



# FIRST THINGS

## MOTIVATION FIRST THINGS—part 7 FACILITATOR GUIDE

### I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS

What motivates you to get up in the morning?

Why do you go to work?

Why would a person disrupt their life to take in a sick family member or friend? To cook for them, bathe them, and care for their special needs?

What motivates you to do the things you do?

Can you tell of a time when you saw real love in action?

When CPC has a baptism service it is a “big deal.” We love to celebrate with those who have expressed a desire to be baptized.

What is the slogan printed on our baptism shirts? **[“I have decided to follow Jesus.”]**

What can cause a person to decide to stand up in front of hundreds of people and be dunked in a tub of water? **[ Motivation of love.]**

More than once, Pastor D has baptized small children—too young to read. When he asks them what is printed on their shirt they reply, “I love Jesus.” While that is so cute to hear them say, it is also very appropriate. Because it is love that drives people to follow Jesus despite of the embarrassing, inconvenient things we may be called to do.

When hardship hits, practice needs **MOTIVATION** to **CONTINUE**.

What choice do people typically make when they come home really tired from a hard day at work, but there is an event at church? Do they go to church anyway or just stay home?

What motivation does that choice say about them? **[Comfort and convenience are a priority. It doesn't mean that they don't know Jesus or that they disregard His teachings, but given the choice in a time of weakness, they will choose the lesser of the one that requires the least from them.]**

Is the choice to stay home and rest a bad thing? **[No. it is understandable to stay home to care for ourselves or for our family. However, we have to question what it means about our commitment to Jesus. ]**

Jesus tackled this same issue...

**Luke 9:57-62—**

57 As they were traveling on the road someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

58 Jesus told him, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

"Lord," he said, "first let me go bury my father."

60 But He told him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and spread the news of the kingdom of God."

61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to those at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

In this passage, Jesus forces us to reflect on our motives for following Him. These three men all thought that following Jesus was a good thing to do. Two of them expressed their own desire to follow Him, which is more than could be said of many in the crowds who heard Jesus preach. But while they wanted to follow Jesus and viewed that as important, it wasn't the *most* important thing. There were other factors that needed to be considered. In the words of the third man, "I will follow You, Lord; but ...".

Why did Jesus seem to be so discouraging to potential followers? **[He knew there were underlying feelings that needed to be brought out in their commitment level.]**

When Jesus told the first guy that "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head," what was He saying about being a follower of His? **[The way won't always be easy. It especially won't be comfortable or convenient. In essence, Jesus was trying to get the men to understand that there is a cost to discipleship. ]**

## **CULTURE CONTEXT:**

When the second man in verse 59 said, "First let me bury my father," it was more than likely that his father was not dead yet. First, it was common in that time to bury the dead very quickly after death because of a lack of embalming practices. Secondly, it was a common phraseology to say this when meaning one needs to stay with and care for their parents. So probably the man Jesus was calling was saying, "After my father is gone, I will follow You."

The Bible teaches that we should care for our elderly parents. The fifth commandment advises us to honor our father and mother. Paul tells Timothy that "anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8) But, Jesus was making the point that if our commitment to family is greater than our commitment to Jesus Christ and His kingdom, we've got our priorities wrong.

**Many people think that following Jesus is important,  
but not the MOST IMPORTANT thing in life.**

Think of various situations where we do things for our family rather than do the things that we know are good for us spiritually.

**What happens if we choose God over our family?**

**How will God take care of our family if we take care of His business first? [God may make it where we will be able to do things that meet our families' needs after spending our time for Him first. When we put God first over other things we teach our children and the rest of our family and friends that God is a priority and He is worth more than anything to us. This becomes our testimony to others.]**

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## **THREE MOTIVATIONS**

In this week's message, Pastor Chris explained that there are three main motivations for serving God:

1. **FEAR**
2. **OBLIGATION**
3. **LOVE**

**How would some people be motivated by fear? [They have a fear of spending eternity in hell where we are told fires burn forever as you are eternally separated from God.]**

Fear-driven devotion is indicative of a view of God that is **INCOMPLETE**. In this understanding, he is the divine judge, wielding His heavenly hammer, waiting to crush us the moment we break one of His arduous commandments.

**Devotion based on obligation is service that only goes THROUGH THE MOTIONS.**

**Have you felt yourself sometimes doing things out of habit rather than desire?**

**Have you ever come to church with a less-than-favorable attitude, but through the worship, message, prayer, fellowship, and movement of the Holy Spirit your attitude changed?**

**Loving God requires KNOWING Him—to love God is to DESIRE Him, to yearn for His righteousness, His Word, and His grace.**

**Psalm 42:1—** As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God.

**What does serving God out of love look like? [Honoring God above all else. Full devotion and commitment to Him and the Kingdom work. It means we are so in love with Him that we want to share His joy and love with others.]**

**Mark 12:30—**And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.

Loving Jesus can motivate you to do anything for Him. It is the reason that Christians can face whatever comes in life.

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## **PRAYER TIME**

- Give God praise for His goodness to you.
- Examine your life to determine the things that you tend to put before God.
- Put a label on your motivation—is it fear, obligation, or love? Ask God to help you operate out of love for Him.
- Ask God to show you how to prioritize Him and His Kingdom over other things—even things that are good and worth your attention.