

Wednesday with the Word

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#MotiveMatters:

“Exploring the motives (our why), and intentions (our what) of our hearts, helps us to live, love, and lead more effectively as Disciples of Christ.”

John 1:19-28 New International Version (NIV)

John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah

19 Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders[a] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. **20** He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

He answered, “No.”

22 Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”[b]

24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent **25** questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

26 “I baptize with[c] water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. **27** He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Definitions to review:

mo·tive

/ˈmōdiv/

noun

a reason for doing something, especially one that is hidden or not obvious.

"a motive for his murder":ex

in·ten·tion

/inˈten(t)SH

noun

1. 1.

a thing intended; an aim or plan.

"she was full of good intentions"

For starters, let's explore the power of testimonies, they too help to reveal and support who it is that you say you are. Notice how the text is certain to highlight John's response to the Pharisees (Jewish Leaders in Jerusalem) as his testimony, the text also goes on to say that he did not fail to confess, but confessed **FREELY**.

Testimony= Confession= a personal statement of belief, that is shown through the embodiment of a believers daily walk. You see, John demonstrates beautifully, when a person is truly liberated and free they have no need to conceal their motive. When questioned, you answer from a place of spirit and truth...

There's a level of consistency in all that you say... You can repeat to jack and jill what you've said because not only did you mean it, you're motives and intentions are pure.

#MotiveMatters

John 1:19-23 (John was consistent, and direct.)

John 1:21-22

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

Why is it that he denies being "the" prophet?

Be careful of how people phrase their questions. If you are listening attentively, and with a spiritual ear like John, you'll hear through the fluff and pull from the root. John had a

clear understanding of what his call was, that didn't mean he identified with the labels of that time. John was too busy doing the work that was assigned to him. He was intentional in living out his call by preparing the way, and making straight the path for the Lord.

What is your motive?

John 1:22

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

Your motive (what) exposes your root (why), and your root (why) exposes your posture. (posture=foundation): What are you grounded in?

Isn't it funny when people don't get the answers they want, their frustrations begin to expose their motives....

Have you ever questioned the motives of those around you?

Could you not have understood someone's motive because of those that you let into your ear? (John 1:19-23)

John 1:23

What does it mean to call out in the wilderness?

A disciple with good motives, a disciple after God's own heart will have a sound that pulls believers out of the wilderness. This doesn't mean we are called to all people, but we are called to a people, making clear whom we are making straight the path for... GOD.

John 10:4-5

4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

Let's Dive DEEPER:

John 1:24-25 New International Version (NIV)

24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

John 1:24-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) 25 They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

I would first like to highlight the power of birds of a feather flocking together.. Through the many different translations of this text these two stood out the most to me. The NIV translation is clear to state that it was the Pharisees who had been sent to John. The ESV doesn't combat this claim, but it states that “they” had been sent by the Pharisee's. Listen, can I just tell you this, when people are telling the story, you become what you are associated with.

Our motives attract their own yoke...#MotiveMatters

Definitions to review:

Pharisee-(Pharisaioi): a Pharisee, member of a Jewish religious sect

"Pharisee" is derived from the Aramaic term, *peras* ("to divide and separate"). This literally refers to a "*separatist*"; hence, a Pharisee was someone "*separated from sin.*"

I would like to suggest that starting out the Pharisees could've very well had good “intentions”, driven by the motive to live a life of Christ... and yet somewhere along the

way their ability to extend the grace, and love given to them was lost. It was this lack of “love” that led them into a life blinded by self-righteousness...

Intentionality: John 1:24 NIV

There is a clear emphasis that the verse 24 stops at the word sent.

Understand that the people sent into your life to question you... Also, confirm your motive and posture. The Pharisees exposed or further revealed just who John was. It was his humility, his ability to respond in love that was put on display when questioned. (What's on display in your life?)

John didn't get upset or angry. If anything he responded with some zest to it, John knew what was up!

John never denied what he was doing, only who he was not! This is a clear indication of his motive, and his intention. #MotiveMatters

Have you ever been around a person that says one thing, but their actions reveal another?

You see, Love matters a great deal when discussing motives, intentions, and posture. Our posture is connected to our hearts. Many people in the church are struggling with their ability to accept things such as the sermon series, transitions, or changes being made in the church, and it's because they've failed to answer/ address their why... Why is this ?

This unfortunately has led to many of us defining and labeling love falsely. Many of us are saying the word love, when really it's:

- **Hate**
- **Jealousy**
- **Bitterness**
- **Manipulation**
- **Anger**
- **Passive Aggressiveness**
- **Tradition**

These emotions stem from previous life experiences, 15yr old you doesn't leave just because you've turned 30, 40, or 50. Instead it continues to evolve and develop over time. Because of this development, the majority of people become spiritually deaf/blind and God can't get to you what you can't see or hear spiritually. We see this with the Pharisees.

1 Peter 4:8

Above all things love each other deeply

Many people can't love their neighbors because they don't love themselves. People have normalized toxic and unhealthy habits, and have the audacity to wonder why what they desire has not manifested FULLY. It is because.....#MotiveMatters

Closing: John 1:26-28

What am I saying?

Many times, it will feel like it costs more, to say less - like John.. Like John, I'm sure we've all had some people (Pharisees) come into our lives asking questions... Knowing that their motives and intentions were not right.

But just like the fillet, that came with less, and may have cost more, there are benefits to choosing to live a strong and healthy life... When you have a clear understanding of your God given motive and intentions, you are able to move throughout life with the spiritual giftings of wisdom and discernment given unto us all freely. This then allows us to know what to say, and when to say it..

John didn't need to defend who he was, because his motives and actions did it for him. Especially not to people who were to blind to see who Jesus was, let alone who God was using.

When your motive is pure that doesn't mean you won't want to respond or lash out but as you continue to trust and follow what God has called you to, you will develop a sense of maturity that understands less is more. John knew his mission, and he knew who was coming.

John 1:26-28

26 "I baptize with[c] water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The text is clear to highlight John's response to the way in which he baptized, along with his location... This is for a reason.

What I love most about these last three verses is that they speak to the future. Those who operate with pure motives and intent, understand that they are paving the way for the ones who will come behind them, and that the work they are doing is not for self-satisfaction but for God and the advancement of the kingdom. John was fixated on his call, not his popularity, not his ranking, or what people were saying. John didn't allow the questions of the Pharisee's to make him big headed, because he understood fully all of who he was and what he was called to do- this is a clear indication of pure motive.

When you look at your reflection in the mirror, do you see one who continues to operate from the intent of a Pharisee or the motive of John?

If you are operating out of a Pharisaic motive, what steps can you take to uproot that mentality?