

MONDAY MANNA

20 November 2017

MOTIVATION AND THANKFULNESS

By Robert J. Tamasy

When was the last time you heard a motivational talk? How did you react to it? Did it fill you with enthusiasm and inspiration? Did you find yourself filled with adrenalin, ready to take on the world?

Years ago, I was invited to attend a multi-level sales meeting when several men and women took the stage, speaking glowingly about their product and declaring how successful they had become. Looking around the room, I saw many of the attendees becoming fired up. They were so excited, I think some of them didn't use the doors to leave – they seemed ready to run through walls.

I was not among them, but could understand the reaction. The stories they heard sounded convincing, and very motivating. The problem is, that kind of motivation rarely lasts. The emotional peaks it produces quickly fade as people return to the “valley” of the everyday workplace and its challenges.

How, then, can we find the motivation we need to not only establish and start pursuing worthwhile goals, but also to sustain the effort, persevering in the face of obstacles, setbacks and discouragement? A sad reality is that many people have the capacity to start well, whether embarking on a new career, starting a business, or taking on higher levels of responsibility and authority. But relatively few are able to stick with it to bring into fulfillment their lofty objectives. Where can we find the much-needed motivation?

Soon Americans and people in some other parts of the world will hold an annual observance called Thanksgiving Day. I would suggest, at least for those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, part of our motivation should be thankfulness. Thankfulness for God's love, for what He has done for us, and for the privilege of being participants in the work He is doing around the world.

Here are some of the sources of thankful motivation we find recorded in the Bible:

Motivated by thankfulness for God's love. The Scriptures teach we have been chosen to become members of God's eternal family by His unconditional love. It also says the Spirit of Jesus Christ lives in every believer, empowering us to love others as He has loved us. As the apostle Paul wrote, *“For Christ's love compels us”* (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Motivated by being thankful for God's calling. One of the amazing statements in the Bible is God wants us to serve as *“instruments of righteousness”* (Romans 6:13), people He uses to demonstrate and express His truths. *“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God”* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Motivated to share it with others. Once we comprehend what God has done for us, and what a genuine relationship with Him offers, we should find ourselves motivated to share what the Bible calls the “good news of Jesus Christ” with others. *“If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you...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”* (2 Corinthians 5:13-15).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

Have you ever heard a motivational speech, listened to a recorded motivational message or read a motivational book? How long did the inspiration you received from that last? Why does external motivation often disappear after a short period of time?

Do you agree that thankfulness can be a source of enduring motivation? Explain your answer.

Whether you are preparing to celebrate a formal Thanksgiving Day or not, what are some of the things you are thankful for today?

How should thankfulness to God – for what He has done in your life and continues to do – serve as motivation as you approach every day in the workplace? What are some of the challenges in maintaining this kind of motivation?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about principles it presents, consider the following passages:

Psalm 100:1-5

Colossians 2:7, 3:16-17

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Hebrews 12:28-29