

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Compelled by Love

There are numerous ways of motivating people to serve God. But only one way produces the kind of genuine service that honors God and attracts others.

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

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Paul’s career as an apostle was not just a job. He was *compelled* to do what he did, driven by a strong sense of urgency to spread his message to as many people as possible, regardless of the cost or trouble. “Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16). Quitting was not an option; neither was doing this work with a slack hand.

But what was the driving force behind that compulsion? Paul identified it as *the love of Christ*. The fact that Jesus gave up heaven, assumed an humble existence here among men, and surrendered his life in a gruesome death—solely because he *loved* us—stirred within Paul a gratitude that demanded expression. “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself

for me” (Gal. 2:20). Paul would gladly sacrifice anything, including his own life, for the privilege of repaying such an enormous debt.

That same gratitude should dominate the minds of all those who seek to serve God. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Some people, for example, are motivated to obey out of *fear*. They live in mortal dread of going to hell, and their lives are a constant scramble to be “good enough” to avoid punishment. While fear can be a healthy device for getting people’s attention, a life propelled exclusively by fear usually ends up as a joyless existence.

Others come to the Lord as a result of *peer pressure*. This sometimes happens among young people, who can easily be swept up in an emotional group conversion, without fully understanding the meaning of the decision they are making. Years later, when they start doing some serious thinking on their own, their faith is too weak to deal with the challenges they encounter, and it’s easy to find reasons to give it up. Similarly, some older folks stick with

their faith, not out of deep conviction, but because over the years they’ve settled into a social circle defined by this faith. So they just go along with what everyone else is doing. They are usually the first to fall away in a church fuss.

The list could go on and on. Some are baptized to get a nagging preacher or wife off their backs. Others are trying to win the favor of a boyfriend or girlfriend. Some are even in it for the money; preaching can be a sweet gig if you can talk fast and aren’t too bothered by a lack of integrity.

What we do for the Lord is important, but *why* we do it is even more important. If a Christian is not motivated by a deep appreciation for the sacrifice that Jesus made for him, then his service to God is on shaky ground, and possibly even a sham.

In our efforts to win others to Christ, and in our own lives of service, the dominant message must always be the story of a God who loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. A life built on love will stand stronger and purer than any other.

– David King