



3. My motivation in life

*Christians are led by
the love of God*

Introduction

Identify whether the following statements are law or gospel statements.

- Because I'm the mommy, that's why! **Though mom's love could motivate, it's still 4th com.**
- If you repent, Jesus will love you. **Conditional. True? Yes, but too limited.**
- What would Jesus do? **As a guide for our behavior, 3rd use of the law**
- Children, obey your parents. **Law, 4th comm.**
- Follow Jesus! **What you should do, not what he has done.**
- Your sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. **What God did to fix your problem and why.**

Remind what the law and gospel do. The only gospel statement is the final one.

The Scriptures Say

1. We are subject to a variety of standards in life. Our perfect, holy, just God also has established a standard for our lives. We call God's standard his law. What does God tell us about his standard in the following passages?

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not **continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.**" **God's standards are perfection; the penalty is damnation.**

Romans 3:20 **No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the** works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. **Obedience to the law doesn't makes us right with God. Rather the law shows us our disobedience.**

Romans 4:15a The law brings wrath. **The law, and my disobedience of it produces righteous anger from a just and holy God.**



2. Our God is a God of love and mercy. He has shown us this love repeatedly in his promises. The greatest example of this love is what Jesus has done for us. We call this good news the gospel. Show from the following passages that the gospel is the **promise of God's love**.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **God loved a sinful world. He promises sinful believers not the hell they deserve, but rather eternal life.**

Romans 5:8 God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **God's undeserved love, in action.**

Titus 3:4,5 When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **Again, what God did and why/why not.**

3. Many things motivate us in life: threats, money, and pleasure, to name a few. But for a Christian who seeks to please God, there is only one God-pleasing motivation. What do the following passages teach us about gospel motivation? **Where is the reference to motivation? What is the source of our motivation?**

Titus 2:14 **[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us** from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, **eager to do what is good.**

Psalms 40:8 **I desire** to do your will, my God; **your law** is within my heart.

In this passage, "your law" = the Scriptures.

2 Corinthians 5:14,15 **Christ's love compels** us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live **should** no longer live for themselves but for **him who died for them** and was raised again. **Christ's love, demonstrated in his work of redeeming us, makes us eager—even compels us—to do God's will. The gospel is the only God-pleasing motivation to live for Jesus.**

4. The sinful nature within each of us wants us to rebel against God's will. Because the gospel is the only God-pleasing motivation for our lives, it is appropriate that we nurture that motivation. According to the following passages, how will our motivation be strengthened? **How do each of these motivate our lives?**

John 5:39 You study the **Scriptures** diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me. **Means what? The Scriptures tell us what Jesus did for us, reinforce our new identity: free, redeemed, children of God, members of his kingdom, his body, the light, the salt. (Read Scripture in context. God connects the imperatives to indicatives)**

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of

Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**. And you will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. **How does a past event motivate my present/future? (A new identity) Old man drowned in baptism. Your passport, birth certificate, death certificate**

Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins**." **A one sided covenant with God. Not a two-sided contract**

The gospel comes through the Word and sacraments. To strengthen our resolve to obey God's will, we use these means of grace.

The Principles

Because the Bible clearly teaches the following truths . . .

1. I believe the law demands that everyone conform to God's standard.
2. I believe the gospel is the promise of God's redeeming love.
3. I believe the gospel is the only God-pleasing motivation to live for Jesus.
4. I believe the gospel comes only through the Word and sacraments.

Focus

Because I Have To!

Imagine a man who gets down on one knee, offers a diamond ring, and proposes to a woman. What a happy day! Should she be impressed if he explained that he did it "because he had to"? Any wise person would encourage the woman to wait for a proposal from a heart of love.

As much as laws, threats, or requirements can move us to do things that align with God's will, they do not impress our Lord. Nor should they impress us. A 10 percent offering, perfect church attendance, perfect Sunday school attendance, etc., are only pleasing to our Lord when they come from a heart overwhelmed by the riches of grace God has showered upon us.

What Does This Mean?

1. Why does it seem so much easier to motivate behavior by using the law? What are the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach?

Give some examples of law motivation. "If you don't behave, you'll be punished, go to hell." If you do the right thing, you'll get a cookie, go to heaven." "I don't want to look bad." What is this: If you do what is right, I/God will love you."

Strengths: They work. (E.g. Problem: members not motivated to give. Solution: an offering plate, plus a revolver) Threats of punishment or promises of reward appeal to our natural selves, so we naturally look for our motivation there. (e.g. Jihads, pilgrimages, fervent prayers by priests of Baal) The weakness is that results that don't spring from love aren't God-pleasing. Not truly voluntary, grateful; Instead, somehow selfish or self-righteous

2. Why does it seem more difficult to motivate behavior using the gospel? What are the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach?

In terms of our two natures, which does the Gospel motivate? It appeals only to our new man. Because our sinful nature opposes everything associated with the gospel, (it's too easy; I can earn it, I don't need it) it seems unnatural. The sinful nature pulls in the opposite direction. The weakness is that it must be accomplished by something outside of ourselves (The Spirit, through the gospel) and has inconsistent, imperfect results. The strength is that it produces the only results that are pleasing to God. God wants voluntary gratitude, not forced compliance. (Did Johnny draw the card or did daddy pay him to do it?)

3. What added importance do attending worship and Bible study have when it comes to gospel motivation? (Cf. Philippians 2:13 *"It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."*)

Only God can work in us the desire and ability to do the good works he has laid out for us. And he only works through the gospel. (Whenever we hear the gospel, we grow in our understanding of what Jesus has done and is still doing for us. That strengthens our resolve to live for God. Without the gospel, we will not have that motivation.).

4. "But it works!" How would you respond to someone who justifies law motivation with words like these?

E.g. Publishing people's offerings in the bulletin. Why would it work? Guilt and pride. (Granted, there can be room for examples of faith in action, e.g. David's offerings; Paul: "Be imitators of me.") It does work, but it doesn't lead to a fruit that is pleasing to God. The emphasis on the law is always on a result but not the right result. Gospel motivation always produces the right result.

What This Means for Me

- Take a few moments to write a short statement expressing the way these truths shape what you believe and how you live. **Let God's unconditional love for you permeate your life. See yourself in Christ. Not: I have to be a better father. Rather, how great the Father's love for me.**