

God Sees the Heart

1 Samuel 16:1-7

1 Samuel 16:1-7 (NLT) 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king.” 2 But Samuel asked, “How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” “Take a heifer with you,” the LORD replied, “and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.

3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me.” 4 So Samuel did as the LORD instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. “What’s wrong?” they asked. “Do you come in peace?” 5 “Yes,” Samuel replied. “I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too.

6 When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the LORD’s anointed!” 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

The first-born son receiving blessing and inheritance was a common and prevalent practice in ancient near eastern culture. In many cases, the first-born would receive a double portion or double inheritance... This was written as a law in the book of Deuteronomy.

But if you read the Scriptures carefully, one thing you will notice is a motif that weaves its way throughout the entire Bible. It’s the motif of the “second born.” Or, I like to simply call it “God’s law of seconds.” If you pay attention, this begins all the way back on the first page of the Bible. God created the sky creatures, sea dwellers, land animals and everything that creeps before he creates humanity... and yet, he chooses mankind to have dominion and to rule over the animals. It’s very interesting... In the story of Cain and Abel, Abel, the younger brother, is chosen over Cain. Abraham was the youngest of his siblings, and there was this sibling rivalry with Lot, the son of his older brother.

You see it with Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Rachel and Leah; you see it in the story of Joseph, and God seems to magnify this motif in the story of David, because David is not just the second born, he is the youngest and last of Jesse’s eight sons.

Again, if you are a student of the Bible, you will understand that this motif, the law of the second born will lead you all the way to Jesus. Jesus would be the one and only one who would be a first born son to receive glory and honor and power according to the Scriptures, but He would not claim it for Himself, nor would he use His equality with God to His advantage. He was born lowly and poor and grew up in lowly Nazareth...

He, just like David, was insignificant in the eyes of the world as a human being, but... passed the test, if you will, all the way to His death and resurrection, to now claim His right to His everlasting throne.

Now... that’s the cliff notes version of a study that could literally last a year for anyone who was serious about looking into it, but tucked away in Samuel we find a clue as to why God worked in this manner. And it’s the story of David’s anointing right here in 1 Samuel 16.

Last week we discussed the “moralist” of Romans 2. The moralist is the one who is quick to point the finger and judge someone’s behavior and even their outward appearance while they themselves, in many ways, practice the same things. We referenced James 2:

James 2:1-4 (NLT) 1 My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? 2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes.

3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor”--well, 4 doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

Pay careful attention to verse 4. ***“Doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by EVIL MOTIVES.”***

So then, what does this mean in 1 Samuel 16:7?

1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT) But the LORD said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Well, we know what the phrase “people judge by the outward appearance” means, but what about ***“but the LORD looks at the heart?”***

God looks on the inner man... God “sees” who we are on the inside... back to the last phrase in the James passage,

God sees our MOTIVES. What others can never really see or know, God sees and knows.

Think about David... What David’s brothers, his father, and even Samuel saw was a ruddy, last of the bunch, insignificant little brother. Jesse didn’t even call him by name... You know, a “this kid’s not going to amount to much” sort of thing. But what God saw was completely different. He saw a shepherd, who was responsible, resilient, caring and compassionate... he saw potential and had vision for the king David would become... God saw the heart of young man who was in tune with the power and the presence of His Spirit.

God sees our motives.

Motive is what causes you and I to act the way that we do. It is what no one really sees or knows but God and God alone. Now, sometimes, motive is revealed in certain circumstances, but most of time, only you know the motive of your heart. What does the Bible say about motive? We’ve already seen what James has to say... let’s look at a couple of other passages.

Proverbs 16:2 (NLT) People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives.

Motives are, in essence, the underlying reason for any action, and we can operate from a variety of motivations, often negative. Pride, anger, revenge, a sense of entitlement, or a desire for approval can all be motivating factors in our behavior.

Here are some ways that we must behave with proper motive.

1. We must GIVE with the proper Motive

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NASB95) Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving should not be done reluctantly or grudgingly, but with a grateful heart for all that God has provided. What did Jesus say about giving with the proper motive?

Matthew 6:1-4 (NASB95) 1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

What is Jesus saying here? When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself! Because when you do that, when you give to receive recognition, Jesus says, fine, but that's all you get. We must be generous with the proper motive.

2. We must PRAY with the proper Motive

James 4:2b-3 ...you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong--you want only what will give you pleasure.

