

The Way You Do The Things You Do

Are you serving God with the right motive?

When

God called me into ministry, I had a full-time job and was making good money. We had a nice, comfortable suburban lifestyle, but I was miserable on the inside because I was religious and didn't have a deep, personal relationship with God.

After

an encounter with the Holy Spirit in 1976, my life really changed. I began developing an intimate relationship with God, and I wanted to help other people experience what I was experiencing. To do that, I had to quit my job so I would have the time I needed to study the Word of God.

I thought, *Well, I've made this big sacrifice quitting my job, so surely we'll be blessed with miraculous provision and our finances will increase supernaturally!* But for the next six years, we suffered financially. I shopped at garage sales, clipped every coupon I could find and took a calculator with me when I went grocery shopping.

During

this time, I taught a Bible study in our home for about five years,
which I didn't get paid to do. This cost us, too. We cleaned the house
each week and provided refreshments (and toilet paper).

I
reached a breaking point one day after hearing a testimony from my
pastor. He had received an unexpected financial blessing from a speaking
engagement he had done. I was tired of hearing about other people's
breakthroughs and felt like we had been so faithful, yet there was no
breakthrough for us.

So I
cried about it for a while and then, by the grace of God, I made a
decision and declared: "God, I am going to tithe and give offerings
until the day I die whether I ever see anything come from it or not!"

I believe with all my heart this was a test for me to see *why* I
was really doing what I was doing because having right, godly motives
is part of what develops an excellent spirit in Christians.

I'm
glad now that God didn't let me get paid to teach the Bible study in my
home because if I had I might have been motivated to do it for the
money, not wholeheartedly for the Lord.

There's been a lot of teaching and preaching that says, "Do this and you'll get that." And it's true that we reap what we sow (see Gal. 6:7). But what about having a pure heart that says, "I want to do the right thing because it's right and it glorifies God"?

The truth is, if we're doing right things just to get something, our motives are selfish and self-centered. Wholehearted commitment to God is not selfish or self-centered—it's excellence!

Daniel is a man in the Bible who is described as having an "excellent spirit." He lived to glorify God with his life, no matter what it cost him. "Then this Daniel was distinguished above the presidents ... because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the whole realm" (Dan. 6:3, *The Amplified Bible*).

Daniel loved God and was unwavering in his commitment to serve Him. As a result, God gave him favor with the king, which led to his promotion over the other leaders in the land. But his commitment to God was tested.

The leaders didn't like that the king favored Daniel. So they manipulated the king to sign a decree that prohibited anyone from praying to any god other

than the
king for 30 days. Violating the decree meant being thrown into
a den of
lions (see Dan. 6:4-7).

Daniel
didn't cave in to this decree—he was more concerned about
keeping his
commitment to God. If you know the story, you know God
protected him and
was glorified in the end.

I want to encourage you to live with an excellent spirit.
Don't live a shallow life, just doing what you *feel* like
doing or being self-centered. Be determined to really live for
God. As
you do, you'll fulfill your true purpose and glorify God in
everything
you do.

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