

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE GREAT COMMISSION

Why do you do what you do as a Christian? What are the motivations behind your actions? Your motives for every action will be judged.

“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God” (1 Cor. 4:5).

Why do you support world missions or why don’t you support world missions? What motivates you towards world evangelism? How much of your mission effort is done to glorify God or to glorify yourself? All your motives for world missions will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. How well do you think you will do in this final judgment?

Most Christians are aware of the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples. There are proper motives behind the Great Commission, and we need to check our motives. If we don’t, God will!

Somewhere I picked up an article written by an atheist about his observations concerning the proper actions and motives of the Christians if Christianity is true.

“Did I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should labor in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow

of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon eternity alone, and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, **WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?"**

BIBLICAL MOTIVATIONS IN WORLD MISSIONS

To Reveal the Father. Jesus in His high priestly prayer for His people said, **‘As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world’ (John 17:18).** The Father sent Christ into the world to do the Father’s will (John 6:38). The will of the Father for His Son was twofold. His will was that the Son would reveal the Father to the world. **“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the father’s side, has made him known” (John 1:18).** His will also was that the Son would redeem men from sin by His death on the Cross. **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).** Why did Christ come – to reveal the Father and to redeem people?

Why have Christians been sent into the world? It is that they should reveal the Father to the world and proclaim redemption in Christ by the preaching and teaching of the true gospel. The work of all true disciples of Christ is a continuation and extension of the work the Father committed to Christ. Christians are to make known to the unsaved world God’s attributes and God’s plans and purposes as they are contained in the Bible, and they are to zealously proclaim that salvation from sin and eternal judgment is found only in the person of Jesus Christ.

To be Compelled by the Love of Christ. The Apostle Paul was sold out to Jesus Christ. He said, **‘If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake**

of God, if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:13-15).

Christ had sovereignly intervened into Paul's life on the road to Damascus, and he was gloriously saved. From the moment of his conversion, he belonged to Christ and gave himself to Christ. God called him to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Because of his zeal for Christ, Paul was accused of being a religious fanatic and "out of his mind." In essence, Paul said that if this was religious fanaticism, then he was a religious fanatic, but it was this fanaticism for Christ that had brought the gospel to the Corinthians.

The charge of fanaticism will always be brought against a true Christian because the world cannot understand salvation. D.L. Moody said, "*No one has ever blessed the world until he was called a fanatic.*" Winston Churchill said, "*A fanatic is one who cannot change his mind and will not change the subject.*"

Paul explained the driving force in his life for evangelism, which was the love of Christ – "**Christ love compels us.**" It was not Paul's love for Christ that motivated him to evangelism (for all human love fluctuates with emotions), but it was Christ's eternal, unchanging and unconditional love for Paul that pushed him on to tell others about Christ. Paul did not look at his own love for Christ, which would have frustrated and defeated him, but he looked at Christ's great love for him which kindled love in his heart for Christ and zeal to make this love known to other people.

Christian, only when you really understand what Christ did for you when He saved you, will you be compelled by His love for you. He loved you before you ever loved Him. You were running from God and in rebellion to God just as was the Apostle Paul, but Christ sovereignly intervened into your life, died for your sins, saved you and surrounded you with His eternal love. Once this concept moves from your head to your

heart, you will be able to say, “This love of Christ compels me.” That love will cause you to want to be obedient to Christ in the reaching of men and women through world missions.

To See People Saved. Paul’s passion for missions can be seen in two clear statements. **“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved” (Rom. 10:1). “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22).** The Christian witnesses because the Bible teaches that all men are lost in sin and are headed for eternal punishment. Only Christ can deliver men from this horrible fate. The realization that people are perishing and that Christ is the only hope for their eternal salvation gives the urgency to preaching the gospel. *Missions are the heartbeat of Christ – He came to seek and to save the lost.*

Do you realize that in the short time I have been preaching this message multiple thousands of people have died somewhere in this world and gone on into eternity - the vast majority of them into a Christ-less eternity. The late Dick Hillis said, *“Missionaries are those who never get accustomed to the thought of Christ-less feet on the way to a godless eternity.”*

If you are a Christian, what is the single greatest thing that has ever happened to you? Obviously, you will reply, “My salvation in Christ Jesus.” What then is the greatest thing you can do for another person? To tell them about Christ, so they too might be saved.

