



Witnessing, Proper Motivation

One of the most important doctrines in the Scripture is the doctrine of mental attitudes and their relation to motivation. The believer must have the proper motivation for witnessing. Why do you do what you do? What motivates you? What drives you? What pushes you? What is behind it all? Witnessing is a bona fide function of Christianity. However, witnessing with the wrong motivation results in human good. 1 John 2:2; Prov. 11:30; Rom. 10:1.

“and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2, NASB)

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.” (Proverbs 11:30, NASB)

“Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” (Romans 10:1, NASB)

In the Book of Philippians, Paul was in prison in Rome. This worked out to four advantages for God's plan. The tempo of witnessing was being stepped up in Rome due to the intensification of evangelism. It led to the writing of the prison epistles - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon - very concentrated doctrine.

It led to the principle of combining discipline with blessing. Paul was under divine discipline for his lack of grace orientation earlier and was now spending two years in Caesarea and two in Rome. But God in His grace found a way to turn cursing into blessing. Rom. 8:28.

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NASB)

This led eventually to God's divine guidance for Paul to move his ministry from the eastern part of the Roman Empire to the western part. Once Paul was released from prison, he moved on to Spain.

The Motivation of Some

Witnessing is the example of motivation in Philippians 1:15-18. There is witnessing that has false motivation in that day and this. “Some” is the nominative plural indefinite pronoun τίς (tis) in the Greek. It is so indefinite that it does not rate an accent. This indefinite pronoun is used to describe false motivation, emotional revolt of the soul with resultant mental attitude sins.

“Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,” (Philippians 1:15-18, NASB)

They were going to witness out of fellowship to show Paul that they could buck him and still get out the Gospel. They wanted to show Paul that he was not the only one who had the Truth. In their jealousy and other mental attitude sins against Paul, they thought they could have God's blessing as well. In their zeal, they added things to the Gospel and actually became mired deeper into legalism.

Paul was one of the greatest believers of all time and these believers in Philippi were actually going out and witnessing with a legalistic motivation because they knew Paul was the staunch enemy of legalism.



They emphasized asking Jesus into your heart. They said it was not necessary to study under Paul or read his writings. All you had to do to be born again was ask Jesus to show you the truth for today.

In Philippians 1:15, “preaching” is the present active indicative of κηρύσσω (kērussō) and means to keep on preaching. This is not the ordinary word for witnessing. It was used in Attic Greek of a herald making the announcement of a king. It means to speak publicly with authority. It means to witness in a public speaking situation.

“Christ” is the accusative singular definite article with accusative singular of Χριστός (Christos). This is the object of the verb to teach. “Even from” is καί (kai) plus the accusative and means because of.

“Envy” is φθόνος (phthonos) and is the Greek word for jealousy (accusative), sometimes envy, sometimes jealousy. They are the same thing. Jealousy is one of the most devastating mental attitude sins because around it are clusters of other mental attitude sins. Jealousy travels in a pack with vindictiveness, pride, and bitterness. “Some, to be sure, keep on proclaiming the Christ motivated by jealousy.”

Here, the one proclaiming the Gospel is out of fellowship. Mental attitude sins have moved in to take over. It is possible for this person to stand up and recall something accurate about the Gospel! However, because of the mental attitude sin of jealousy there is a deliberate move on the part of volition to muddy the waters in order to hurt Paul in prison. These believers, knowing that Paul was a stickler for accuracy, were causing “strife” which is ἔρις (eris) in the Greek and means contention. They were also causing division among the believers in Rome.

Paul was an excellent Bible teacher, but Paul’s teaching led some to lawless living. Some believed that if you are saved, you must give up your sins. Bible doctrine is a bona fide divider of believers! Rom. 16:17-18.

“Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” (Romans 16:17-18, NASB)

Strife always has a right and a wrong side. It made petty and small believers feel important to disagree with the Apostle Paul! It made them feel great. They in disagreeing with a great person tried to elevate themselves above him in effect.

The words envy and strife cause us to know that they were presenting the Gospel in a certain way. They likely said something like, “That spindly-legged, squeaky voiced Paul is in prison, and as you know he has been accused of lack of patriotism toward Rome. That man has the nerve to preach that all you have to do to be saved is to believe in Jesus Christ and nothing else. Now the Gospel has been presented. But I say to you, you have to be sincere, you have to surrender, you have to feel sorry for your sins, you have to come down to the front and confess your sins and promise to give them up. Also, if you are a Gentile as most of you are, you haven’t really got the full Gospel unless you are circumcised. And. And. And.”

