

## Motivation

Ponder: What motivates you? How should you motivate others?

Scripture: “And Caleb said, ‘He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as a wife’” (Josh. 15:14, NKJV).

There’s a reason Dale Carnegie’s blockbuster “How to win friends and influence people” has sold over fifteen million copies. First published in 1936, it is still in print and available today.

Within this volume about motivating people, I observed many points in harmony with Scripture; some of the absolutes, however, go too far (e.g. “Never say, ‘You’re wrong.’” That’s a good general rule, but is not absolute. Jesus told the Sadducees, “You are greatly mistaken” (Mark 12:27). We’ll take Jesus over Carnegie!

God knows we need motivation, and He knows how to motivate us. His servant, Caleb, provided a motive for someone to attack and conquer the city of Kirjath Sepher (later called Debir). We can only hope that his daughter, Achsah, was favorable to the idea of marrying Othniel, the soldier who attacked and took the city! Of course nowadays we aren’t conquering territory and slaughtering Canaanites, so we should avoid a mercenary spirit in our service to the Lord. Nevertheless, Caleb’s example illustrates the need to motivate people to accomplish a task.

Jesus motivated people with the hope of eternal reward (Matt. 25:34). He also used the fear of eternal torment in “the fire that shall never be quenched” (Mark 9:43 & 45). Fear of Hell certainly ought to motivate us to obey! In practical terms, though, fear motivates initial obedience while we need a higher motive to yield permanent and willing obedience. Paul, for example, obeyed Jesus’ command to evangelize the world because “the love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14). No one had to threaten Paul with punishment if he didn’t share the gospel. He understood the love of Jesus that sent Him to the cross; and that love motivated Paul to love the lost and the Lord. How could he not evangelize?

Paul also motivated people with sincere compliments. Think how Priscilla and Aquila must have felt when they heard Paul’s thankfulness that they had risked their necks for him (Rom. 16:3). A pat on the back for a job well done might produce even more and better service. Give it a try!

Song: “We’ll Work Till Jesus Comes”

Prayer: Gracious Father, Your love compels us to serve You obediently. Help us never to lose sight of Your precious Servant, Jesus the Messiah, whose love for You and for us motivated Him to give His all in service. May we wear ourselves out in loving, willing service to His cause. In His name, Amen.