

42. WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR LIFE?



What drives you in life? What makes you get up out of bed and live your life each day?

#NCSAMENTALHEALTHDEVOTIONS

WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR LIFE?

Deuteronomy 30:15: "Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death."

Have you ever asked the question, "What is the purpose of life?" Amidst so much heartache and evil going around and people disappointing you, you perhaps have felt like King Solomon when he said that life is just a chasing after wind? What is the point of life? Is there really something that will give you satisfaction and hope and love and peace and all those beautiful things you want in life?

Please stop for a moment and ask yourself what is motivating you today? What were your sources of motivation in the past? Have you been motivated, or are you like some people who struggle with motivation? Are you saying: "Yes, I do have goals in life, I do have a plan"? "I do have a schedule, but I don't feel motivated. I struggle to get that energy, that power, that source that drives me, that thing that I can connect to, that gives me the fuel to go through the day." I want to ask you a few questions about life and the things you do and about your motivation.

- When it comes to your personal *well-being*, what makes you to get up in the morning?
- What motivates you in your own *personal life* to live a healthful life, to exercise, to look at your eating and drinking habits in order to live a healthy life for yourself?
- What motivates you in your *home life* to do the small, boring tasks that lie ahead in the day, like doing the dishes and making the beds or fixing the light you have promised your wife a long time ago?

**WHAT MOTIVATES YOU? WHAT
DRIVES YOU TO ACTION IN YOUR
PERSONAL LIFE? YOUR WORK LIFE?
YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?**

- What motivates you in your *family life*? What is keeping your family meal times and your family worship times going? What pushes you to do the things you have set for yourself to do?
- What motivates you at *work* to complete the tasks your employer has given you? What motivates you to study and to learn?
- What motivates you to be *spiritual*? What motivates your relationship with the Lord? What motivates you to do Bible study, to pray, to do those things which are spiritual and to take time to connect with God, being quiet and just allowing Him to speak to you?

We are motivated in different areas of life and we are more motivated in some areas than in others. Some of us are more motivated for self-growth, others are more motivated when they are at home and they have home tasks to do. Some are more motivated in the areas of work and success in their jobs while others are more motivated to be spiritual and to gain what God wants them to gain.

Ask yourself what motivates you more in one specific area as opposed to the others. This will give you a bit of insight into your own life and into your own being up until this point. What have you been doing successfully so far in the sense of motivation? What area of life have you been pushed in or perhaps not pushed in? Why do you do the things that you do? This will give you the answer as to what motivates you. What is your response? Are you doing the things because you are used to it or because it is the right thing to do or because it is expected of you? Is your response something like: "I don't really have a choice, do I? I don't really have a reason why I do it, I just do it. I don't really know why I do it."

WHICH AREA OF LIFE ARE YOU MORE MOTIVATED IN, AND WHY? NOW APPLY THE REASON TO THE AREAS YOU ARE LESS MOTIVATED IN.

If so, it means that right now you are probably just coasting along. It means that you are not living life with a definite purpose. You don't really have something specific that you are aiming at. You are merely existing without living with a definite purpose. You need to be careful not to get stuck in just the mundane routine of life, just doing life because you have to do it. You are getting up just because the sun rises or because it is expected of you to get up. This is not living a life in a motivated way. It means that there is not something that is pushing you, except the fact that it is expected of you. It is living life in a very aimless way.

There is a saying: *'An aimless life is a living death.'* Many of us are alive, but not truly living. We're doing things and we don't really know why we are doing them. This can demotivate a person. This can bring you to a place in your life where you wonder if life is really worth living, a place where you ask: "Why am I doing all these things?" Sooner or later you will push yourself to work hard in order to achieve your goals and your dreams and your aspirations. But if you don't have something that you are aiming at, if you don't have an overarching theme that drives you or pushes you, you are going to end up giving up on these goals. You will enjoy them for a while and then you will ask what the point is in doing it. "I've reached my goal and what now? What have I really accomplished?"

When we look at the world out there, there are many people who live their lives, pushing a dream, fighting for something that doesn't really bring meaning and purpose to their lives. They end up achieving their goals, they end up being rich, they end up being famous, they get the job they wanted, but they end up feeling miserable. They end up questioning why they even did those things.

