

# Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

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## FRUITFULNESS: THE MOTIVATIONS OF GOD

by Dan Trygg

**What are the motivations of God?** This is a very important question. Probably it is the most significant issue which we will ever consider. A true reception and application of what the Scripture reveals about this will transform our lives entirely.

As might be expected, **this is the very point which Satan, in his insidious subtlety, attacks so vehemently. To cast doubt and suspicion upon God's motives is to successfully undercut the basis of true delight in Him, and sows the seeds of rebellion and independent action** (Gen. 3:1-6). In fact, a word of caution would probably be appropriate here in our discussion. Satan is quick to take advantage of any opportunity to distort the truth to his advantage. He would attempt to twist any analogy that would illustrate our relationship to God, e.g. God as the Master Farmer, the Vinedresser, the Shepherd, or even the Husband. He would paint the picture of a God who only wants something from us, and only is willing to provide for us so that we will give what He desires. He would point out that this is the case with earthly farmers. They, he would argue, have no inherent love for their crops. They only plant and nurture them for what benefit they can get out of them. Thus, the Blasphemer would suggest that God is only out for what He can get from us. "Sure, He is skillful at farming. Sure, He will pamper you, but only so that He can get what He wants from you." **Once God's motives are tarnished before our eyes in this manner, it is a short step to demotivate us entirely from seeking Him**, and another short step to imply that, like people we have known, either God will cast us off once He has received what He wanted, or He will reject us if we do not perform. The Accuser (Rev. 12:9), of course, will then deftly point out that we are not performing very well, after all. We might as well give up. It is impossible to please such a selfish, self-centered tyrant, anyway.

**The sad truth is that this picture of God is widely held by unbeliever and believer alike. Most believers know better intellectually, but their words and actions betray that in their heart of hearts they still are reacting to some evil, twisted caricature of what God really is.** Under the stress of trial and difficulty, how often are heard the expressions of doubt as to the quality of God's character or the extent of His involvement in the lives of His children. Doubt and suspicion pervert the very lips which have been set free from bondage to sin, having been bought by Jesus' blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit for righteousness, into tools for demeaning the very One who has given so much to secure their true liberty. **The human heart, in the foment of frustration, suspicion, and confusion, is encouraged to insist that God *prove* His love by, of course, securing deliverance or answering prayer according to the mind of the petitioner. My dear child of God, to test the Lord in this way is not only unfitting and improper, it is also unnecessary. He *has proven* once and for all His true heart of love** (Rom. 5:6-8; I Jn. 4:9,10,16). He remains unchangeable, and this greatest expression of His power, love, and unselfish concern stands beyond disputation in eternity. All doubts, questions, and accusations melt before it.

**What could He possibly gain from us?** He is the creator, owner, and sustainer of all things (I Chr. 29:10-16; Col. 1:16,17). Furthermore, **He is perfect** (Mt. 5:48) **and, therefore, has no needs or lacks which could be supplied by *anything* outside of Himself.** He is not evil, nor does He tempt anyone to evil (Ps. 5:4; Hab. 1:13; Jas. 1:13,14). He has nothing to gain from our performance of certain religious acts (Job 35:6-8). In fact, such religious acts apart from a genuine heart of love are not only empty, they are a mockery of who He is and of the relationship which He intends for people to enjoy (Isa. 1:10-15; Ps. 50:7-15; Mic. 6:6-8; Ps. 40:6-8).

**The picture which has somehow been popularized, that God created people because He was lonely, just does not pan out when compared with Scripture.** God, as an expression of His creativity, made humankind in His image to glorify Him by being a living picture of His own personality and moral nature. From the beginning, God

cherished them and surrounded them with goodness and beauty for their pleasure (Gen. 1:31; 2:8,9). **God created people so that they might be able to enjoy *Him*; not so that He might be amused with them** (Cf. Mk. 2:27).

**Throughout history, God has been working for our benefit *because He is gracious, not because He was ever being rewarded appropriately for His efforts.*** On the contrary, people in their rebellion and rejection of Him, have been a source of sorrow and grief, not a fount of joy and blessing. **If performance had ever been the focus of God's creating us, then surely He would have destroyed us long ago. Instead, He has steadfastly endured our affronts.** He has patiently communicated and brought to pass, over great periods of time and through multitudes of Divine-human encounters, the plan for the redemption of humanity. At the proper moment in time, He poured Himself into time/space history to live as a human being, to experience the weaknesses, limitations, and sorrows of our existence, and to take upon Himself the horrible payment which His justice required for sin (Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4,5; Phil. 2:4-11; Rom. 8:3,4; Isa. 53). He became the Suffering Servant, the Man of Sorrows, the Lamb led to mockery, humiliation, and slaughter on our behalf. In mercy He delivered us from what was our deserved end, and in grace He has filled us with His very Spirit to continue to be our Help and Comforter in this present evil age. He continues in very real conscious contact with the sufferings and cares of His people (Heb. 7:25; Acts 9:2-5; I Pet. 5:7). **In light of what God has done for us in the giving of His Son, we are assured that there is nothing that He would withhold from us to restore us and to enable us to walk in liberty** (Rom. 5:7-10; 8:32; Ps. 84:11). *It is the freedom and intimacy of family that we have been called to, not the fear and bondage of servitude* (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6,7). We are further instructed that our future with Him will not be a time of repaying Him for all He has done (How could we?), but rather a further continual disclosing of "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

Father, how grieved You must be over our suspicious hearts! How we dishonor You with our doubts concerning Your motivations or Your character! And, dear Father, how You grieve over the impoverished state of our spiritual lives because we have believed the devil's lies.

Father, we confess that we have been guilty of questioning You, either suspecting Your motives, or doubting the wisdom of the course of action that You have directed us to. Our hesitation to obey reflects our fundamental unbelief in Your goodness or Your omniscient wisdom. Forgive us, O Lord.

Holy Spirit, teach us the truth concerning the heart of God. Remind us of the testimony of revealed history that bears witness of Your absolute goodness and faithfulness in Your dealings with people. Teach us to trust in You, for there is none as faithful and trust-worthy as You are.

#### **FOR MEDITATION: Jn. 10:10b**

"...I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."

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