

Two Powerful Motivations

New Life by the Gospel of Grace

Walking with Jesus is child's play—as long as He is leading us in a direction we want to go, or as long as we are not being assaulted by the enemy. Then the going can get tough! What can you do? Reach for one or the other of these two powerful motivations. They will power you up to reign in the flesh and unleash your heart for God. Either one will help you cling to the Lord, but you have to keep them in easy reach, so know what they are and be prepared to use them.

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 6:17 ESV

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV



How Law and Grace Empower You

Our good intentions and the promises we make don't carry anyone very far towards their goals. The feelings that prompt such resolutions can dissolve as quickly as they appear. Simply wanting to do the right thing or desiring to be good are nice thoughts, but they don't have a spiritual backbone to them, unless they are backed up by something far more powerful than the warm feelings of the moment.

Fortunately for us, God supplies two powerful motivations—one positive, the other negative: the love of God and the fear of God. With these at the ready we can stay motivated to live right, reject sin and keep pursuing the Lord. One works by the Law, the other by the Gospel.

1) The Law cultivates the fear of God.

This reveals sin and helps us restrain sin. The fear of God can powerfully keep us from doing things that will wreck our life, but it cannot get out the pressure of wrong desires that are in us. It cannot save us for heaven or heal our brokenness. For that we need [the gospel of grace](#).



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2) The Gospel cultivates the love of God.

Faith activates it. Only the gospel can do this by revealing the grace that we need to see in God and by supplying the faith for us to respond. As we yield in faith the Spirit lifts us into the higher life of trust, freedom and love. Whenever your love for God wanes, re-embrace the liberating truths of the gospel of grace!

Motivation #1: The Fear of God

The most elementary form of the fear of God is knowing that you cannot escape or avoid the unpleasant consequences of breaking God's laws. The law of sowing and reaping is the "granddaddy" of all the laws in the Bible. It covers all the other laws, because it shows us that there are consequences whenever we break them. This has not been set aside by the New Covenant. In dying on the cross, Jesus removed sin's spiritual punishment (death and eternal separation from God), but not [sin's natural consequences](#).

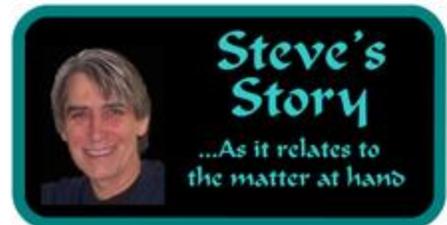
God's laws are as impossible to "break" as gravity. Just as you can jump off a tall building and feel really "free" for a short while, so, too, you can do the wrong thing morally and feel like you are getting away with it—for a while. But watch out. Such pride always goes before a fall! There is an old proverb: "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small."

The fear of God is, therefore, the beginning of wisdom because it marks the wholesome change that comes into anyone's life once they realize that God is God and they are not. They don't get to write the rules and they won't be able to get away with breaking them. Take this to heart: Every sin that you allow will carry you captive to consequences you don't want. You are literally fighting for your life and your freedom. Being convinced of this will motivate you to cling to Jesus and call on Him for help every time. Calling on the Lord is our key to victory for He has guaranteed His help will arrive, rescuing everyone who perseveres in calling on Him.

Consequences Work Both Ways

We might be easily tempted to think of the law of consequences as the law of "sowing and weeping", because the focus is usually on sowing the wrong thing (sin) and weeping as we reap its grievous consequences. The truth is, however, that this law works for us every bit as much as it can work against us. Our God rewards those who seek Him. Every step in the right direction finds a positive reward, just as every misstep reaps a negative one. That puts a divine incentive on both sides of the equation!

This motivation operates by enlightened self-interest regarding the laws of God: "I do it for love of me." If we are wise we will fight to do the right thing and cling to Jesus for all we are worth, simply because we don't want to wreck our lives by sin and its consequences. Not only that, we will actually press in to do what He wants because we *know* that "there's something in it for us." The positive consequences—peace and other blessings—are worth hanging in there to receive. You don't have to be a Christian to operate in this motivation and experience its tremendous benefits, because it is not primarily based on loving God. It is based upon an enlightened love of self.



