

An Attempt To Listen To God On

Meditations on  
The Motivations of The Lord's Prayers

By

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There is an overlapping of the truths of motivation and purpose. For this paper I am viewing motivation as the stimulating force that caused the Lord to pray, and in the paper "The purpose for Christ praying", it will deal with the ultimate goal for His praying.

### The God Who Tested The Motives

Abraham made a rich statement about the justice of God when he said: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). It was because of this very truth that the children of Israel were given legislation concerning their dealings with each other in matters of civil and spiritual life. Throughout the scriptures the justice of God is emphasised repeatedly. For instance:

- a) "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth . . . He shall judge the people righteously." (Psa. 96:10)
- b) "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes." (Isa. 11:3)
- c) "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." (2 Tim. 4:8)
- d) "If there be a controversy between men, . . . the judges . . . shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. . . and if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten . . . he shall be beaten according to his fault." (Duet 25:1-3)

Clearly then the God who reviewed the motives of Christ's praying, evaluated the reins of his heart (Jer. 11:20), and what an adjudicator God is. He cannot be swayed by relationship, nor have present evaluation coloured by the past. Yet, in the blaze of this all knowing perfectly righteous God, the Lord could have said: "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart" (Psa. 26:2). Jeremiah, Paul and John take up the theme of motivations and write:

- a) "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to His ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17:10; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23)

As the Judge of all the earth and who judges righteously, and looked "on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7), and "trieth the hearts" (Prov. 17:3; 1 Thess. 2:4), saw nothing but pure love for the honour and glory of God.

When our Lord prayed He knew God judged according to truth (Rom. 2:2), therefore He knew God was discerning any iota of deaf formality, selfish ambition, or covert requests. The words of the Psalmist rang clear: "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether" (Psa. 139:4). Thus, every prayer had to be made in purity of motive and would thus be characterised by:

- a) Never making a request out of the mind of God
- b) One in harmony with God's will
- c) As an activity of love not a duty or thing to be done
- d) In perfect obedience
- e) In cheerful obedience
- f) In singularity of goal.
- g) In sincerity

### All Had To Be Done With The Purest Of Motives

Why do I pray?

It may be because that which a christian ought to do, or, to keep on good terms with God. It may even be that the mentioning of the Name of our Lord is a formula to begin and end a prayer. It is easy to believe that I need the cleansing the blood of the Lord gives, but it is totally different to see Him hanging and suffering there for sin. Yet, I can speak about His vicarious suffering and not appreciate the necessity for all that the Lord is and has done. It may be to get something I want, in other words, my motives can be very faulty. The Lord's prayers were never like that.

In the sacrifices, the Hebrew word "qereb" is translated "inwards" (Ex. 29:13; Lev. 1:9) and symbolized the internal perfections of the Lord. It is a truth only one writer of the New Testament really takes up and that is John. Paul writes of Christ: "Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21), and Peter wrote: "Who did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). This

focuses on activity and results. However, John goes deeper and writes: "In Him is no sin" (1 Jn. 3:5). The Holy Spirit caused John to focus not on what the Lord did or said, but the perfection which was manifested in how and why He said or did things. It is the looking into His motives of heart and mind in their holy perfection. With this in mind, His prayers were always with the purest of motivation.

The root word from which "qereb" comes is "qarab" and it is translated: "He shall offer" (Lev. 1:3); "when it is presented" (Lev. 2:8); and "to approach" (Lev. 21:18). It therefore indicates the approaching, the presentation, and the offering. When this, it is seen as a foreshadow of the Lord offering Himself to God from the very depths of His being. His was a life devoted to God, not just outwardly in body, but in heart, mind, soul and strength.

Being naturally self centered we primarily think of salvation and us and what it has done for us, but, was our salvation Christ's highest motive? I think not! Speaking reverently, it was a by-product of God's great plan. It is clear from the scriptures that the Lord's highest motive was a combination of a fourfold cord:

- a) The glory of God in the finishing of His work. (Jn. 17:4)
- b) His love for the Father. (Jn. 14:31)
- c) The Joy set before Him ( Heb. 12:1)
- d) His love for His own (Jn. 13: 1)

With this in mind, when the Lord prayed:

- a) It had to be for the glory of God
- b) It had to be in love for that fellowship they knew together
- c) And it had to be in view of the joy set before Him.

### **The Motivation For The Lord's Praying Necessitated It Was Done For The Glory of God**

In the scriptures we read of:

- a) Those who "ask amiss" (Jam. 4:3)
- b) Those who pray "but none giveth an answer because . . . of evil men" (Job. 35:12)
- c) Those who "cried . . . unto the Lord, but He answered them not" (Psa. 18:41)

The problem for all such situations is the individuals are not living for the glory of God and are not doing the things which are "pleasing in His sight" (1 Jn. 3:22). Consequently, they are not able to ask "according to His will" (1 Jn. 5:14). Such was never the case with Christ.