**AN AIMLESS LIFE IS A LIVING
DEATH.**

I don't want to discuss your purpose and your goals in life only, but also what your motivation is. What is really your goal and purpose in life, your overarching goal? Not the small ones you have throughout the day, but the aim that overarches all the other decisions that you make in life. What is the purpose that drives and motivates you? Many people do have goals they want to achieve, daily, weekly and monthly goals, even for their entire lives. But they struggle to have one overarching theme or goal for their life. That thing that puts them in first gear, the thing that jump-starts their day and all the other smaller things and goals within their lives. What is your pursuit in life that you are aiming for?

If you listen to motivational speakers, they sometimes give you advice as why you are lacking motivation. They might say something like it's because you don't love what you are doing. If you can find something that you love doing, then you will be more motivated to do it. I don't say all motivational talks are bad, but the truth of the matter is, it is difficult to find love in every single thing that we do. There are things we are called to do that we don't like doing. Life is not just full of pleasures and things that we enjoy doing.

They might say one person is motivated to do the dishes, while the other one is not. And it is, they say, because the one person is thinking about dishes in a different way. They don't think about dishes as a punishment, but they think about the joy that they get after they've done the dishes. In other words, don't focus on the task at hand, but focus on the joy you will have after you have done the dishes or completed a task. It is all good motivation and advice, but the truth of the matter is that it is difficult to do that.

**MOTIVATIONAL SAYINGS ARGUE
THAT FINDING LOVE IN THE TASKS
YOU DO WILL MOTIVATE YOU INTO
ACTION.**

It is difficult for me to focus on the thought of enjoying the cleaning of the house after I have done the dishes. It is difficult to just focus on the goal and the reward at the end. Yes, they might share ideas which are not always bad advice.

- They might say things like focus on your goals.
- To achieve your goals, you must be positive in your thinking. When you do something, see the positive in the thing that you are doing. Don't focus on the negative of what you are doing, but focus on the reward at the end – the punishment versus the joy.
- Be creative in the things that you do because if you do it in a creative way, you will enjoy what you are doing and you will be more motivated to do it.
- Be assertive in what you are going to do. In other words, say: "I am doing this now and I am sticking to it until I am done."
- Be decisive in your goals. Make a decision and do it. Use energy and enthusiasm to push and to motivate you. Have a hunger for knowledge so that you can grow.
- You need to have a good self-esteem, they would say. Feel good about yourself, because if you feel good about yourself, you will be motivated to do more.

Now, all of these things may be true in certain ways. I'm not saying that you should not focus on these things, but the problem is, if you focus on all of these things, it can become overwhelming. How do you remember all of them? How can you remember to be goal-orientated, to be positive and to focus on the reward? To be creative and decisive and have energy and enthusiasm to grow? At the end of the day, it just becomes too much and you might say: "I can't do this. I just give up, it is too much to remember."

THERE IS ALOT OF ADVICE ON HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED, BUT TOO MANY TIPS CAN BECOME OVERWHELMINGLY DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW.

Now this is all good and well, but many of us struggle to think positively in our own strength. I for one, can't think positively, even if it is something that I enjoy doing. We struggle with these things. A lot of the advice that is given, is self-focused and focused on what **you must do**. **You must** focus on positivity and being creative and it is **you, you, you**. I really do believe that you set yourself up for failure when you focus so much on what **YOU** have to do.

They would even say something like: "Research has proven that you can improve your own levels of motivation and self-control." Some people might be able to do all this for a little while, but I have realised that I cannot do very much on my own. I am weak. I am selfish. I am lazy. I am prone to do the things that give me joy, rather than the things that I **have** to do. I cannot even motivate myself to brush my teeth every single day. How am I going to do all those other things, if I cannot even do the things that are important for myself and for my own health?

Philippians 4:13 gives us the silver lining that is missed by many. It says: "*I can do all things through Christ who give me strength.*" A lot of times we leave God out of the equation. We forget that it is God who motivates us and who drives us and gives us the strength to do the tasks that lay ahead of us – to do those things we have set up as goals throughout our day. It is important to set up goals that add value to your life, but remember that the true values, the eternal things, not the things of this temporary life, come from God.

