

Hebrews 11 (24-27) – Keeping Your Motivation Fresh

The key to change is motivation. It can be positive or negative motivation. To obtain something you want, or to avoid something you don't want. You change your behavior and direction because you are motivated. And you stay the course as long as you stay motivated. Everyone knows that.

The question is, how do you stay motivated? How can you keep your motivation fresh when you are in a mundane or miserable situation? When life seems boring, how can you keep going? And how can you increase in holiness when you feel life's heaviness? How can you fight your impulses, and stay motivated against sin?

Today, we are going to examine what motivated Moses, to leave Egypt, and also to keep on going, even after he led Israel out of Egypt. And you will see how you can keep this type of motivation going in your everyday life.

Moses had lived his early years as a prince of Egypt. He was royal, rich, and respected. And yet, Moses left all that for another life. A life of hard choices, and negative circumstances. But Moses still took the actions of faith. Moses *refused* the position and pleasures, and he *chose* the mistreatment and reproach, because he *considered* it worth it. And the reason he considered it worth it was that he was *looking* at the reward. He *left* it all behind, and he wasn't *afraid* of the trouble it might cause him. The reason he was able to *endure* is that he *saw* the future and kept it in focus. He left Egypt because of the big picture. He continued on because he was able to keep the big picture in everyday focus. He leveraged his motivation and made it lasting.

You need powerful motivation to overcome worldly attraction and persecution. You need something to keep your engine running when you feel like you're out of fuel. Your willpower alone will not get it done in the long run. You need to know how to stay the course instead of self-indulge.

Moses was able to get motivated, and stay motivated. So, how can you?

Vs.23 – Moses’ parents were faithful. But they were slaves like the rest of the Israelites in Egypt. And Pharaoh had decreed that all new born males of Israel were to be put to death. So, they hid Moses. And in the sovereign providence of God, something happened between vs.23 and vs.24.

You see it in Acts 7:20-24 – *At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God’s sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father’s house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.* Moses was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter. And Moses became a royal in the palace of Egypt. He was well taught and he became a wise and great man. He lived a life of luxury and power and renown. But then God put it into his heart to see who his real people were, and how they were being brutally mistreated. And so, Moses refused to continue living his old life.

Vs.24 – All Moses had ever known was his Egyptian heritage. He had great riches, recognition, and reputation. But then, Moses grew up. This phrase, *when he was grown up*, means “having become great”. Moses had grown in age and stature, but also in power and prestige for his accomplishments. Moses had become a great man. But when Moses became great, God grew him up, and he refused the easy way, and went the right way, God’s way.

Moses had all the adoration and affirmation he could have ever wanted. But what good is that if you lose your soul? In all your struggles to be somebody, often all you prove is that your priorities are wrong. Moses had it all, as far as the world is concerned – but he was ready to let it all go for God.

It’s hard to change when you are comfortable, and what Moses needed was to be shaken out of his comfort zone. So, God led him to see the plight of his true people. After this, he refused to identify with his old life and enjoy its comforts. Instead, he chose a different, difficult path.

Vs.25 – Moses chose to suffer with the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Too often, people choose temporal satisfaction over eternal values. You think a little sin is okay because you know that God will forgive you. But that is not exercising faith, that is perverse disobedience. 1 Peter 2:16 says – *Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.* Playing with sin won't help you to stay motivated for God. Moses refused the easy life and he chose mistreatment instead. So, Moses must have had some extreme motivation to refuse and choose such extreme opposites. The question is, what was that motivation?

Vs.26 – Moses thought about it. He weighed the options, and came to a decision. Moses did the math; the text says he *considered*. This wasn't just his inner feeling or sentiment. This was the weighing and comparing of facts, a careful and deliberate judgment, his once for all reckoning for his once for all move. And he *considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.* Jesus was worth it.

How could Moses consider the reproach of Christ greater when Christ was born many years later? Moses believed in a Messiah. His eyes were fixed on God and his reward. It motivated Moses to leave his world behind. He was laying up treasures in heaven. But people want to live in their reward now. They try and have it both ways. But Jesus says you can't serve two masters.

Now hear this. The Christian life isn't just about having to deal with every hard situation by gritting your teeth and bearing it. Don't think that God just wants you to suffer all the time. It's not that you always have to suffer, it's about finding your joy in Jesus even when you do have to suffer. It's living a life that says Jesus is worth it. But it's not just putting on a happy face. It's about truly experiencing joy and peace in believing. And sometimes life is difficult because God is giving you the opportunity for a greater reward. God's refining fire is God is putting you on the bonus plan. Faithfulness will increase your reward in your eternal life, and bless you with God's presence in your life right now. You don't have to take advantage of it if you don't want to. But all that will do is leave you miserable, or falling into sin.

