

Pastor Glen Davidson was a businessman who felt the call to preach. He informed his boss he was quitting. The owner of the company told his boss, offer him a \$500 raise, and if he takes it, fire him on the spot! Jesus deals with the issue of motives.

I. UNDER THE SURFACE

A. Life involves actions – ministry involves actions; There are things that we do – things we do that are right

1. But underneath our actions are motives: *Reason for doing something, especially one that is hidden or not obvious*
 - a. Q: *Why are you doing what you are doing?*
 - b. Reality: We can be doing the right things – for the wrong reasons!
2. Many motives revolve around our ego
 - a. **We want attention from other people:** Praise from other people
 1. *V1 to be seen of men.*
 2. *V2 sounding a trumpet on the streets...*
 - b. **We want position:** Which we assume will give us more attention
 1. *Grant that we sit on the right and the left*
 2. *Chief seats at feasts*
 - c. **We want power:** Being able to tell people what to do
 1. *Jesus warned his disciples of 'Lording' over people*

B. The problem is that our motives can be hidden to ourselves

1. *Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart*
 - a. We feel spiritual – all for Jesus! But actually there is raging pride/selfishness/ambition

II. DAMAGING MOTIVES

A. Wrong motives can cause us problems – they are destructive!

1. **They cause conflicts with others**
 - a. We view other people as competitors for what we want: *Attention/position*
 1. So we fight with them (conflict)
 - a. The issue people are fighting about is often not what they're actually upset at
 - b. We envy them (upset at their blessings). c. We hate them
 2. **They cause conflict with leadership**
 - a. We become offended when leaders fail to give us what we really want
 1. *Elder brother: You never gave me a goat!* 2. *Man leaving the church – you didn't thank me for working on the van!*
 3. **They hinder the blessing of God:** In God's economy – doing right is rewarded
 - a. But wrong motives stop God's rewards:
 1. *Matt 6:1 ...otherwise you have no reward from your father in heaven. V3 they have their reward*

III. HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE ON MOTIVES

A. Immaturity refuses involvement in right actions

1. *I don't want to be a hypocrite...so I won't do anything!*
 - a. Lazy/envious/bitter people sue this as an excuse – as a reason to despise others who are laboring

B. Total purity of heart is exceedingly rare: Most of us operate on mixed motives

1. Part of us wants to do right for/right reasons – and part of us wants to do right for the wrong reasons
 - a. God is able to accomplish His will – even with imperfect motives!
 2. We can work on this: *V3-4 in secret...going against pride/selfishness*

C. Most of salvation and ministry involves course corrections

1. God deals with us/exposes us in preaching/word of God/prayer
2. Events/conflicts/crises expose us
3. There can be major life course corrections – that involve major crises/revelation

a. The Iroquois Indians gave developmentally challenged children a place of honor in the tribe and treated them as gods. It was felt that in their lack of self-centeredness, they were a transparent window into the Great Spirit. It is interesting that in their ancient culture those early Native American people learned to think of people without mixed motives as divine – godlike.