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GENESIS 14

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] It's important for us, Father, to recognize how big you are. Bigger than any problem we experience, any challenge that we have. Sometimes, Lord, we think we're pretty important and we need to recognize how small we are, how needy we are, and how much we just need your grace. We need your love and we need your care. We need your salvation. Lord, life gets complicated for us at times and we start to reverse that and we start to think that you're small and we're big. So we ask as we open your word today you would just remind us about who we are. Give us a clarity about our own weakness and our need for you. Lord, we want to live this week trusting in you, having faith in you, relying on you. So we're asking you to speak to us today. Lord, I know that you know the heart of each person who's listening today and you know exactly what they need. So I pray that the portion of your word today that's most important for that person that you'd make come alive. Give them what they need as you do with each one of us. Speak to us this morning we ask. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today we're going to look at motives. I want you to just examine your own motives for a bit. Motives are those things that are kind of inside the heart of a person. Caleb even says when he thinks about the heart that's what he thinks about. He thinks about motives. That's what is this deeper stuff within us. Because we take action. We make decisions. Every day we're doing things. And that's the behavior of life. But it's good for us every once in a while to step back and say, "Why am I doing this? What are my motives in accomplishing this?" Because I think sometimes our motives can start well, but then they start moving in some different directions. You remember the Pharisees. Their motives started well probably that they wanted to serve the Lord. They wanted to please Him. But then they started pleasing people instead and they started being religious and not being able to see Jesus when He came. So something happened in their motives. It's the heart that's so important. So take some opportunity today and think about your own motives. Your motivation for doing what you do.

The Bible has several things to say about motives. Let me show you some verses that describe this. Proverbs 16:2 says – *All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord.* Now that must be a warning for us. Because what it says is all of the ways that we have, all of a person's ways seem pure to them. In other words I think people are generally consistent. Every person is internally consistent that they think that all their world makes sense and that's why they do what they do. Sometimes we're trying to say, "Yeah, it makes sense to you, but it sure doesn't make sense to me." So we're trying to change their mind. But people believe that they are consistent, that they are internally pure, that they got it together. Or maybe not got it together, but they're doing things in reacting and acting in response to some consistent thinking inside of them. But the contrast is God weighs the motives. So motives are important about why

we're doing things. So we need to step back and ask ourselves the question about our own motives. Why do we do what we do? Why are we making the decisions that we're making? Great question to ask.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:4 it says – *For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people.* Our purpose is to please God, not people. But it's so easy for us in our lives to start pleasing people and not God. Or maybe we're trying to please God, but we're really trying to please people. So the people-pleasing motive gets in the way there. And notice it says there – *He alone examines the motive of our hearts.*

It also affects our prayer life, as James 4:3 says – *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.* So if your prayer is “Lord, make me happy today,” likely you're going to end up with a problem and you're not going to get what you want. Because if you pursue happiness you don't find it. That's not how you get it. You might get pleasure and it might be nice for a while. But pursuing pleasure leads to addiction. If we pursue the God-filled life then happiness, pleasure is a byproduct. *Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you.* In other words you don't seek the other things, you seek the Lord. So motives become very important for us as we're pursuing our understanding.

I want you to think about motives for a moment. Let me give you some very practical examples before we look at our passage in Genesis 14. Here are some external motivations. I want you to look at these. And I want to look at some internal motivations. Because when you become a Christian, your motivations start to change. You move from external motivation to more internal motivation in your life. You just do. That's what it means to follow Christ. That's what He taught us. You're going to see that today all the more.

I grew up in a Christian home, so my life was always learning more about what it means to be internally motivated instead of externally motivated. That's just part of living the Christian life. So if you're externally motivated, you're asking what am I going to get out of this? What's the reward I'm going to get? If you're going to choose to do an activity you want to know how it's going to benefit you.

Or the fear of punishment. When you ask kids, “Why do you do what's right?” I love to ask children this question. Why do you do what's right? Often their answer is “so I don't get in trouble.” Fear of punishment. It's not just kids, is it? Adults are that way too.

Fear in general that I'm going to lose something. And so that fear drives me to make decisions sometimes.