To Reach the Elect. Paul wrote this verse while in a Roman prison. **“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (1 Tim. 2:10).** He was suffering imprisonment while chained like an animal. While he was chained, he realized that the gospel was not chained. **“This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained” (1 Tim. 2:9).**

Paul shared the good news of Christ with everyone because he realized that the Word would never return void and it would accomplish

what God pleased. Paul understood that God had an elect people and they would believe as the gospel was spread and nothing or no one could stop that from happening. Paul had a burden for the elect of God, even though he had no idea who they might be.

Do you think about reaching God's elect? You say, "Well, if God has an elect people, why witness, pray or give? They are going to be saved anyway no matter what I do." Not so, no man will ever be saved without the gospel being preached, prayer being offered and faith being exercised in Christ by the person. We must take the gospel to all nations, cultures and people groups. We will leave the elective purposes to God. We must take the gospel and watch God work! The poet said it well,

*"Many listen, but they heed not,
Yet, our task is crystal-clear;
Preach the Gospel, never doubting
God will make His chosen hear!"*

To Receive a Reward. There is a special reward for those who faithfully witness and, through their witness, others come to accept Christ as personal Lord and Savior. **"For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:19)?** Crowns will be primarily given for our faithfulness in witness not how many souls we have won to Christ. How many evangelistic crowns will you be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ to throw at the feet of your Savior?

To Be Obedient to Christ. The strongest and the most difficult motivation for reaching lost men, women, boys and girls for Jesus Christ is obedience to the command of Christ in the Great Commission. Christ commanded the Church to preach repentance to all nations. **"And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).** He commanded that the gospel should be preached to every individual in the world. **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"**

(Mark 16:15). Since Christ the Supreme Commander of heaven and earth commands us, we are to act and obey His command. However, we will not obey until we are in submission to His Lordship.

Christ clearly explains how we are to carry out the Great Commission. **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have command you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).** There is one command, “make disciples,” and these disciples are to be made by going, by water baptizing and by teaching. We have not fulfilled this command unless we have done all three – make disciples by going, water baptizing and teaching. This process is to continue until the end of the age, and the age will end at the Second Advent of Christ. Our task is to make disciples or followers of Christ, not just people who mentally assent to Christ, or have an emotional religious experience, or have their names on a church roll.

We make disciples by going to all nations. To make disciples for Christ, we must go to the lost of this world in every country, culture and people group. If people are to be saved, they must hear the gospel and if they are to hear the gospel, Christians must take the good news to them. We do not wait for people to come to us; we go to them. We must go where the unsaved are and speak to them in terms they can understand.

The gospel is for the nations, not just for America. Each one of us Christians must do our part in seeing to it that the gospel of Christ is taken to every person in this world. We are responsible to reach our generation for Christ. *Humanly speaking, no man should hear the gospel twice until every person has had an opportunity to hear it once.* Do you realize that of the six billion plus people in the world today only about one and a half billion are considered Christians? The statisticians lump all brands of Christianity together: Roman Catholics, Protestants, Mormons, Jehovah Witness, Cultist and snake charmers.

Only God knows for sure who the true believers in Christ really are. There are about two and a half billion people in this world that have heard

the gospel and rejected it. There are still two billion people who have never heard the gospel and many have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. Most of these are in the 10/40 window – Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Shinto. How do we accomplish this task? We can't but God can. We witness, we go, we give money, we pray, reaching one person at a time, one people group at a time, one culture at a time, one nation at a time. What seems impossible to us is not impossible with God.

We make disciples by baptizing them with water. When a person believes in Christ, he is to be baptized. Notice it says nothing about the way one is to be baptized – immersion, pouring or sprinkling. In many countries, a person is not considered a true Christian until he has been baptized. Unbelievers take little note when one says he is a believer in Christ, but unbelievers become very disturbed when this person is baptized because he is breaking with his old pagan or religious ways, and making a public profession of this fact. Unbelievers get more agitated when a father has his children, even infants, baptized because this is taking a whole family away from paganism or a particular religion.

