

Love that Motivates

Paul Stanley

Introduction:

A. There are three motivations for serving God.

1. Love for self.
2. Love for others.
3. Love for God.

B. Motivation determines the outcome of one's life.

1. The dominant drive is crucial.
2. What drives you?

I. Love of self.

A. Why did the apostles stick it out with Jesus?

1. They stayed with Christ through hardship.
2. I believe they stayed out of love for self.
 - a. They quarreled over who was the greatest. (Luke 9:36; Mark 9:34)
 - b. Jesus said the greatest would be the least, not greatest. (Matthew 20:20-21)
 - d. At the last supper they did not want to wash feet so Jesus did. (John 13; Luke 24)
 - e. The disciples also wanted to call down fire from heaven on those who didn't walk with them.
 - f. Many Christians are driven by selfish desires to be the best.
3. Love for self is not necessarily evil. (Ecclesiastes 3:17-19)
 - a. Warning others is profitable.
 - b. We will be judged by our life's work. (1 Corinthians 13:10-15)

4. The desire for rewards and a fear of loss it legitimate.
5. But self love wanes in times of real sacrifice.
6. Self-fulfillment is shallow.
7. A leading psychologist said the struggle for self-fulfillment is the leading edge of this generation. Concentrating on self-needs and desires does not produce free individuals but restrained people.
8. A friend was motivated to plant churches in Eastern Europe with great alacrity.
 - a. He was very task oriented.
 - b. Others got involved.
 - c. I encouraged them to go slowly with a low profile.
 - d. They were driven, however, and pushed hard.
 - e. Difficulty ensued especially with interpersonal relationships.
 - f. They asked me to minister to them.
 - g. They could not get along and left the ministry.

B. I wonder what motivates those who push for great things.

II. Love for others is like Jesus' love for the lost. (1 John 4:9-10)

A. Out love for people comes from a love for God. (1 John 4:7)

1. Jesus challenged his disciples to love one another. (John 13:34-35)
2. Love for others is measured by sacrifice.
3. Love is an act of the will.
4. Love is spontaneous, as when Jesus forgave the woman who poured her perfume over him. (Mark 14:6)
 - a. Children act spontaneously.
 - b. Spontaneous acts of love are not wasteful.

c. Mother Theresa's Home of the Dying is extravagant devotion.

1. Emaciated bodies are cared for.
2. People from all over the world worked there.
3. They had great compassion.
4. Mother Theresa said she could tell quickly the motives of volunteer workers. Those with love for others last longer.

B. Love for people helps us stay in the thick of the battle.

III. Love of God is the greatest.

A. Jesus loved the Father and served him. (John 14:31)

1. Love comes from God. (1 John 4:10)
2. We love because God loved us. (1 John 19)
3. We show love for God by obeying him. (1 John 5:3)
4. Our obedience results in more love for God and God loving us. (John 14:21)
5. Despite my sin and failures my love for God moves me to love him more.
6. The love of God constrains us. (2 Corinthians 5:14)
7. We are indebted to God. (John 13:8-10)
8. Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. (Romans 8:35-37)
 - a. We are more than conquerors through the love of God.
 - b. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.
 - c. We might fall short in our devotional lives but God will not stop loving us.
 - d. Waves of the sea are dangerous to a swimmer but fun to a surfer.
 - e. The love of God helps us to surf on the troubles of life.

f. Stephen gave great glory to God in the face of stoning. (Acts 7)

g. Jesus loved even on the cross.

h. Paul rejoiced in prison.

i. A book described people who laugh as more resilient than those who can't laugh.

1. One couple divorced over breast cancer.

2. Another couple pressed through a tumor that caused a droop in the mouth of the wife.

B. God lifts up the humble in any circumstance. (Psalm 18:27-30)

1. God's love empowers us.

2. God's ways are perfect.

3. God makes our way straight.

C. We love the Lord because he hears our prayers. (Psalm 116:1-2)

D. A girl named Helen wasn't very pretty but had a keen mind.

1. She became a doctor and applied to a mission board and started a medical facility in a rural area of Africa.

2. In several years she had established a model clinic.

3. A new doctor showed up but she disliked him.

4. She left this clinic to start another.

5. The locale was turbulent but she remained out of love for the people.

6. One night she was accosted by rebels who raped them for weeks.

7. She prayed and God spoke to her about her motive.

8. Soon the government saved them from these rebels and Helen questioned why God would have allowed this to happen.

9. She realized that God wanted her to return and serve these people out of love for Him, not for personal ambition.

10. Helen's mission board wanted to reassign her to another place but she insisted on returning to serve in the same location.

11. Helen went because she loved God more than her own life.

E. The love of God is the greatest motivation in life.

1. What is motivating you?

2. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mathew 22:34-38)

3. I'd like to challenge you to commit yourself to love God like this.

4. If you take this challenge answer these questions.

a. What helps you to love God?

b. Who helps you to love God?

5. What helps me to love God?

a. The Psalms and writing out prayers help me.

b. Reading about others who love God.

c. Meditation.

d. Worship tapes.

e. When you listen to music what do you listen to?

f. Living with a focus helps me to love God.

8. Who helps me to love God?

a. My wife.

b. Good books help me.

- Tozer
- Chambers
- Amy Carmichael