The motive of the Lord's prayers was evident in saying: "I come to do Thy will" (Heb. 10:9), and this had to be more than lip service. Praise God that when He was here "His meat was to do the Father's will" (Jn. 4:34), and He alone could say: "I seek not my own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jn. 5:30). When our Lord prayed He was conscious that God always heard Him (Jn. 11:42). Had there been the slightest iota of disobedience, in act or word, including His prayers, He could not have said: "I do only those things that please Him (Jn. 8:29). It would have been a lie, and not only in the statement but the activities, would not have been for the glory of God. Toward the end of His earthly sojourn He could say: "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (Jn. 17:4), and that included every prayer He offered to God, be it in worship, thanks, or petitioning.

Is prayer an activity?

Real burdened heart prayer is a work of intensity and the Lord knew all about that. When He prayed and wept over Jerusalem it was because the glory of God was being denied Him by their rejection of His Son.

### **The Motivation For The Lord's Praying Necessitated It Was Done In Love**

Another aspect of His motive for praying was that it was an act of love, not a mere functional drudgery or duty. Paul wrote to the Corinthians telling them: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to

be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Cor. 13:1-3). With this in mind, it is clear that when our Lord prayed, His words were never as a tinkling cymbal or empty brass. It was an activity of love’s intimacy for the fellowship divine persons shared between them and for the delight to whom He was speaking. He loved God His Father and loved speaking to Him.

### [This Leads To The Pondering Of What Motivated The Father To Have The Son Praying?](#)

Who can grasp the wonders of divine understanding and sympathy? For the Lord to be my High Priest He had to know what it was to be a real man living life dependent on God. It was a manifestation of infinite compassion. The Lord knew that we never would be able to keep on believing when:

- a) Surrounded by the spiritual attacks by His Satanic majesty’s activities by sinful men, especially the religious.
- b) Being deprived of personal liberty by being cast into jail.
- c) Having the things we worked so hard for taken or destroyed before our eyes.

God knew we needed someone who could sympathize with us by Himself going through the same experiences. But, it was not just anyone. What was needed was an individual who would be able to succour, intercede for all the saints at all times, never weary and never sleeping as long as there was ever a redeemed one on earth. Such could be none other than one who is deity. Our Lord had to know the experiences of humanity, and not just humanity, but a particular class of humanity, those who were born of God walking a life of faith in fellowship with God. Thus, among the many experiences He learnt was that of praying, and seeking as we must do, wisdom, strength, and direction from God for what he should do and say. Therefore, for our strengthening for the glory of God, the Father had the Lord learn the blessedness of confiding in God, finding comfort in God, and being strengthened by God.

### [Purity Of Motive Results In Perfect Obedience](#)

There is recorded an interesting statement by David: “In the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things” (1 Chron. 29:17). David’s offering was things, and it was with a pure motive. He spoke of presenting his service willingly, but he was outshone by the Lord. In His inwards He lived in dependence on God, His was a life of faith, serving God for the glory of God and from a heart filled with love for God.

The Corinthian saints offered money but first offered themselves, thus they were followers of the example of our Lord who offered Himself.

He offered himself to glorify God by doing His will. The Lord said: “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn. 4:34); again: “I come to do thy will” (Heb. 10:9). This lovely man listened for the will of God: “Morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear” (Isa. 50:4). He sought the will of God: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (Jn. 5:30). He did the will of God: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn. 6:38). He brought himself near to God for His glory and service before the cross for we can read: “I sanctify myself” (Jn. 17:19).

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to write concerning the wrong motives of some who were preaching: “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife” (Phil. 1:15). Added to this, Paul wrote of the possibility of having the wrong motives for our speaking, activities, demonstrations of our faith, and devotion (1 Cor. 13:1-3). James was led to tell us that we can be wrong in the motive for our praying (Jam. 4:3). None of these wrongs could ever be laid against the Lord.

Our Lord’s integrity in this is beyond reproach, for God Himself, He of whom it is said: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right (Gen. 18:25), and God has appointed Him as Judge and executor of judgment” (Jn. 5:22, 27). As such, he does not judge by appearance but by that which is in the heart. No jury is needed for decision making for He is perfectly accurate in all knowledge and assessment, has perfection of character and insight. His motives are without reproach for He always seeks the glory of God. The Lord assesses a situation precisely and gives perfect judgment.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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