You need to have this overarching theme of the greater goal in life – the things of God. How do your goals in life fit into the bigger picture of the goals that God has set out for you?

THE BIBLE TELLS US WHERE TO FIND MOTIVATION, IT SAYS: "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME".

How does your purpose for life fit in with the purpose that God has for you? People often forget that in order to live a purposeful life, is not about setting up a purpose for themselves. It is not about our own goals and our own motivation. The goals and the tasks we set out for ourselves every single day, have to fall within the bigger plan that God has for our lives, for that day as well as for our lives as a whole.

We set a lot of goals for ourselves. I believe the reason why we don't stay motivated, is because our goals are very selfish. Our goals are very much focused on ourselves instead of asking what God's purpose for our lives is.

Isaiah 26:3 says: *"You, Lord, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in You."* Isaiah is saying that there is a purpose in life and that we need to put our trust in God that He will accomplish this purpose and that we can have peace.

2 Timothy 1:9 says: *"He saved us and called us to be His own people, not because of what we have done, **but because of His own purpose and grace.**"* The Bible is telling us that God does what He wants because of His own purposes, because He has certain goals in mind for us. He saved us with His own purposes in mind, therefore we need to realise that the reason we are alive today, is to fulfil the purpose that God has for our lives.

You may say: "Nandi, I don't know what God's purpose for my life is. I don't know what He wants for my life." I'd like to tell you that the goals and the purposes God has for us, are very unique.

THE LORD GIVES PERFECT PEACE
TO THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR
PURPOSE FIRM AND THEIR TRUST
IN HIM.

It is not an overarching purpose in the sense that everybody live their lives in the same way. God has a very specific and unique reason why He has created you with your specific temperament and personality and your specific dreams. I always tell people: "If you're not sure of your purpose in life, ask yourself what spiritual push you have been feeling deep down since you were young? What goals and dreams did you have and how did those – let's call them earthly dreams and goals – fit into the bigger picture of what God wants for your life? What God wants in terms of salvation, what God wants in terms of helping others in fulfilling His purpose for this world?"

God came to this world with a very specific purpose. His purpose was to save us from sin and to reunite us with Him. How does your purpose fit in with that bigger purpose of God? How is what you are doing today, bringing people closer to God and saving them for eternity? How is what you are doing, helping yourself (and others) to bring you into a closer relationship with God? How is your day going to fit into that bigger purpose? I believe the reason why we struggle to be motivated, is because we forget to ask the question: "How does my goals fit into God's goals for me and for others and for this world?" We don't live God's purposes for our lives. We don't even live our own goals and our own ambitions. We struggle because our focus, our overarching goal, is wrong.

There are many Biblical examples of people for whom God had different purposes for their lives. *Enoch* came and lived the life that Abel was supposed to live. Through his example, he would turn the minds of sinful men to revere their Creator.

**UNDERSTANDING GODS PURPOSE
FOR YOUR LIFE WILL HELP
MOTIVATE YOU INTO ACTION.**

Abel was supposed to help us back onto the path which Cain stole from us. I believe that Enoch came and lived a righteous life to show men that God will take the righteous to heaven. He walked with God and we believe that he went to heaven. (The Bible tells us that Enoch was translated.) Enoch's purpose in life was to show us that the righteous will have eternal life, that the righteous will have a relationship with God to the point where God translates them.

I believe that *John the Baptist* lived a purposeful life. Everything he did, he did with meaning and motivation because he focused on his purpose which was to call people to repentance.

I think of a man who we often neglect in the Bible, a man named *Cyrus*. Cyrus, together with Darius, were the rulers of Medo-Persia. Many years before Cyrus was born, Isaiah prophesied God's purpose for his life. We read in Isaiah 45:13: *"I myself have stirred Cyrus into action to fulfil My purpose and to put things right. I will straighten out every road that he travels. He will rebuild My city, Jerusalem, and set My captives free. No one is hired or bribed him to do this."* This is a wonderful way in which we can look at life. God proclaimed that He had a specific purpose for Cyrus. Cyrus was going to rebuild Jerusalem and he was going to set God's people free, not because of his own doing or his own goals or ambitions or because someone bribed him, but because God had set this purpose for him.