Moses *was looking to the reward*. He realized that the reward was worth the sacrifice. He was placing his value on the eternal riches, and also on knowing God more intimately now. Jesus said that where your treasure is, that is where your heart is. Enjoying the pleasures of sin wasn't as exciting to Moses as the reward he was looking at. He knew that unlike *the fleeting pleasures of sin*, the reward of God wasn't fleeting, it would be lasting. He had faith. And keeping your faith focused is a key to understanding motivation. You need this, because it will help you deal with sin. You need to keep on rowing your boat, but you need more, you need wind in your sails.

The answer to your impulses is to fight the sinful motivation with a greater motivation. The issue is that in those moments of temptation, the "wrong thing" is the very thing which has the immediate reward, the gratification, the pleasure. And you get to enjoy it, while the pain of having made the "wrong decision" comes after. So, it's no wonder when you choose the wrong thing. Because you get the pleasure and you don't get the pain. And doing the right thing means you don't get the pleasure and you do get the pain. So, choosing the "wrong thing" is a powerful two-edged sword. You get the immediate gratification, and also get to delay the pain. So, in the moment, it is strong motivation. That is why it is so powerful.

What can you do? How can you fight your impulses? Two ways. A negative motivation and a positive motivation. First, you need to realize that your sinful choice is waging war against your soul. And realize that the pain of regret is worse than the pain of discipline. The reward is worth the sacrifice.

Second, you need the motivation of a greater spiritual vision! Christ loves you and has fought for you and won you. He has saved you and is saving you. He has an eternal inheritance waiting for you. And here is your impulse smashing motivation: your reward can INCREASE! Moses knew he was going to have some very hard times, but he used this vision of his reward, his vision of Christ, to smash the idol of the immediate impulses in his life. If you don't have this vision, you won't have this victory. And if you don't understand what I am saying yet, keep listening.

The pleasures of sin are only for a season. They will bring immediate gratification to the flesh but the gratification is short lived. The problem is when you think you can have both. You don't think about what sin will cost you for eternity, you want gratification to the flesh now. It isn't worth it.

People think that because they are saved, their reward is already set. But they are wrong. Yes, if you are saved, then your eternity with God is set. Everyone in heaven will be fully happy. But everyone will have different measures of fullness. In other words, your cup will be completely full in the afterlife. But the size of your cup is determined by how you live in this life.

No one will ever make it to heaven and then say they wished they went to church less, or prayed less, or read their Bible less, or talked to people about Jesus less. You know that's true. But how can you keep yourself going? You need something to pull you toward God instead of just trying to push yourself out of sin. Focusing on your reward is just such a thing. It's what put the wind in Moses' sails. And it will work for you, too.

Vs.27 – Moses first left Egypt after he killed the Egyptian slave master. And now, 40 years later, he did not fear the Pharaoh, but led all of Israel out of Egypt. He was motivated to get the people out. And he had to stay motivated to keep the people out. It was hard, but Moses was able to endure.

Moses kept his motivation fresh. He kept on going. He *endured*. Now this endurance is talking about a single decision, Moses' decision to leave Egypt and fulfill his role as the deliverer of the people. But Moses also had to keep on enduring because the people wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. Just like the people in the book of Hebrews had to be reminded not to go back to Judaism when Christianity got tough. Just like you and me. Moses didn't do this thing perfectly. But when he made mistakes, and when he felt the weight, he always went back to the vision.

Christians can have trouble enduring. The text tells us how Moses endured – *he endured as seeing him who is invisible*. This is talking about keeping Jesus

in your focus. About seeing your circumstances through the lens of Jesus, instead of seeing Jesus through the lens of your circumstances. You say I just can't do it. Well, it is because you don't really see it. It is far off, and not in focus. You have to see it as a "for now" truth not just a "forever" truth.

Moses kept his motivation fresh by *seeing him who is invisible*. This is what the Hebrews needed and what you need. Moses saw by faith what was not visible to the physical eye. He was able to bring the invisible to bear on the immediate. Moses saw something that was greater than what he already had. And he saw Someone who was worth it all. He was able to keep the big picture in everyday focus. Moses is not the only one. That's exactly what Hebrews chapter 11 is all about. The end point on earth was not what they might have thought, but their vision was further out and into forever.

If you want to stay motivated, you have to learn to keep your focus. Daily, you have to think, to consider that the suffering is worth it. You have to keep looking at your reward. You have to keep leaving it all behind. Then you will mature, and you will endure, because you will be able to see how Jesus is right there with you, for you, and in you, to motivate you.

You can keep your motivation fresh in your daily life. You may feel defeated but you don't have to stay defeated. You can bring the invisible to bear on the immediate. You can refuse sin, choose godliness, consider your reward, and endure whatever the world says or does. You can live for today by having an eye for tomorrow. You can stay motivated. Moses stayed motivated right to the very end. It didn't finish the way he had hoped for at first, or thought it might, but it ended for him even greater than he could have ever imagined. It can happen that way for you, too.

You don't have to have all the answers when you have THE Answer. Keep beholding Christ and his truth with the eyes of faith. Keep thinking about it, considering it, every day, especially in those moments of temptation, and even when you fail, and you will stay motivated. By faith, see the reward, know it can increase, and know this power in your life.