Praise of others or fame. Trying to be this people pleaser. If I can please other people. And it's not just peer pressure for young people, although that's a major concern. Sometimes young people make decisions based on peer pressure and they get themselves in trouble. But it's not just kids, is it? Even adults make decisions based on peer pressure. It's an external motivation.

The desire for power or to control externals. You know that's an external motivation.

And of course comparison and competition. Comparing ourselves with someone else to make sure we're doing as well as they are, or we're having as much as they have, or competing with someone else to make sure that we're doing better than they are. That kind of comparison and completion, those are all external motivations.

Well let's look at some internal motivations because you'll be reminded as you look at these of things that are true about the Christian life. Jesus came to teach us more about these things. This is what happens. When you become a Christian these things start affecting you in ways that make you different than someone else.

Love for example. And I put loyalty there because sometimes there's this sense of loyalty that comes from this inner motivation. You say, "Why does that person keep hanging in there?" They hang in there because there's a sense of loyalty. This internal motivation. Not that they're getting anything from it. But there's this loyalty or love often is what's motivating them.

A very important one in our Christian faith is gratitude. We see it over and over in the scriptures. That we are grateful for all that God has done for us and that prompts us to want to give back and to serve others and to do things.

Which leads us to serving God or making the world a better place. Christians are noted for this. So when we go into another culture, we're setting up schools and we're setting up hospitals. We're helping them change the culture in regards to hygiene and other things. We are interesting in serving people. Christians have inside of them this desire to do this. We'll see that more today as we go into our story. But there's an internal motivation to serve God and you do that by serving other people or often making the world a better place so to speak.

Sometimes our internal motivation is personal growth. That I want to grow, I want to become a more patient person. I'm not getting a reward for that, except that internal personal growth experience. That God is doing something in me. That's an internal motivation.

Here's another one. A sense of accomplishment. Yes, got it done. Now you can experience that by doing your to-do list and checking off things. Why do you mark off that last thing before you throw it in the trash? Will you mark off that last thing because there's a sense of yes! I'm marking that off! A sense of accomplishment. And that's internal motivation. But there's this sense in our Christian life that we're accomplishing things for the Lord. There's this sense of yes, we're advancing the kingdom. We're a part of something bigger than just ourselves.

And that last one I put (now motivation is much bigger than this, but I've just chosen some things to illustrate this so we can do some evaluation today) is responsibility or integrity. Sometimes you do it just because it's the right thing (integrity) or you're responsible for this and you feel internally obligated to do it. You're not going to get a reward for it, but you know you need to do it. It's part of your job and so that's your task and that's what you're doing.

Well now having said all those things about internal motivation and external motivation, having talked about just motivation in general and how the scriptures talk about motives and how they

affect our lives, let's do some work here. Let's do some work to evaluate the motives of Abraham when he makes three important decisions today. We're going to try to figure out what those motivations are. As we do, we're going to learn some things about yourselves and be able to evaluate our own motivations as we go through this passage. That's the goal as we look at this passage.

Now in Genesis 14 we have a story. I'm not even going to read the first few verses of this story because there's a lot of names of things. Let me just summarize the first few verses so you understand. In that day and age when Abraham had come to Palestine, they didn't have yet the Persian Empire or the Greek Empire or the Roman Empire. They didn't have those yet. They were not present. Those are huge kingdoms, empires that affected the whole known world. They didn't have those. But what they did have was they had small little kings and kingdoms. They had serfdoms as we would call them where this king would rise up over here around his little group of people. There would be another king over here and they'd have some skirmishes. And then some of them would get together and they would tax someone else and they would say, "Okay, we're going to put a tax on you guys or we're going to come beat you up." It was these little skirmishes that they had. Abraham was living in that political environment. It's like politics is what it is. Sometimes I just have to turn off the news because I can't stand listening to it anymore. That's what we got going on here. It's a lot of politics happening.

So we're going to look at this in Genesis 14. Let me show it to you. I'm going to just read the yellow portion here. You can read the whole thing, because it's going to give you the list of the five kings and the four kings. Because in this story that we're about to see there are four kings that are kind of gathered together and they are the bullies. They have been taxing the five kings. The five kings have been paying their taxes for about twelve years and now they've decided to stop doing that. That's all you really need to know about this. If you want to read the names of all the people you can do that. I'll tell you about some of them as we go.

