistakes we are going to make for the rest of our life! When God deals with any issue, all things are exposed. Therefore, there is no limit to what the Word of God can accomplish because it is universal in scope, limitless in exposure, and able to bring all our failures and successes to light.

God’s two-edged sword reveals the thoughts of your heart and the motivation behind your actions. It is able to go beyond the action to the motive and the system of thinking, exposing and revealing to us the true meaning behind our thoughts, words and actions, if we simply listen to His doctrine, **1Sa 16:7**, “*God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*”

False motivation hinders spiritual growth, while true motivation comes from God the Holy Spirit, **Job 17:11, Phi 2:13-14**, “*For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [give you the power to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without sullen discontent*

[pouting] *or argumentations* [undermining authority].” Many believers do the *right thing* but in the *wrong way*, with false motivation. They give, serve, pray, learn, and even apply what they learn, but with false motivation.

If you are going to advance through the stages of spiritual growth, it takes authority to get you there. If you are going to succeed in the Christian way of life you must do it under the authority of your right pastor without pouting, arguing, or disrespecting authority. The great issue in spiritual giving is motivation.

**2Co 9:7** “*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart* [been motivated in his right lobe]; *not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful or a joyful giver.*”

For a more detailed study, order last week’s tapes, IA11-241 to IA11-244.