

Coincidence, Consequence, and Conviction

Living with Conviction

Wk. 3

What motivates you to get up in the morning and either go to school or do school? Some of us would say nothing, but we would probably be lying because we all get up and either go to school or do school at home. Maybe it's your alarm clock that gets you up and going, you hate it but it's what gets you up. Maybe it's your parents, banging on your door or calling out your name for you to get your butt in gear. Maybe it's fear, fear of failing, fear of getting caught skipping, fear of being a 25 year old senior. Whatever it is, something motivates you, encourages you, or pushes you to get out of bed to go to school. I don't have to get up and go to school right now, but there are a few things that push me or motivate me to get up in the middle of the night. The first is pooh. I can't stand it, no not my pooh or my desire to pooh, dog pooh. It's not as bad right now, but when the dog was younger the fear of having to clean up pooh in the morning would get me up at no matter what time of the night it was to let that dog out. I've heard so many stories of dog's poohing in the house and then playing in it and eating it that the mere whimper of a dog in the middle of the night gets me out of bed. A second thing that'll get me out of bed is a crying or whining kid. I love my kids, but I can't stand it when they cry. Hope will call out in the middle of the night, out of the blue, dad!!!, dad!!!! And each time it gets louder. Even if I tell her to be quiet I'm coming she continues until I'm actually in the room. Or if one of my kids has a bad dream and is up, that wakes me up.

You see no matter what we do, there is something motivating us, pushing us, or encouraging us to do it. Even for people who are lazy and don't want to do anything there's something motivating them to be that way. Sleeping in to 2pm, there's something motivating, usually the need for sleep. That's why people will do crazy stuff for love; they buy outrageous gifts, skip school, miss work, all sorts of crazy stuff, why because they are motivated.

Illustration...

Tonight we are going to look at a type of motivation called conviction. For the sake of our talk tonight, conviction is motivation by the Holy Spirit who dwells in the lives of Christians to live for God, to be motivated by God for the things of God. Now I realize that some of you have conviction and some of you don't. If you don't please don't feel like I'm trying to sell you something. All I'm really trying to do is communicate what God's word says about you and to you. Jesus says that...

Jn 16:14 He (the Holy Spirit) will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

Jn 16:15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

That means that the same spirit and the same understanding that Jesus has, you and I can have. The same things that motivated Jesus, should be the same things that motivate those who follow Jesus. Jesus was motivated by the Holy Spirit to follow God, are we? Is His Spirit living in you?

Tonight we are going to look at two guys who did some outrageous things because they were motivated by God for the things of God, they lived with conviction. One guy moved across the country and another guy started a second career, neither one of them had any guarantee's. In both situations the things they did cost them dearly, but they were motivated by God for the things of God.

The first guy's name is Abraham, in Genesis 12:1-5 we see that Abraham heard from God...

Ge 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. Ge 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. Ge 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Ge 12:4 So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. Ge 12:5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

So we know that Abraham heard from God but what motivated him to follow God? A few chapters later scripture tells us...

Ge 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness

It was Abram believing that God would do what He said he would do that motivated him to move. You see Abram lived with conviction, he lived with the motivation that God would do what He said he would do. Do we live life with that type of conviction? When God tells us in His word that we are loved, do we believe it? When he tells us that there are consequences do we live like we believe it? When He says we have purpose and that we're not an accident, that us being here tonight is not a coincidence, do we believe it? You see when we believe these things they begin to motivate us to do the same things and live the same life Jesus did.

Illustration...

The second guy's name was Paul. Paul went from being a hard core religious leader to a preacher and a tent maker.

(The difference is between a hard core religious leader and a preacher is that a religious leader follows rules to get to God and preacher has a relationship with God and follows him.)

Paul makes a drastic life change, and switches careers. As a religious leader he had a lot of freebies and enjoyed the life of a rich person but when he became a preacher and tent maker (Acts 18:13) many times he had barely enough to get by. Listen to glimpses of Paul's life

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: Phil 3:5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; Phil 3:6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. Phil 3:7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. Phil 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ

2Co 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. 2Co 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 2Co 11:24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 2Co 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 2Co 11:26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 2Co 11:27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 2Co 11:28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 2Co 11:29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 2Co 11:30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness....2 Cor. 12:9b My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 2Co 12:10 That is why, for

Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ^{Phil 4:12} I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ^{Phil 4:13} I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

So with everything Paul went through, what motivated him to continue to preach? He says it best in his own words...

^{2Co 5:14} For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ^{2Co 5:15} 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. ^{2Co 5:16} So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

It was the combination of Christ love and message, impacting Paul's life that motivated him, and drove his entire life.

Illustration...

The kicker is this, whether you live with purpose or you live by coincidence, something motivates you. Something or someone keeps you going, despite whether times are good or bad. Is that someone Christ, could that someone for you be Christ? Could you be like Abram and believe that God is going to do what he said he is going to do? Will that motivate you; will that allow you to live with conviction? Could you be like Paul, where the love of Christ and the message of the gospel are so personal to you that you live with conviction? That you're motivated by God to do the things of God? Could that you be you, it could. Will it, that's a decision you'll have to wrestle with.

Suggested Discussion Questions...

Middle School...

1. What is the best way to get woken up, why?
2. What is the worse way to get woken up, why?
3. What are some ways to wake up people to do something for you?
(Ex. Need a ride somewhere, you answer a phone call, and someone is running late when mom or dad is taking a nap)
4. If you are not motivated by God for the things of God, what are some ways you think God might wake you up? (use the metaphors about being woken up or waking others up)

Additional verses about how God might wake someone up, look for the exclamation points and see if you can "feel" the tone. *Rev. 3:2-3, Eph. 5:13-15*

Sr. High...

1. What types of things to you need motivation for, why?
2. Do we need motivation to follow God, why?
3. How is Abram's and Paul's motivation/conviction like our motivation(s) to get up in the morning? (Abram believed God, we believe there is a reason to go to school (etc))
4. How should/could God's love motivate us to live, (Jn. 14:15)