

4.19.21 - Motives

Can we know a person's motives by his actions? If my friends do not want to associate with me since they learned of my naturist beliefs, are they trying to force me to think like them? Is their only one motivation for a given action? Do we know enough to judge a person's motivation? We will look at some Bible examples and then the reaction of your friends to naturism.

We will start with a popular Bible story: Jonah and the great fish. Jonah is often portrayed as rebellious, but that is more of an action classification than a motive. Was he rebelling because he hated God? Did he hate the Ninevites? Did he think he could force God to send someone else? He could even have been trying to help his country against the Ninevites. Let God destroy them, and we will not lose any men in battle. Do we know enough to say for sure why he headed away from Nineveh? His actions when he saw God would not destroy them could be used to say he hated Ninevites, but he may have just wanted to see fire come down from heaven and destroy a city. Conclusion: we do not know why Jonah rebelled against God's command even though we certainly have some hints.

There is no doubt that Balaam was looking for wealth. Is that all he was offered? **Num 22:17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.** Remember the first offer was only wealth and Balaam followed God's instruction at that time. After the instructions the second time he found a way to justify going along with the messengers. Balaam could have been motivated by power, honor or wealth. Again, we are not sure of the motive even though it is usually assumed he went for wealth.

Surely you would agree that King David was motivated by sexual lust. If we go to Nathan's analogy in his message from God, it is clear that David had a whole "flock" to gratify his sexual lust. He might have felt guilty for not going to the battle as he was expected to do. Satan (the traveler in the analogy) may have added boredom to the guilt. David needed an adrenaline rush to quiet the "still small voice". David may have been looking for some divergence, excitement, or adventure. Satan is always willing to use any motive to ruin your life and provide the justification for your desired action, but that does not tell us his motive for sure.

We are hoping the examples above show that there are always a number of possible motives for any given action. Which motive is the cause of the action? Until we can read minds correctly all the time, we are not able to pick the motive

for a given action. When we assign a motive to an action, we are most likely blinded by our like or dislike of the person. If we like the person, we pick the most acceptable motive for the action, but we use the most wicked motive for people we dislike. To illustrate: a person who is not easily swayed by peer pressure is called strong willed and resolute by his friends but stubborn and obstinate by those of a contrary opinion.

Let's consider the person who stopped being your friend since word got out that you are going to naturists activities. What could motivate them to act unfriendly? They may fear being rejected by the group they associate with. They are very sensitive to peer pressure. They may be very insecure, and change is frightening. They may think they have to think as you do to be your friend. They may have a friend, mentor, or pastor who gave them a lot of misinformation and they can't see a way to be friends with someone who believes like they have been told. They believe you have gone into deep sin and left the faith.

What about the ones that are down-right mean you ask? We believe most of them are in the position of Job's comforters. They have to choose between their beliefs and what God is really like. Their belief that God hates nakedness makes you a wicked person. They feel right helping God "punish the sinner". Saul of Tarsus is the Bible example. He was helping God keep His worship true by killing the Christians who Saul believed were going astray. The people act this way think they are helping God and you by being mean. They may be overreacting to protect the "weaker believers". They may think the idea is contagious like a cold, so they drive you away from them. None of these motivations get the desired results. They set a bad example of Christian behavior for others who are watching. They keep the people they are "protecting" babes in Christ, unable and afraid to think for themselves.

What do we do about this pushback? Be confident in your agreement with the Word of God when you engage in naturists activities. Do not allow their bully tactics to dissuade you from living as God intended...stand fast. If we give in to their "demands" they see that as an indication that they are right...and they are not! You may not return the meanness back to them and stay obedient to scripture. Treat them as nice as they will allow you to without being a pest. Revenge belongs to God. You need to ask for power to love unconditionally which is an indication of walking with God, but it is not easy. You do not know enough to assign a motive to their actions. There is always more than one motive for a given action. If the person is saved, then they have a good heart, but they are not being led by their heart in this area. They need to renew and reprogram their minds to agree

with their hearts. God forgave you for all your sins so to be God like you need to forgive those who mistreat you.

Remember to not treat them the way they treated you. Love unconditionally, forgive quickly and even before they ask, seek to restore and not to ignore or destroy. Treat them as Christ does and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your heart!