But it says in verse 3 – *And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.* So now we've got four kings versus five kings. Because the five kings have decided to rebel and the four kings are going to enforce their taxation. That's what's happening in this kind of an environment.

Let me go to the next verses in verses 8-12 and let me read these to you so you get a little more of the idea. Here's the names again. *Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) (that is five kings, notice) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim with (and then we have the four kings they're fighting against) Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five.* I think you got the picture. Four kings against five. They're going to fight each other because they're going to see if they have to pay the taxes or not. That's what's happening. It's politics. We wouldn't even know this story, it wouldn't be important, like most of the politics today we wouldn't even know about it unless it affected us.

So here's where it starts affecting us. It says in verse 10 – *Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits (tar pits), and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah,*

and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot. Here's where the story gets relevant. You would not know this story if it weren't for Lot. That's how it becomes important to us. They took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

So now it gets personal. So sometimes I do turn on the news. When I find out something is getting personal, I want to know what the governor is saying or the president is saying or the mayor is saying. I want to know what's going on. It gets personal.

Now here it gets very personal for Abraham. So he's going to have to make some decisions here. What he's going to do is he's going to leave where he is and he's going to go fight a battle. He's got his own little serfdoms going. We're going to see that going on here. But he's going to go out and fight a battle. He's going to win the battle. Let's see why does he fight the battle. I'm getting ahead to the motivations in a moment. Before we do let's read the story. This is the first of three decisions he makes. Let's ask the question, why is he doing this? We'll go back to our external and internal motivation and see what do we think he's doing and why.

Let's read the story first of all starting in verse 13. It says this: *Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. Those are four groups of people now. They're going to get together and go and fight too. So they got their own little allies happening here. When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them... This guy has got a lot of stuff, he's got a lot of servants, and these guys are trained. So if you look at the political climate you've got to have trained soldiers in your family because there's a lot of infighting and politics going on here and you got to protect yourself. So he's got them. So went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.*

We're going to learn more about the possessions and what all happens to them in a little bit. But let's start with the question why. Why does Abraham go out there and fight this battle? I mean we already had a situation with Lot. Remember he goes to Lot and he says to Lot, "Hey, let's divide up. You decide what part of the land you want and let's separate." So they do. Lot goes his way and they separate from Abram. He's happy he's got the beautiful land. He ends up going and living in Sodom.

You see Lot made a bad decision. His decision was he was hanging around the wrong people. I'm sure we all know people like my friend in high school. When I was younger in high school I had a friend who was a good guy. I mean we were friends. But he ended up getting arrested. I'm going, "How in the world did you get arrested?" He says, "I don't know. I was in this car with these other guys and the police stopped us and found drugs in the trunk, so they arrested me. I wasn't even a part of that." That's what happens when you hang around with the wrong people. That means you don't have to do anything wrong. Just being by bad people you are going to get in trouble.

I don't want to hang around with people who are disobeying God. I mean if God is going to discipline them, I don't want to be standing next to them when the lightning strikes, you know. I want to be serving the Lord. So sometimes if you're hanging around with the wrong people you get in trouble. Bad things happen. And that's what happens with Lot. We don't see any indication that Lot is sinning here. He's just hanging around with the wrong guys. And he gets taken away as part of the plunder. Now he's going to be a servant to some other serfdom somewhere. So Abraham's making a decision to go out and to rescue him.

Well let's look at some external motivations. What is motivating this guy? Let's go back to our list. Is it personal reward? No. He's not going to get anything out of this by going and rescuing Lot. Is it fear of punishment? I don't think so. Is it fear in general? No. He doesn't seem to be afraid. Is it praise of others or fame? No, that doesn't seem to be what he's looking for. Power or control of externals? No, that's not on the list either. Is it comparison or competition? No. It is not anything on this list because he's not externally motivated. He's internally motivated to do something.

