

**STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS**

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15**

# WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?



**MOTIVATION**

LOADING...

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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

DAVID MURRAY  
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# INTRODUCTION

What motivates you? What gets you up in the morning? Your boss? Money? Success? Fame? Parental expectations? To provide for your family? Fear of failure? What's your motivation? **Why do you do what you do?**

Same question applies to spiritual matters? What motivates you spiritually? What brings you to church? Why do you live or serve the way you do? What's your motivation? **Why do you do what you do?**

The question of motivation is important not only because God sees our motives but because motives determine the quantity and quality of energy we bring to our tasks. Without motivation it takes much more energy to just get started. Poor or sinful motivations are like fuel contaminants which affect the smooth running of our engines.

# BACKGROUND

Paul's adversaries in Corinth questioned not only what he did but why he did it. They accused him of sinful motivation, of doing what he did for the wrong reasons. In 2 Corinthians 5:11-15, verses he confesses to two holy motivations.



What was Paul's first motivation?



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# 1. WE'RE MOTIVATED BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD (11-13)

## We please the Lord

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord... (11).

Paul's not talking about his personal fear of judgment. As we saw in the previous sermon, he's looking forward to that because he knows that God will vindicate him and exhibit his faithfulness before all. This 'fear' is humble reverence that leads to an earnest desire to please God alone (8-10) and persuade others to do the same.

## We persuade others

**...we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart** (11-12).

He rejected rhetorical persuasion and techniques, but not the need to persuade. (Acts 17:4; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23). He tried to convince others of the truth and of his truthfulness.

- *We try to persuade others:* to live for the Lord so they are also ready for the judgment
- *We are not trying to persuade God:* God knows my motives
- *We are not trying to persuade you:* Deep down, whatever you say, you know my pure motives
- *We are trying to persuade others through you:* I want to give you materials and arguments to convince others. You can vouch for my integrity and motives to others. It's not about outward impressiveness but God's approval alone.

**If we are "out of our mind," as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you** (13).

We only care what God thinks and how to benefit you. He does not do what he does for himself but for God and for the Corinthians.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Christians are God-pleasers.** We live to please him alone. We do not live in terror of him but with a reverent awe which makes us enjoy pleasing him

**Christians are people-persuaders.** "How do I know if I fear God?" We will be persuaders of others. You will reason, plead, beseech, call, others to prepare to meet God. You will not care what others think only what God thinks.

GOD-PLEASERS ARE  
PEOPLE-PERSUADERS



How can I become a better persuader?



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## 2. WE'RE MOTIVATED BY THE LOVE OF THE LORD (14-15)

### The love of loves

**For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced...** (14).

Paul was motivated by Christ's love for him. We know this verse is speaking of Christ's love for him rather than his love for Christ because the following verses speak of Christ's love manifested at the cross. When Paul is speaking about Christ's love for him, it's not some mushy emotional feeling, but a convictional knowledge of Christ's cross. This changed Paul's life. He was no longer constrained or pressured by hatred. He was propelled forward by Christ's love. This dominated and besieged him. It hemmed him in and pushed him forward.

### The death of deaths

**...that one died for all, and therefore all died** (14).

Christ died not for his own sins but for the sins of others. 'For' does not only mean 'because of' but 'instead of.' It does not only mean 'for the benefit of' but 'in the place of.' It's not only sympathy but substitution.

'All' does not necessarily mean every single person that ever lived, but may mean all sorts of people (e.g. Jn. 12:32). The same group of people who are raised to life in verse 15 are those who died in verse 14. That's not everyone.

We expect to read that because one died for all, that all lived. Instead, we read, 'All died.' 'All died' is the same verb and tense as the word in 'one died.' When the 'one' died, the 'all' died. As one was put to death, in God's eyes, the all were put to death, the all for whom Christ died, died with him. He died for them, and they died with him. This death was done for us but treated by God as done by us.

### The life of lives

**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** (15).

Christ's death must change our lives. Usually life leads to death but here death leads to life both for the one who died and the all who died with him. Just as his death was ours, so his life is ours. How do we see that? We live for him as he lived for us.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Love makes everything easy.** When we love someone it's much easier to live for them, put them first, and serve them. Being loved by someone is even more powerful than loving someone. There is no greater love than the love of Christ for his people, it is the love of loves that died the death of deaths, to give the life of lives.

GOD LOVERS ARE  
PEOPLE PERSUADERS



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others stories



# SUMMARY



**PRAYER:** Awesome Lover, motivate me with your awesome love that I might live to please you and persuade others

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the biggest motivations in your life? Why do you do what you do?
2. "The fear of the Lord is just an Old Testament idea." How would you answer that?
3. What does a Christian persuader look like? How can you get better at this?
4. How can you increase the motivating power of Christ's love in your life?
5. How is pleasing God connected with persuading others?
6. How can you live for Christ this week?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church  
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315  
Phone: (616) 878-9768  
[www.firstbyroncrc.org](http://www.firstbyroncrc.org)

Pastor David Murray  
[www.HeadHeartHand.org](http://www.HeadHeartHand.org)  
[www.thestorychanger.life](http://www.thestorychanger.life)

