

Why Do People Serve God?

Dub McClish

I suppose the most difficult task that each of us is called upon to perform is the examination of our motives. Jesus was talking about this when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: For they shall see God" (Mat. 5:8). The idea in "pure" is that which is unalloyed, as pure silver or pure gold with no inferior metals or substances mixed in. The blessing belongs to those who act out of unmixed motives, whether toward God or men. It is quite possible for us to do that which is right on the surface, but to do it with the wrong motive, for the wrong reason. Consider the following motives that have been observed:

1. **Malice.** One may do a good deed to one person in an effort to stir up jealousy or envy in others. He may be very generous in his deed or gift and may receive much praise from those unaware of his impure motive. The cost does not matter as long as his malicious purpose is served. What an infantile and ugly motive! How it tarnishes the good deed done when its true purpose is revealed.
2. **Selfishness.** Here is a person who is willing to give a tidy sum for a good cause, but there must be much publicity of his name and his gift. Someone does a good work, but through human error, he is not publicly recognized or thanked, and he becomes sorely offended. Some have even quit the church because of such. Now we all like to be appreciated and appropriate "Thank You's" keep the machinery of human relations well-oiled; but anyone who reacts so extremely is revealing more than he may intend to. It becomes evident that his gift or service is not for God's glory, but for his own. If he had known there was no personal advantage or prestige to be gained, he would never have acted at all.
3. **Duty.** A sense of duty, doing something because it is right, is surely a great improvement over the previous motives mentioned. However, it has its limitations if it is the only reason we serve God. By this motive one can appear to be truly dedicated to God in his keeping of externals, while his heart is somewhere else. If one gives his money or his service only because he has to, he still has not given self.
4. **Can't Help Himself.** This person loves God and men, and he is driven by this love to give and serve in every way possible. It matters not if the whole world knows or if no one knows, still he must do it.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, June 11, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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