

The Essential Heart

There is a strong link between *motive, motivation and method* (the three 'M's). For instance, if your motives are wrong, then both your motivation and method will receive negative influences. Causing your actions to be misguided. This process, from "cause" to "action" is a key to success.

1 Chronicles 28:9 says, ***"For the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts."*** Your motives, although not visible, are very significant. **1 Corinthians 4:5** states, ***"The Lord 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."***

These verses reveal (a) that your motives are hidden in your heart, and that God examines them. And, (b) that your motives generate thoughts. So it makes sense that if you're to control your thought life, you must first examine the motives hidden in your heart. Maybe this is why so many believers don't get blessed.

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives" (**James 4:3**). What's also interesting to note is that the Greek word translated "wrong motive" refers to something evil. Therefore, whenever your motives are wrong they are considered evil in God's sight. You cannot fool God! He understands exactly what's going on inside your heart.

So what is a motive? (The first "M")

Motive – the English Dictionary definition is, "the compelling force or reason behind your actions." Quite simply, a motive is the energy behind actions. Motives are what drive you to do things – whether good or bad. They are the very reason why you do things! What's hidden in your heart is a driving force that propels your actions and behaviour. Change your motive for doing something and you will change your behaviour also.

Another interesting aspect of this process is this. Unless you find a good reason for doing something, you will eventually stop doing it. Why, because without motive there can be no motivation! What is your motive for loving, caring, giving, serving, praising, helping, being kind, being obliging, etc.? If your motive is wrong, it will become hard work and you will eventually stop doing it. I have seen so many young or single people come to church regularly until they either find a partner, or break off with the partner they have found. In fact, many people get married for the wrong reason, and it's amazing, because often the very reason they got married is the reason they now want to get divorced.

"I married him because he runs a successful business and is a good provider." Now the story has changed to, "I never see him; he's always away on business. I need to find a man who is interested in me alone, and not his career." Honey! It's a bit late for that. If your motives were right in the first place, your relationship would have gone from strength to strength. And it's the same in your relationship with God - you must have a pure heart.

If "motive" is the force behind all our actions, then we can understand why God wants us to have the right motives. He knows that when our motives are right, then our hearts are right also. But more important, the outcome is guaranteed to be right; **right motive – right action – right result**. In the positive, every right "motive" (hidden in the heart) supplies fuel for motivation; and "motivation" is fuel for method. What's more, correct "method" brings about correct results.

The key to this principle operating successfully in your life is, maintaining a *pure heart*. **“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me” (Psalm 51:10)**. What’s hidden in the heart determines your motives, and your motives in turn determine your actions (and your behaviour). **“For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7)**. But remember, motives generate thoughts. So, what you’re thinking in your heart is as a result of your motives. Implying that your motives make you who you are!

What is motivation? (The second “M”)

Motivation is *the ongoing force or energy that propels each action toward your next accomplishment*. Many people have the right or correct *motive* for doing something, however, they are never *motivated* enough to complete it. Lasting motivation is a matter of the heart too. It manifests out of the deep desires in the heart. Therefore, lasting or enduring motivation can only come from within. This is why your heart cannot be double-minded, full of doubt or unbelief.

“A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul” (Proverbs 13:19). Achieving your goals is pleasing and enjoyable. But note, there must be desire (motivation) present before this can come about. Any form of human accomplishment takes a degree of motivation - a desire to get the job done. Enterprising go-getters are intensely motivated to advance themselves; they have a clear vision of a better future, which they are determined to realise. No motivation - no energy for advancement! But note, it always starts in the heart (from within).

Proverbs 4:23 says, **“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”** Remember to pay close attention to the things you want to be deposited in your heart. The fountain of life, the heart, is the place from which your actions and behaviour are generated and motivated. The main source of personal accomplishment is the heart. The Bible pinpoints two ways that the content of your heart is exposed:

(a) By the words of your mouth. *“Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34)*.

When you’re not on guard, the things that leave your mouth will expose what’s in your heart - the fantasies, the anger, the hurt, the ambition, frustration, jealousy, rivalry, etc.

(b) The way you spend your money. *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21)*. What motivates you to reach into your pocket will be different to what motivates me to reach into my pocket. But one thing’s for sure, all of us are being motivated by something (whether good or evil).

Note, nobody is stuck with wrong motives; therefore, we should never use this as an excuse. We can all change the content of our hearts, and consequently, change what motivates us. By approaching what’s hidden in the heart with a sense of ownership, and responsibility, we can find the right *reason* for doing the *right* thing. And when you’re struggling, ask God to help you cleans yourself of wrong motives and replace them with *right* ones. The Psalmist said, **“Search me, O God, and know my heart; and see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 129:23, 24)**.

Motivation is vital to success of any venture, whether it be spiritual or practical in nature. But here is the acid test, *“When every other reason to continue is non-existent, you will discover what it is that motivates you.”*

What is method (the third “M”)

Method is *a particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something; a pattern of thought or behaviour; or systematic planning or action*. Method leads to results. When you are truly motivated you create a pattern of thought or behaviour that brings about results. Motivated people are systematic in their

planning and actions, and their method is always clear. King David was a man of God's own heart. Therefore, we can safely assume that his motives were right, and as a result, he was genuinely motivated in his service to God and man. But he was also a great leader and used 'method' very effectively.

1 Chronicles 13:1-4 (method in bringing back the Ark); ***“David conferred with each of his officers, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. He then said to the whole assembly of Israel, ‘If it seems good to you and if it is the will of the Lord our God, let us send word far and wide to the rest of our brothers throughout the territories of Israel, and also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their towns and pasturelands, to come and join us. Let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we did not inquire of it during the reign of Saul.’ The whole assembly agreed to do this, because it seemed right to all the people.”*** David's method seemed right with all the people.

As a Christian you must maintain a pure heart (**motive**), and for this reason, out of this wellspring of your life will flow the right energy (**motivation**). Then, with motivation will come a correct procedure or pattern that brings about the desired results (**method**). All three elements, working together, bring glory to God. However, they are generated, energised and inspired by what's been hidden in the heart. So, it's essential that you have a blameless heart, one that is truly pleasing to God.

2 Chronicles 16:9 states, ***“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is blameless toward Him.”*** The Lord is constantly scanning the whole earth, looking for a special kind of person. Someone, on whose behalf, He can exercise His mighty strength and power.