For me, this is a difficult. Because the line between what I want, and what God wants, and what I think I need and what He knows that I need is oftentimes blurry. This is a work in progress, for sure... sometimes we pray selfishly, but it's not really for us, it's for others... for a loved one to be healed, for a family member to be helped. So then, this is difficult, but I try my best to pray “Lord, this is what we are asking from you, but we are content that Your will be done.”

Jesus modeled this for us in the Garden before He was crucified. ***“Father, if it be your will, let this cup of wrath pass from me... but nonetheless, I'm here to do your will and not mine.”***

Jesus also talked about prayer in Matthew 6.

Matthew 6:5-13 (NKJV) 5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

6 “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who [is] in the secret [place;] and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

7 “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen [do.] For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Then Jesus gives us His model prayer, which is an unselfish and purely motivated prayer. It begins with praise, then a prayer for God’s will to be done, look at it:

9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as [it is] in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Honestly, this is why I’m not a huge fan of public prayer...Because in my lifetime, I’ve seen some folks make a complete spectacle out of it. Jesus instructs us here that prayer should be done in secret, between you and your Heavenly Father. So then, if you are called upon to prayer in our Sunday gatherings, make sure you are praying with the proper motive...

There should **NEVER** be a worry about how elaborate my prayer is, or how well constructed my prayer is... it is simply talking to the Father.

Number 2, We must PRAY with the proper motive.

3. We must PREACH, MINISTER, and TEACH with the proper Motive.

Philippians 1:15-18 (NLT) 15 It’s true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives.

Paul constantly fought this battle... warning the early church of those who would preach and teach with impure motives... and then blessing those who do the opposite.

16 They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News.

17 Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me.

Paul is warning the Philippian church that there are those who preach, and even preach Christ, with an impure motive. In other words, they are preaching or teaching to receive recognition, fame, or even wealth. And we can clearly see that even today and throughout history, there are “ministers” or “preachers” who will exploit and take advantage of God’s people for their own, personal recognition or wealthy gain.

And so we also must be careful... being a pastor, being a preacher, being a teacher of God’s word is a sobering responsibility. Being a servant is no longer being a servant if we are seeking the praises of men. James would tell us that those who preach and teach will be held to a higher accountability when we stand before Christ. So then, the priority of our teaching and preaching should not be to impress someone, but to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Tim Mackie, who is a Scholar, specifically in OT Hebrew and even NT Greek, said this... "There is not enough time in a lifetime to know, understand, and decipher the word of God." This book must be studied carefully and diligently with hours and hours of preparation, to teach it and preach it and unfortunately, many pastors and teachers do not take this seriously.

John Phillips... You're too late. - Illustration

This is a commitment that I have made to the Lord and to this church... that I will, with God's help, never come to teach you without the proper study and preparation. And more than that, that I do not seek your approval and I will not water down the truth, or "**tickle your ears**" so that I might be praised.

Now... a proper motive also doesn't worry about what everyone else is doing... look at verse 18 of Philippians 1:

Philippians 1:18 (NLT) 18 But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.

I saw so much criticism of the Asbury Revival... come on. Was Christ being glorified? yes. Jesus, if He were here in person today, would say... leave them alone because if they are not against us, they are for us. I think he would really say, "What's wrong with you people?"

Let us preach, and those of you who teach here, let us teach with the proper motive and with careful preparation.

So then, what is the right motivation?

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 (NLT) For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.

5 Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money!

6 As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else.

Paul set a great example for us on what it means to live life with the proper motive... it's actually selfless living... the same example that Jesus set for us and that Paul describes in Philippians 2.

Letter I received... Money for the chairs in the youth room.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NLT) So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time--before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

In closing, here are 8 questions to ask ourselves to help evaluate our own motives:

www.gotquestions.com

1. If no one ever knows what I am doing (giving, serving, sacrificing), would I still do it?

2. If there was no visible payoff for doing this, would I still do it?
3. Would I joyfully take a lesser position if God asked me to?
4. Am I doing this for the praise of others or how it makes me feel?
5. If I had to suffer for continuing what God has called me to do, would I continue?
6. If others misunderstand or criticize my actions, will I stop?
7. If those whom I am serving never show gratitude or repay me in any way, will I still do it?
8. Do I judge my success or failure based upon my faithfulness to what God has asked me to do, or how I compare it with others?

Invitation - Soft Pads

jay@oaklawnlife.com