

# Helping People Change

## Motivation of the Heart

Objective: to help students understand that they do what they do because of the motivation of their hearts and to understand that our obedience needs to be motivated by our love and desire to please the Lord.

INTRODUCTION: Read the story.

One January day, a family wakes up at six o'clock in the morning. As the alarm clocks start going off, individuals of this family start pulling themselves out of bed and notice the 4-7 inches of white snow on the ground. The dad sees the snow and immediately turns the radio on and hears about the traffic tie-ups already beginning. He becomes anxious and worried. The mom gets up, looks out the window, and just sits a few moments in her bay window beholding the beauty of the snow. As she looks she smiles and reflects on the pleasure and the beauty of this event. The two school-aged children get up knowing that last night there was a predicted snowstorm. They leap out of bed and fling open the drapes excited about how deep the snow is. As Dad makes his way outside to his car and begins scraping off his car he notices his neighbor shoveling, grumbling, and mumbling under his breath obscenities about the snow.

Why are each of these individuals responding differently to the same circumstances?

Dad, Mom, kids

What we want to talk about is the key to understanding why people do what they do.

1. Read James 4:1-2

What does this passage say is the source of our behavior?

(Your desires, pleasures, or lusts)

2. Read Luke 6:43:45

What does this passage say is the source of our behavior?

(The heart)

3. If we put these two passages together we learn that our desires are actually within our heart. Our heart is the "control center" for our desires, motivating us to do what we do. The behavior (fruit) on the outside is a result of what's in our heart.

The biblical concept of the "heart" is what motivates our behavior.

**Heart**  
**"The Control Center"**



**Behavior**  
**Speech/Actions**

4. What should be in our heart? What should be the utmost desire and values of our heart according to 2 Cor. 5:9?

(Our hearts desire should be to please God)

5. Think about a time when you were behaving sinfully.

For example: Two teens walk into the frozen food section at Tom's and one stands in front of the other to block the view and the other sticks two large frozen pizzas in his coat and walks out.

- a. What did the teen want? What was his hearts desire?

(To please himself)

He wanted what he wanted, when he wanted it.

- b. What are things our hearts typically want?

(Power, control, peace, pleasure, possessions, praise)

- c. Is it wrong to want these things?

(It depends upon our motives)

Ask ourselves two questions:

(1) Am I willing to sin in order to get what I want? Phil. 4:2

(2) Do I respond sinfully when I do get what I want?

- d. The problem isn't that we want things, but that we want them too much. They become lusts or "idols" of the heart. They take the place of God.

- e. Read Ez. 14:1-5

When we have idols in our hearts they become the only thing we can focus on. They are right in front of our face so that we can't see God or others, only our selfish desires.

6. When we have idols of the heart what kind of behavior and consequences will we experience according to these verses?

Read: Rom. 2:9 "tribulation and disasters for those who do evil"

James 3:16 "...disorder and every evil thing"

Phil. 4:1-4 "quarrels and fights"

Heart's Desire		Behavior		Emotions
<u>Idols of the heart</u>	½	<u>Disobedient speech/actions</u>	½	Guilt, fear, depression, anxiety

When you have these emotions, what are they trying to tell you?  
(Potentially something isn't right in your heart)

7. When our goal is to please God and our speech and actions are obedient to God, what does God do as a result according to the following verses?

John 13:17 (Blessed if we serve)

Phil. 4:9 (We will have peace)

Heart's Desire		Behavior		Emotions
<u>Please God</u>	½	<u>Obedient speech/actions</u>	½	Joy, happiness, peace

**CONCLUSION:**

The most important question is, "What rules your heart?"

Is it your desires and pleasures or is it a desire to please God no matter what it takes.

PRINCIPLE: Whatever rules your heart will exercise an inescapable influence on a person's life and behavior.

Why would you want God to rule your life? Why would you want to live to please Him instead of yourself? (Understanding the gospel/the cross is the answer)

I suppose there are a lot of ways to answer that question. We have already said we will experience a more fulfilling life but that's probably not enough to want to follow God, after all it's easier, in the sense that it comes naturally, to live for yourself.

We could answer, because God created us and as a Creator He has the right to rule our lives. But with this you might conclude that God is an all-powerful tyrant who forces us to obey Him.

The reality is, instead of God remaining in heaven as an all-powerful dictator who bosses us around, He left heaven and took on flesh and made Himself vulnerable. Instead of Him taking advantage of us, He allowed His creation to take advantage of Him to the

point where we crucified Him.

You might ask, "Why would God do that? Why would He allow us to abuse Him like that?" It's not because He is weak. It was because He loves us.

We have a problem called sin. We can't experience the life God desired for us because our sin keeps us from having a relationship with a Holy God who couldn't tolerate our sin.

God's remedy to our sin and rebellion was that the payment of death would have to be made. Just like in our courts today, when a person breaks the law they have to pay. In this case, because God loves us so much, He said He would be willing to take the penalty of our sin upon Himself. That is why He came to earth and let us kill Him. He did it to make a way for our sins to be paid for. Now that our sins are paid for they are forgiven and we are able to have a relationship with a Holy God.

To have this relationship with God you need to be willing to  
admit your sin,  
believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, really did die to pay for your sins, and rose again to prove He's alive, and  
acknowledge that you want that payment to be applied to your life.

I don't know about you, but how do you respond to that kind of love-to that kind of God? He gave His life so you could live in a relationship with Him. I would suggest the only response to that kind of love is to respond with love in return. That is what motivates our desire to please Him and allow Him to rule our lives.

#### APPLICATION:

What do I need to do to change the attitude of my heart?

1. If you've never acknowledged your sin and your need of a Savior from your sin, tell God you believe and want to apply Christ's death to your life.
2. If you know you have sin in your life that breaks God's heart, repent and remove those idols from your life. (Ez. 14:6) Ask others to pray for you and get help.
3. Thank God for His forgiveness and spend time daily in His Word and in prayer asking God to show you areas in your life you need to surrender to Him as an act of love to God.