When we look at the history, this is exactly what happened. Cyrus came in reign and took hold of Babylon together with Darius. Eventually, when the command was given for Jerusalem to be rebuild and to set the Israelites (who were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar many years ago) free, Cyrus was the one who set them free.

**UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSES
BIBLICAL CHARACTERS AND HOW THEIR
PURPOSE IN LIFE MOTIVATED THEM,
MAY HELP YOU FIND YOUR
MOTIVATION.**

In other words, God has a purpose for each person. God is not going to lead you to a purpose which you don't want. This is an interesting thing. God works with the desires of our hearts. He leads us to our purpose by making use of what we enjoy doing, the things that we find fulfilment in. We need to realise that it is an important task that lies ahead of us – to fulfil the purpose that God has for us.

When *John the Baptist* was sitting in prison, perishing and about to die, there was no greater honour for him than to die in that way in order to make God's name known to the world out there. I don't know what God's purpose is for your life, but I'd like to tell you that His overarching purpose for you is that you should live for Him in whichever way He calls you to do it. If He calls you to die, then He calls you to die. He might call you to set the captives free like Cyrus and to rebuild something which has been destroyed. I don't know if the purpose for your life is that you need to be righteous for others to observe. God has a specific purpose for you, therefore you need to know that God wants you to live your life for Him.

Proverbs 16:9 says: "*You may make your plans, but God directs your actions.*" We need to be open to the whispering of God's voice. God not only has a purpose for you, He even has a purpose for the wicked. Isn't that interesting?

Romans 9:17 is speaking about Pharaoh of Egypt and it says: "I have made you king in order to use you to show My power and to spread My fame all over the world." It is very interesting that if you allow God to lead you, even if you haven't been on His path, even if you feel that you are not a righteous person, He will use you in a way that is mighty and powerful.

PROVERBS 16:9
YOU MAY MAKE YOUR PLANS, BUT
GOD DIRECTS YOUR ACTIONS.

I am reminded of a true story which was published in the newspapers a while back.

Terrible fires broke out in the Knysna Forest in South Africa. Many houses of the people who lived in the Knysna Strip, caught fire. A lot of terrible things happened when this fire broke out, but there was a specific story told by a man who stayed in a house in an isolated area. He knew that the fires were coming, but he didn't realise how quickly they were coming. He started preparing to keep his house safe by cutting off the trees surrounding his house, clearing out the shrubs and taking everything that could possibly catch fire, away. He sent his wife and his children and some of his animals away from the home. He was very busy, trying to do the best he could to protect his home, even clearing out the little shrubs around his home and throwing them away. He also used the hose pipe to spray water around the house and on the house itself in order to stop anything from catching fire.

While he was busy doing that, the fire was coming towards his house very quickly. The area was heating up and he realised that he wasn't going to be able to protect his home. He didn't do everything he had to do in terms of preparation to keep his home safe because there was not enough time. While he was busy wetting the ground around his house and trying to clear out some of the stuff, he realised he was not going to make it. So he prayed. As he opened his eyes again, he saw a man attempting to climb out of his house with a television in his hands. That was an opportunistic burglar who took advantage of the chaos of the fire. He was trying to get away with some of the goods that were in the house. As the man saw the burglar, he shouted at him, not to scold him, but to come and help him.

**TRUE MOTIVATION COMES FROM
THE INNER PURPOSE FOR YOUR
LIFE, WHICH GOD PLANTED IN
YOUR HEART.**

The funny part of the story is that the burglar put the TV and everything that he had taken down and he actually went and he helped the man. The man and the burglar fought the fire together until the fire had passed the house – together they successfully saved his property.

I thought to myself; if God can transform a burglar and bring purpose to his life in a small way, to do good unto others and to help others who are in need, instead of putting his own selfish ambitions ahead of him (the stolen goods), surely then God has a plan for me. If He could use Pharaoh, if He could use a burglar, then surely God has a plan for you and for me.