So let's look at the internal motivation list. What do we see there and what do you think? Well I think it's the first one. I think he has this love or this sense of loyalty to family. You just got to think about this. Because I know sometimes you might look at someone else's family and you go, "Look at that girl. Her parents are continuing to support her and she's doing the wrong thing." And the brothers and sisters are saying, "You can't support her anymore. You shouldn't do that." So there's this argument among the family. But the dad says or the mom says, "She's family. We've got to take care of her." So that's this loyalty, this internal motivation that's driving Abraham and saying I'm going to do this. I'm going to go out there.

Gratitude? I don't think so.

Serving God, making the world a better place? I think so. I think he's saying what is happening here is not right. It shall not be that Lot gets carried away and these kings get overtaken. That's the wrong thing that's going on. I'm going to go out there and I'm going to do something about it. See, I think Christians do that. We are proactive. We don't just sit around. We see someone that is hurting and we help them.

I just think about that story of the Good Samaritan. In that situation there was kind of an ethnic problem going on between the Samaritans and the Jews. Two Jewish guys pass this guy who had been overtaken by robbers, laying bleeding on the ground. Two Jewish guys, one a Levite and the other one a priest, go by him and they don't even do anything. But the Samaritan comes by and he picks up the guy and takes him and cares for him. He's serving.

There's just this Good Samaritan mentality that's embed in us because we are now Christians. We imitate Christ who *did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many*, the Bible says. So we are following Christ and Christ was all about serving. In fact He spent a lot of time trying to teach the disciples and the Pharisees about the importance of service. We serve God. We serve others.

I'm sure that's part of Abraham's motivation. I just think the closer we get to God the more we serve. The closer we get to God the more we give up our agenda. It takes place in a marriage relationship. Doesn't it? If you go into a marriage relationship and you're externally motivated, it's all "what are you going to give me?" "What am I going to get for that?" "Well let's split it. You do this; you do that." But if you go into a marriage as a Christian you say, "How can I serve?" How can I make this work? I want to give you more than you give me. My goal is to serve you." It's just a powerful internal motivation. I think that's what Abraham's experiencing there.

Personal growth, sanctification? That's probably not his motivation here.

Sense of accomplishment? I don't think so.

Responsibility and integrity? Maybe that's part of that. So as we evaluate Abraham, notice the internal motivation that's driving him and think for a moment about the internal motivations that you experience in your own life. Why do you do what you do? Because I believe that our lives are made up of rescue missions. We're out there rescuing people. It takes place in a lot of different ways. That's who we are. We're Christians. We're out there rescuing people. We're trying to figure out, should I rescue these people or let them suffer on their own? What should I do? We're trying to figure all of that out. But we're asking the questions where other people aren't even asking the questions because we're Christians. We're wrestling with that.

Let me show you some verses that just talk about what happens when you become a Christian with this idea of rescue missions. Colossians 3:13 talks about forgiveness. Do you think about forgiveness as a rescue mission? Well I do. I think it's this idea that we're giving something a person doesn't deserve. That's what we're doing. It says in Colossians 3:13 – *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

So we look at the fact that God forgave us. Because of that spiritual depth that God is giving us, we have a lot of reserve that we can give to other people and say, "Okay, I forgive you. I release this offense." It doesn't mean we let them hurt us again. I mean we still may set some boundaries, but we're saying I'm not going to hold this offense against you. Certainly forgiveness does something for us, but it's this thing that we do. We give to other people that's just a blessing to them. It's a way of rescuing, giving, serving other people. Forgiveness is part of that. That's what Christianity is all about. Because God forgave us.

Here's another one in Acts 20:35. *In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

You see we as Christians think differently than people who are not yet Christians. Because our desire is to not please ourselves and build our little kingdom, our goal is to serve others and to bless them. Because we know that it's more blessed to give than to receive. That's what Jesus taught us. We're trying to follow His example.

Very important. Check your motivations because maybe God as you're kind of thinking through your life is going to say to you I need to increase this area of my life to enhance that motivation capability inside of me. I don't know what God wants to do in your life. I just spent some time this week evaluating my motivations and why am I doing what I'm doing? I want to make sure my motivations are in line with what God has for me and wants to do.

Well let's go on to the next part of the story. Because as we go into the next part of the story we're going to see Abraham's second choice that he makes.

