

# The Motive of Our Consecration

by Zac Poonen

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*The motive underlying our service for the Lord is what matters most, and serving Him with selfish or legalistic motives leads to drudgery and lack of joy.*

**Scripture:** Luke 15:11

**Topics:** "Love for God", "Motive in Service"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that the true measure of our service to God lies not in the actions we take but in the motives behind them. At the judgment seat of Christ, the critical question will be 'Why did you do it?' rather than 'What did you do?' He illustrates this with the parable of the prodigal son, highlighting how both the younger son's selfishness and the elder son's legalism reflect flawed motives in serving God. Poonen urges believers to examine their hearts and serve out of love for God rather than for personal gain or obligation, encouraging a joyful and genuine relationship with the Lord.

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## Transcript

In all our service for the Lord it is the motive underlying that service that matters. At the judgement seat of Christ the important question will not be "What did you do?" so much as "Why did you do it?" It is not the number of hours that we spend in reading our Bibles or in prayer, or the number of tracts we distribute, or the number of souls that we witness to, that are first in importance, but the motive with which all these are done. It is possible to be keenly engaged in all these spiritual activities and yet to do them all with a motive that is wholly selfish, or on the other hand that is merely legalistic.

Examples of these two ways of serving the Lord can be seen in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The younger son had motives that were selfish; the elder son had a legalistic spirit. Let us consider them briefly. One day the younger son came to his father and asked for his share of the property. And just as we have been seeing that God's nature is to give lavishly, even so the father in this parable readily gave to the son. But as soon as the younger son had received all that he wanted, he left his father and set out for a far country, thus clearly showing that he was motivated not by love for his father at all but solely by what he could get out of him. Now as I have said, this would not be so bad if only, in the process of maturing spiritually, we came to recognise our selfish motives in coming to the Lord, and corrected our attitude accordingly. But unfortunately this is not often so, and many believers live their entire lives on this plane of personal profit. It is because they are always seeking to get from God instead of seeking to give to Him, that they have so many problems in their lives and so little joy in their service. Why do we read our

Bibles? Very often we do so solely in order to get a blessing for ourselves. Sometimes, perhaps to gain a reputation as a Bible scholar. How very seldom do we read it in order to know the will of God and to do it, so that God may be glorified through our lives. Why do we pray? So often, it is just to secure some special blessing for ourselves. How seldom do believers pray in order that the Lord's work may progress on earth for His glory. We may even fast and pray. But have we ever stoppe The elder son in the parable is generally considered the better of the two. Examine his attitude however and we shall find that he was just as much as fault as his brother. When the younger son at last returned, the father, we are told, gave himself up to rejoicing together with the whole household. The elder son however proved unable, out of sheer jealousy, to share in that joy. He was so angry at such honour being bestowed on his brother that he would not even enter the house. His reply to his father's entreaties exposes the spirit in which he had been serving him hitherto. "All these years I have served you and not once have I disobeyed. Yet you have never given me anything like this." His service for his father, instead of being joyful and loving, was calculating and legalistic, like that of a servant who serves his master for wages. Thus, as so many of us do, he compared his lot with that of others and discovered plenty of ground for complaint.

Through the death of Christ we are dead to the law, in order that we might be wedded to the risen Christ. This is the teaching of Romans 7:1-6. Paul's rather strange expression means simply that instead of serving the Lord as a servant serves his master, legalistically, we are henceforth to serve Him "in newness of spirit" as a wife serves her husband, out of love.

Serving God for selfish ends or in a legalistic spirit is sheer drudgery. It is like driving a car with sand in the bearings. How it groans and complains, protesting vigorously at every least move forward! Yet that, unfortunately, is a fair description of the lives and service of many of us. But clean out the sand and lubricate the machinery. How smoothly, noiselessly and quickly the car moves now! And God wants your Bible-reading and your times spent in prayer to be like that. He desires that your worship and your witnessing, and every Christian activity that you carry out, shall spring freely and joyously out of love for Him.

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