

R.T. Kendall: 10 of My Motives God Sees Straight Through

1. Accepting an invitation before I think it through.

Although I pray daily to know when to say yes and when to say no, I often say yes because it seems so sensible and convenient and the right thing to do on the surface. This could be an invitation to preach or to go out to a restaurant. I hate to say no to either, but often I lose peace merely because I feel obligated to accept someone's gracious invitation.

2. Making an important decision without praying sufficiently about it.

This was the mistake Joshua made when he was deceived by the Gibeonites. On the surface all seemed clear and straightforward, but they did not inquire of the Lord (Josh. 9:14). Had they done this, they would have spared themselves grief in their own generation, not to mention future generations.

3. Offering a word of advice before I have the right to give it.

If people ask for advice, perhaps it is fine to consider giving it; but when they don't ask, and you speak into their lives, you may be outside your right to talk to them. We all must earn the right to speak privately to people. This could be based on a longer relationship or by learning more about the person.

I have learned one lesson from "prophetic" people: If you ask them for a word, so many of them will have one. My experience is that it is often worthless. Let them initiate it without your prompting. But even then, that does not mean you have to accept what they say.

4. **Speaking when I am annoyed.** If you speak when you are annoyed, it will almost always come out wrong! Even if the anger seems justified, the devil will exploit this and cause you to say what will reflect badly upon your Christian testimony.
5. **Accusing another when it is really because you are holding a grudge.** You are not to judge another in the first place, says Jesus (Matt. 7:1), but when you point the finger, chances are you have a skeleton in your closet along the same line of what you are accusing them of. By the time you succeed in removing the plank from your eye, the issue that made you want to judge will probably have evaporated in the meantime.
6. **Saying a word that is boastful about your accomplishment for reasons of aggrandizement.** Do you need to name drop? Do you need to say something that will cause people to admire you? "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth" (Prov. 27:2). I have had a hard time resisting telling people of some famous person I met or some compliment I received. The truth is, people don't really want to know about your accomplishments.
7. **Speaking out of fear.** Anxiety often only breeds anxiety in the other—or will irritate them. Wait until you are calm. Remember this proverb too: "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19).
8. **Giving a compliment to someone with the view of getting a favor in return.** I used this technique when I was a door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman: Give the prospective buyer a sincere compliment, and he will be more likely to buy from you. But when it comes to manipulating people to satisfy your fleshly motive, you may live to regret doing this. We must ask ourselves: Are we playing into someone's ego in a manner that will

make him do something that he will regret? If so, that person will turn on you later.

9. **Being extra nice to someone of the opposite sex because they are attractive.** The thing not often openly discussed but everybody notices: A pretty face has a head start when it comes to selling magazines and books—whether in the church or the world. Do you think Jesus showed favoritism to a beautiful woman? You may say: “But what is wrong with this?” I am not entering into the issue whether it is right or wrong; I am merely pointing out that we sometimes don’t come face-to-face with our motives when God already knows what is on our minds.

10. **Defending ourselves.** The greatest freedom is having nothing to prove. The last thing you and I should ever do is vindicate ourselves. This is God’s prerogative (Rom. 12:19). It is what He does brilliantly! Don’t deprive Him of doing what He loves to do. When we turn things over to Him and take ourselves out of the picture, He gets all the glory.

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