The **reason why we fail** in the things we set aside, is because we are overworked and sometimes we desire relaxation more than accomplishment. We just want to complete the task at hand and then be lazy and enjoy life. We don't want to think and to plan and to execute. We sometimes just want to sit, doing nothing, and be mindless. This is called laziness. **Laziness** is one of the reasons why we are not successful. Proverbs 6:6-10 says that we need to learn from the ant and how the ant works diligently towards a goal of storing up food for winter.

We also tend to fail being **motivated**. Our motivation is sapped by laziness, but it is also sapped because we **focus on the wrong rewards**. We focus so much on material gain. By looking at those who gained material things, we also realise that it doesn't always bring happiness. It doesn't always bring the rewards we want. We should rather be focusing on our eternal gain. The Bible tells us to store up treasures in heaven.

**FOCUSING ON ETERNAL REWARD
AS APPOSED TO EARTHLY
REWARDS, WILL INCREASE YOUR
MOTIVATION FOR ACTION.**

Fear is also something that saps and steels our motivation. We are often worried that we are going to fail if we live our lives the way we want to. We need to learn to live in the here and the now and not to think about tomorrow and the things of tomorrow and the fear that grips us in tomorrow.

Another reason why your motivation is sapped can be because you might be struggling with **grief and depression**. You need to realise that it is not because you are a bad person, but just because you are going through things in life which lower your motivation. Perhaps you are struggling with **burnout** because you have set unrealistic goals, trying to take too much on during the day. It is mostly because we are focusing on our own goals that we burnout. It is because we are focusing on our own goals that we are fearful for the future. It is because we focus on our own goals that we become lazy, because our own goals are often silly goals.

We focus on the wrong rewards, not the eternal rewards, because our focus is on doing everything for ourselves and in our own power. We forget that it is God who gives us strength to do what we need to do. It is God who sets a goal for us for our future. We focus so much on our past failures and mistakes, instead of focusing on what God can accomplish in us and for us.

You need to learn to focus on the things that don't sap your energy and your motivation. I recommend that you focus on the love of God because I believe that the love of God is the greatest source of motivation for your daily and weekly tasks and for your life as a whole.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul wrote: *"It is the love of God that compels us."* It is the love of God that pushes us to keep doing what we need to do, even when there is persecution.

**GRIEF AND DEPRESSION CAN
DEMOTIVATE YOU. MAKE SURE YOU
ADDRESS ANY MENTAL HEALTH
CONCERNS THAT ARE SAPPING YOUR
ENERGY.**

Even when hardships come and even when we don't feel like doing the things, God's love drives us. We are ruled by the love of God. The thing that should push us in everything we do, is our love for Him and His love for us. We need to ask ourselves every single day, why we are doing this. We are doing this because God loves us and because God wants us to be successful. Because we love Him, we want to live a successful life.

In 1 Corinthians 10:31 Paul again wrote: *"Therefore whether you eat or whether you drink, or whatever you do, do it to the glory of God."* Do it for God. Do it because you have this love for God. And when you do things that don't fit into doing it for God, then maybe you should not be doing it. If what you are doing is not something that you can do for God, maybe your goals are incorrect. And that could be why you don't have motivation.

I think of the example of Jesus. I believe that Jesus was very motivated in all that He did. He lived life with a purpose. When we look at the life of Jesus, we often find Him on the mountain, preaching. He went to people's houses, like Peter's house, and healed the sick and the lame. After the Sabbath, when the sun had set, He went back and He started healing the people again and ministering unto the crowds. Even during the night, He ministered unto huge crowds. Those were things that would have sapped our energy long ago. After the healing and the preaching, He went to the boat where He slept. Even though He was exhausted, He attended to the needs of the faithless disciples when they were fearful of the storm and woke Him up. Later, on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, He got out of the boat and He healed a demon-possessed man. The people of that town chased Him away, even though He did something good.

**GOD LOVE SHOULD BE YOUR
DRIVING FORCE, A DRIVING
FORCE TO KEEP GOING DESPITE
HARDSHIPS.**

Podcast



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