Motivation #2: The Love of God

Fortunately, not all of our moments are embattled by trouble or temptation. During those times the love of God has unhindered opportunities to lift our hearts and lead us out into the many positive things that rightly inspire our action or give us pleasure. Nothing grows the love of God better than a grateful heart, so try to keep His goodness in remembrance. Warm your heart by thanking Him for the many ways He has blessed you in the past and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see fresh blessing in previously overlooked things that God does for you. With that in mind, seek to learn how to thank God in all things and for all things. This carries genuine praise and gratitude into whole new dimensions. (For more on this see the [Pick Ax of Praise](#) and the [Bring the Hammer Down](#).)

There are two sides to the love of God as a motivation: one is soft and tender; the other is tough as nails. The soft and tender side is primarily a feeling. We love Him because He first loves us—this is a natural response of our hearts. We also love Him because He gives us a love to love Him with—this is supernatural assistance. Scripture says that God sheds His love “abroad in our hearts.” However little we may actually feel His love, this is the deep wellspring of an unending desire in us to love and please him.

Consider how deep [the love of God](#) really is: His feeling of love for us is an ocean compared to ours; His passionate affection a torrent like Niagara Falls. Not only is His love in us as a love for us; it is in us as a love for God and for others. This river wants to flow! Because it can easily be blocked by unforgiveness, doubts and fears, our job is to keep our hearts cleared of these obstacles. (See our lesson on [Spiritual Strongholds](#).) By “un-damming” our hearts of anything that obstructs the love of God, we not only allow feelings of peace and love to resurface; we are actually fulfilling our Number One assignment—to love God first and foremost! Paul gives us a sparkling vision of what that can be like.

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:17-19 ESV

A Love as Strong as Death

Since not everything in life is “sweetness and light,” true love has to grow a tougher dimension than simple feelings of affection. This “tough as nails” side of love is best described as loyalty. We want to be loyal to the One who took that beating and died that death for us! We want to show Him how much His sacrifice means to us by being willing to lay our lives down for Him. Above all, we don’t want to disgrace the One who brought such saving grace to us. This is a fierce loyalty that would rather [die to self](#), or even die in this life, than turn against or stray away from the Greatest Friend we have ever known. Hear the heart cry of the beloved in the Song of Solomon and make it your own.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man



offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised. Song of Solomon 8:6-7 ESV

This motivation operates by a higher desire than the fear of God which is inevitably attached to our own self-interest, no matter how enlightened it may be. The love of God in us wants to become as self-forgetting, self-giving and self-sacrificing as that love that we see in Jesus. Because we love Him, we want to live under His leadership and stay intimately united to His Presence. Since we love Him because He first loves us, it is essential that we keep putting our spiritual eyes back on Jesus and the grace He supplies.

Two More to Explore

Two Warring Natures Take a good look in the “mirror”—the mirror of God’s Word. What you will see is that there is now the new you and the old you. At times the old you may seem more real than the new you, but don’t fall for its disguise. You are no longer who you once knew yourself to be. *You are a new creation.* However, your true self—your real life—is a mystery “hidden with Christ.” It can only be revealed as you walk with Him in trusting obedience into the new life He has planned for you. Get used to not being in charge!

Two Passionate Purposes The unbelieving world, plagued with emptiness, loneliness and boredom, ever seeks distraction through selfish pursuit of pleasure or ambition. What a difference a wholesome sense of real purpose brings into any life! Suddenly, one has reasons to live for, a passion to live by, and a destined purpose worthy of great and noble sacrifices. As believers in Jesus we have not one, but two magnificent purposes. Learn how to strap them on, my friend, and you need never be empty, bored, or lonely *ever again*.

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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