It says starting in verse 17 – *After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).* So you have to imagine there is a valley. They brought all of the stuff. All the people and all the things that they got from those kings. They brought them back and they're all in this valley and they're all going to talk about it. Two kings in particular are in this story and they're going to visit Abram. When they visit him, he's going to make a couple decisions here. We're going to look at the first one because this first king is a mysterious guy. We have no history about him. He just shows up here. His name is Melchizedek.

Verse 18 – *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)* Now this story of Melchizedek is picked up other places in the Bible, Psalm 110. But most importantly in Hebrews 7 where the whole chapter is given over to this guy Melchizedek in order to teach us more about Jesus. You see what we learn about Melchizedek is this. Here's a guy who is a priest, but he didn't come from the priestly line because Moses wasn't even born yet. Aaron, the first high priest wasn't born yet. The whole instructions about the priesthood on Mount Sinai haven't happened yet. We don't even know what a priest is supposed to do. There is no priest yet. Here's a guy who shows up on the scene. He's not like the other priest, like Jesus who didn't come from the tribe of Levi like all the other priests. He came from the tribe of Judah. It's surprising. He's our high priest that Hebrews 7 is talking about. We see that he's a king and a priest. He's the king of Salem.

Notice he's bringing out bread and wine. That should start reminding you about something about Jesus. Because Jesus brought out bread and wine when He's doing the Last Supper with His disciples. There's some parallels about Melchizedek and Christ that are fascinating because Melchizedek is a picture of Christ who's yet to come. Someday when we get to Hebrews 7 I'll develop all of that and you'll see more about it. For now let's go back into Abraham's life and let's see how he's interacting with Melchizedek and what Melchizedek does.

Verse 19 – *Melchizedek blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Now here's this priest we don't know how he was trained or who he was, but he's a king and he shows up on the plains here and he makes this statement obviously from God to remind Abraham that what has happened here is from the Lord.

I think sometimes we tend to think that when we accomplish something it was because we did it. "Hey I went to school all those years and now I'm moving up in the company and you're telling

me God did this? Look. I did this. I worked myself up from my bootstraps.” We have to be careful because we have to realize that God is even the one who gives us the breath to breathe. He gives us the strength, the mind to be able to study, and the opportunity to advance in a company. God provides all those things for us. If we start thinking we did it, we get into a problem.

Here this king comes and says, “Praise the Lord that God has allowed you to rescue these people. He has given you the victory. Praise the Lord.” That’s what this guy is coming to do. To remind Abraham about this.

It makes a statement – *And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Now there's no instructions about the law here. There's no statement about a tithe. It's not here in this passage. What's happening in this passage is that Abraham out of his own free will and willingness steps up and says okay I'm going to give. I'm going to give financially to this guy, to God's work, or whatever he's doing here. I'm going to give. It's this statement internally he's doing something. He's making this statement. He's motivated to share with this guy Melchizedek.

So let's just stop and pause and ask the questions about his internal motivation at this point. Why is he doing this? Is it because of love and loyalty? I don't think so. I think it's probably the second one, out of gratitude. He's so grateful for all of the things that God has done, including bringing him to where he is today, winning the battle, having success, having what he has with his 318 soldier guys. He's got all this stuff. The Lord brought him to where he is today and he says, “I am so grateful for all of this I am going to give.” I think that off the list of internal motivations, I think that's the one.

When it comes to our financial giving, God makes it very clear in the New Testament that we don't give as a sense of obligation. Now you may start giving it as a sense of obligation in order to build the discipline in your life. But there comes a place when you start giving freely. And that's why it says – *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

There's this internal motivation that we have to give financially to God's kingdom. That's what we do. But notice it's internal motivation that takes place even in our own lives. So pause for a moment and ask yourself the question, whether it's giving of your time or energy or whatever you do, what is it that drives you? Is it external motivation or is it internal motivation? What is it that God wants to do specifically in your life?

Well let's go to decision number three now as we look at the rest of this story in Genesis 14. Because now the king of Sodom is also there on the plains. We got the first king comes and blesses him. The other king Sodom almost makes this rude statement to Abraham. Notice it says – *And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.”* In other words, you won the battle. All the people here I want for me. You take all the other things, the wealth that is there.