We make disciples by teaching them the truths of the Bible. The Great Commission has not been carried out until the new believers have been taught Christian doctrine and how to apply it to life. Equipping Pastors International is concentrating on this aspect of the Great Commission. *While there are hundreds of legitimate needs on the mission field, the greatest need today is to train national pastors who in turn will train their churches to do evangelism and discipleship.*

The Great Commission is an unending task, for each generation of people born into this world must be evangelized. One day, however, the gospel will penetrate into every nation in such a way that this saturation will bring the Second Advent of Christ. **“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).**

Have you ever thought about the fact that a deeper commitment to the Great Commission on your part may bring the Second Advent a step closer?

This message on motivations can be summed up by the late Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He challenges indifferent Christians who are spiritually asleep concerning world evangelism.

“ Sleep Christian, let me shout in your ears – you are sleeping while souls are being lost – sleeping while men are being damned – sleeping while hell is being peopled – sleeping while Christ is being dishonored – sleeping while the devil is grinning at your sleepy face – sleeping while the demons are dancing around your slumbering carcass, and telling it in hell that a Christian is asleep. You will never catch the devil asleep; let not the devil catch you asleep. Watch, and be sober, that you may be always up to do your duty” (“The Enchanted Ground,” 1 Thessalonians 5:6).

Missions are for all ages. *You are either a missionary or a mission field.* Missions are at home and overseas. God calls young and old to do part-time and full-time world evangelism.

You cannot be a missionary overseas until you are a missionary at home – at work, school, neighborhood, clubs, friends. As you are obedient here, He will give you a desire to be obedient over there.

What can you do to prepare yourself for missions? You can ask God to give you an evangelistic heart for the lost. Then pray that He will give you a heart for the lost in every part of the globe. Pray that he might convict you about your need of seeing and ministering in another culture. American Christians need to experience, by observing first hand, the disease, hunger and poverty of third world nations. Pray that God will give you a heart to give of your monies liberally to world missions. One of the best ways to see God work supernaturally in America is through our giving. We give to Him and He gives back to us in material and spiritual rewards.

The last thing you can do is open up yourself to part-time or full-time missions. Ask God to send you. You ask and He sends. You may ask and the answer may be “No.” Yet, you will never know

that until you ask. Many Christians are afraid to ask God because they have a deathly fear that the answer might be “Yes.” God called me to full-time mission work when I was 63 years old. Old age is no excuse. *The greatest resource for missions in the USA today are retired Christians.* They have time, money and energy. At any age, you can change the world by being involved in world missions. You start by honestly saying, “Here I am, Lord, send me.”

Alternate ending (Kendall)

We all have been to many missions conferences and been challenged over and over again to go, to pray and to give. I want to emphasize your responsibility to give to world missions. Do you have any idea what American dollars can do for world missions in third world countries? American dollars will go at least four times as far in Africa. One national church planter in a major city can be supported for \$400 to 500/ month and that includes money to rent a hall for church services. In the remote villages, one church planter needs \$30/month. Many pastors make only \$1.00/day and sometimes they do not get paid. Giving money directed to the right places can change the face of modern missions.

American is the richest nation in the world. American Christians have more money per capita than any other people in the world. So why did God give us money? There are two reasons. The first is so we can enjoy it, and the second is so we can share it.

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age. So that they may take hold of the life that is truly life” (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

God does not care how much money we have as long as we understand that all the money we have comes from Him and is to be shared with others. A good portion of our money is to be used for world evangelism and the fulfilling of the Great Commission in this generation. D.L. Moody said, *“You know that you have really grabbed a man’s heart when you finally touch his pocketbook.”* Is the following Bible verse true or false?

“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will

prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Prov. 11:24-25).

I challenge you to test God as to whether a generous person will gain more in return. Is it true if we give faithfully of our money, He will give back to us plentifully, both spiritually and materially? You can find out whether it is true or not by giving liberally and sacrificially to missions through the faith-promise method. Test God, trust God and watch God work!