

## ***Disqualifying Motives - Why God can Reject our Service***

*an article by Martin Anthony - [www.aphgroup.co.za](http://www.aphgroup.co.za)*

In our sincere service and worship to the Lord, there is a definite caution to believers, to ensure that our deeds and service are acceptable by God's required standards.

Whilst many believers assume that God will accept their effortful service, the qualifying issue of acceptance, is our motive. The greatest question, to re-align motive, is why? Why do we attempt the good deeds and generous, charitable acts that make us feel worthy about ourselves?

There is a satisfying adrenalin that feeds our sensory neurons when we commit acts of compassion, generosity, sympathy and good will. This makes us feel dependable and wanted. Someone needed us and we were there for them. We have met the need of someone else and filled the space of their incompetence and failure. The good news is that we have discovered the art of sharing with our fellow human beings. The bad news is that if there is an over-satisfaction derived from our gracious deeds, we can be boastful and become ultimately proud. Pride can be addictive and drive us to attempt more of these seemingly selfless acts while in fact being self-seeking.

Without intending to be glorified or praised by others, internally we become applauders of our own deeds, which by now, could be regarded as achievements.

Some, however, will regularly be attracted to the praise of those who appreciate their kindness and the willingness to help those less fortunate than themselves.

The truth remains that if we praise ourselves or are looking to be praised by others, the motive has become self-seeking and ego inflating.

We are aware that true heroes are those who are publicly acknowledged for their acts of bravery and goodwill and though might not have been expecting praise or acknowledgement, they are commended for their selflessness. Up to this point, there is nothing wrong with being recognized by others, but herein again, lies the danger in becoming self-absorbed and the desperate desire for more accolades of human approval.

Jesus addresses the human emotional desire to serve but more importantly, what it is that drives those desires.

**I don't think He was assessing the justification of our motives after our deeds are done, but is posing the challenge, to first examine the motives before we attempt our deeds.**

It is a preparation of the heart, will and emotions of the person that becomes more important and valuable to God, than the amount of sacrifice offered.

The internal issues of the heart matter more than the outward expressions and so obedience is validated by the response of inner motivation rather than exhaustive, external activity.

***Matthew 6:1-4, "1. Take heed that you do not do your merciful deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in Heaven. 2. Therefore when you do your merciful deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have***

*glory from men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. 3. But when you do merciful deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, 4. so that your merciful deeds may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret Himself shall reward you openly."*

The grand question is "which is worth more to YOU?" What will bring you the greater feeling of satisfaction, achievement and fulfilment? Is it the praise of man or the commendation of God? What makes you feel worthwhile and valuable? Does an unseen act of goodness make you feel like no one is watching? Think again!

It almost seems like Jesus is prescribing a method by which He measures and rewards the good deeds of man.

If what we do, is put on display for acknowledgement, then the praises of man nullifies the commendation of God. That is not to say that we must be negative to compliment or the gratitude of people that have been blessed by us, but simply never to increase the level of our expectations, in terms of human praise or reward.

***Hebrews 11:6**, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (MKJV)*

The writer of the book of Hebrews speaks of God as being a rewarder. We know God by the multiple ways He expresses Himself to us but do we know Him as a rewarder?

God never obligates Himself to man, in any way. In fact, He is no man's debtor and will always ensure that what is due to us will come our way. He even rewards for the deeds others have not seen or noticed.

Jesus speaks of those who receive a good reward for their deeds but also speaks of negative rewards (consequences) of those that are self seeking.

Let us search deep into the motives of our passions and ask ourselves whether what we do will bring us the sense of temporary accomplishment or eternal commendation that comes from our Father who sees in secret. It might be helpful to understand that when Jesus speaks of doing our deeds in secret or even when he talks about 'entering into your closet to pray,' that these are not literal acts but refers to the privacy of motives being restraint. It means that we should know how to enter into the silence of our minds as opposed to publicly flaunting.

This should not only apply to good deeds and acts of benevolence, but in every single response to God, be it word, deed or thought, which then becomes a lifestyle of worship and obedience.

***Matthew 6:5-8**, "5. And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. 6. But you, when you pray, enter into your room. And shutting your door, pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly. 7. But when you pray, do not babble vain words, as the nations. For they think that in their much speaking they shall be heard. 8. Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask Him."*

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees (*read Matthew 23*) more than people who are not in religious circles. He tries to emphasize the importance of sincere, deliberate and honest intentions as opposed to ritualistic and ceremonial worship for public display.

John speaks of Jesus as being the word being made flesh and living amongst them. When Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their disconnection from God, the Pharisees felt justified in that they were protecting the Holy Scriptures and defending the interests of God.

How did it become possible for them to protect the scriptures while rejecting the "word"? It took a process of habitual religious practices that had become ritualistic because the focus had shifted from pleasing God to pleasing man. Now the opinions and approval of human beings had become more important and vital to their operations than simple obedience to God.

By rebuking them, Jesus was trying to bring about reformation in the way they served God, and not merely to embarrass them. Their rituals had, by this time, become so entrenched into their spirits that their failure to change, led them to conspire the death of Jesus.

As He continues to speak, the disciples of Jesus were beginning to understand what the requirements of heaven were, in order that they may aspire to being acceptable to God. This mental adjustment allows the quality of service to override the quantity.

In *Matthew 25*, Jesus speaks the parable of the talents and advises that the Kingdom of God operates in the same way.

In commending the servants who were profitable He says "*well done.*"

"Well done" is not the same as saying "Good job". At first it may appear to be the same but if you were asked to go to the shop and buy a loaf of bread and decided to buy a few packets of groceries out of the kindness of your heart, which will be greater?

Well, it depends on whether you bought the bread or not. Many people do good deeds for God and assume that the quantity will make up for what God expected of them. "Well done", is a compliment to someone who has been asked to do something and carried out their assignment or task to completion. Doing everything else for God, except what He requires, will be futile effort.

Jesus addresses the art of religious deception, where people learn how to use religious activity to preoccupy themselves, so that they have no time to obey Him, whilst making it seem to others that they are.

Just as in the time of Jesus, we too can fall into the trap of the Pharisees, when we become more concerned of the impression we make on society rather than responding to the expectations of God.

How often do we declare that "Jesus is Lord of our lives" when in truth, we are the Lord of our lives because He does not control anything in us and nothing we do might be for His glory and not ours.

We have to remind ourselves, constantly, that our motives are the determining factor when it comes to acceptance or rejection of our service to God. He is constantly assessing us.

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