Notice what happens. *But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the Lord (that's like an oath, like "I swear" kind of thing), God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."*

Those are the guys who partnered with Abraham to go and conquer these people and to win the little battle they had there. So he's saying let them have their portion and let my men have what they ate. But let's just let go of the rest of it. I don't want to take anything from you.

You got to think what is he doing and why is he doing this? Well let's go back to our list of internal motivations that I put together and just ask the question. Was it out of love or loyalty? I don't think so. Was it out of gratitude? Probably not. Was it because he was serving God and wanted to make the world a better place that he wouldn't receive these things from Sodom? That doesn't ring true to me. Was it because of personal growth or sanctification? I don't think so. Was it because of a sense of accomplishment? Probably not. Was it responsibility or integrity? Ah I think that's probably it. Integrity.

I want all the glory that comes from my personal growth. When people see me and they see that I've made wealth, I don't want them coming and saying they contributed to this or they made me wealthy. I want all the glory to go to the Lord. There's this personal integrity that Abraham has that's striking here. So much that he forgoes some of the financial benefits he could have received. He says no, I'm not going to take those because my integrity is important. I've got to live with myself. I'm going to be talking to myself every day and I want to make sure that what I'm saying is what I like to be saying to myself.

You know it's this personal integrity that drives us many times and that's what takes place in the light of Abraham in this case. Just ask yourself, what motivation do you have? What's driving you to make the decisions you've made? Because I think when you start making the evaluations, you start saying, you know what, I probably need a little bit more of this in my life. A little more service or generosity or forgiveness or something. I need a little bit more of that in my life. Because that will increase that motivation. That will help me exercise that part of my life that is godliness so I can be more like Christ. I want to be more like Christ and I want my motivations to be correct, so I'm going to practice that a little bit more in these various areas so that I can demonstrate to myself and to others really that my motivations are becoming purer in my life.

I just love the passage when Moses was saying to the Israelites... Just feel what he's saying to them. He's saying you're going to be successful when you go into the land if you do this. He says to them in Deuteronomy 6 of all of the things I could tell you to do when you go into the land, do this. He says – *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* Make that your motivation to love the Lord your God with all of those things. *These commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts.* They're not just a list out there on the wall, obligations. They are to be on your hearts. They are your internal motivation to follow the Lord. I'm showing you what this looks like. The primary thing you want to do is love

the Lord your God with all your heart. That is your motivation, he's saying. You want to do that. All the other things are going to fit into place if you do that.

And then he makes the statement – *Impress them on your children*. We have a job to do with our kids. It's not just about external motivation. “Do that or you're going to get in trouble.” Or “you do that and I'll give you a reward.” No. We serve the Lord because we love Him. And so Moses is saying impress these ideas on your kids. Otherwise they're going to become legalistic. They need to know the faith comes from inside. It's something that we do because we love God and that's why we do all the things we do. That's how we handle our lives. We are motivated internally.

I just trust that as God works in your own life and that as you evaluate your own motivations, God will prompt you. That's what He does. You just say, “Holy Spirit, come in and will you put your finger on an area of my life that you'd like me to change?” He's going to come right to that area in your heart where He says probably this thing you need to do, probably the motivation, you're holding onto that maybe because of fear, or maybe you need to work on your anger because that desire to control is a problem. And so God takes us through those things because He wants to purify those motivations inside of us. I trust that God will use that in your own heart to help you understand what it means to follow Jesus Christ as your own Lord. He's the boss. He's the one we're motivated to serve. When we serve Him that way, our motivations change. We grow more. So think about your motivations and allow God to speak to you in the midst of that.

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Father, we know that we have a mixture of motivations sometimes. Sometimes we have faith and sometimes we say like the man who says, “Lord, I have belief, but help me in my unbelief.” Lord, we want our motivations to trust you and to have faith in you. We're mixed in that sometimes. So grow us, Father. Teach us what it means to serve you in very practical ways so we can prove those motivations that sometimes get us sidetracked. Lord, we entrust ourselves to you and ask that you would be honored in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.