Even though they were ministering with mental attitude sin to refute Paul’s position, they stated his position accurately. It was easy to state, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” Often there would be people in their congregations who were positive and were saved by faith in Christ. It is possible for an unbeliever to mention the Gospel in an unfavorable light and for someone to still be saved.

In Philippians 1:15, “from good will” is εὐδοκία (eudokia) and means good thinking, good intention,



good motivation. A corrected translation is “And certain ones (on the one hand) proclaim the Christ because of jealousy and contention, and certain ones (on the other hand) because of good intentions.”

True Motivation

In Philippians 1:16, “the latter” refers to those grace oriented believers who were preaching “from good will.” “Out of love” is ἐκ ἀγάπῃ (ek agapē) and means out from the source of relaxed mental attitude *agape* love. “Knowing” is the perfect active participle of οἶδα (oida) used as a present tense. They have Bible doctrine in their frame of reference. “I am appointed” is the present active indicative of κεῖμαι (keimai) and means to be set, appointed, destined.

“the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;” (Philippians 1:16, NASB)

They realized that they and Paul were on the same team. They had their eyes on the Lord and not on Paul and therefore they are not competing with Paul. A corrected translation of is, “But the other group out from the source of relaxed mental attitude love having known that I am appointed for the purpose of the defense of the Gospel.”

False Motivation

It is never thought to be wrong to witness, to give, to attend church. And yet, if motivations are askew, it can degenerate divine good into human good. In Philippians 1:17, “the former” refers to those negative believers who were preaching “out of selfish ambition.” “Thinking” is οἶομαι (oiomai) and means to presume, to think impure motivation. “To cause” is ἐγείρω (egeirō) and means to have a lot of gall, to be brassy. “Distress” is the present active infinitive of θλίψις (thlipsis) and means presuming to arouse distress or anguish of mind.

“the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.” (Philippians 1:17, NASB)

Others were competing with him, a great man. They felt their claim to fame was to knock Paul, run him down, and make him look bad in some way. A corrected translation is, “The former proclaim Christ out from the source of contentiousness, not from pure motive, presuming to arouse distress of mind in my imprisonments (both in Caesarea and Rome).” With false motivation, they were trying to hurt Paul.

Motivation is related to happiness. If you have wrong motivation, even though you are going through the motions, you are an unhappy person. If you are trying to compete with someone else, if you are trying to make someone else look bad to build yourself up, your motives are wrong. In Christianity you just don’t get away with this!

For the men, your manhood doesn’t depend upon making someone else look ridiculous. For the ladies, your womanhood doesn’t depend upon making someone look sick who appears to be attractive or popular.

The following is a witnessing illustration with false motivation. Here’s a girl who breaks up with a believer who attends Bible class. Because he continues to attend, she won’t come to Bible class. However, she comes to Bible class with some other guy motivated to hurt her ex-boyfriend.

She looks endearing on the outside and makes sure the “ex” sees them together in class. Inside, she has a seething soul. Others in the local church observe that she has brought a visitor, because bringing a visitor is supposed to be a great thing! Why did she bring this visitor? Because she wants him to get Bible doctrine? No, she wants the boyfriend with whom she has had the fight to squirm, to twitch, and to



go through torture in his soul. There is at least one motivation behind every action.

Paul's Conclusion

In Philippians 1:18, “What then?” is τίς γάρ (tis gar) and is an idiom for “what is my conclusion?” “Pretense” is πρόφασις (prophasis) and means falsely alleged motive. “In truth” is ἀλήθεια (alētheia) and means a true motivation. “Proclaimed” is the present passive indicative of καταγγέλλω (kataggellō) and means to announce, declare, to proclaim publicly, to promulgate, to make known. Sometimes even the false motivation crowd gives an accurate Gospel message. Paul did not rejoice in pretense, but he kept on rejoicing that “truth” was proclaimed in the Roman Empire. They did not succeed. Isaiah 54:17 knocked them out.

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,” (Philippians 1:18, NASB)

“No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me,” declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 54:17, NASB)

A corrected translation is “What is my conclusion, however that in every way whether in false motivation or in truth, the Christ is constantly proclaimed and in this fact I keep rejoicing. And also I will continue to rejoice.”

Paul does not condone false teaching or false doctrine. Paul does not concern himself with false motivation. False motivation is self-destructive. Paul shared the happiness of God on the basis of the dissemination of the Truth. Paul continued to have the happiness of God because he was not disturbed by the motivation of others. He did not have his eyes on people. Those who were jealous did not hurt him. Paul's ministry continued despite believers functioning under emotional revolt of the soul.