

Making Biblical Decisions

Study Guide

LESSON
NINE

THE EXISTENTIAL
PERSPECTIVE: INTENDING
GOOD



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON AND STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video lesson. If you do not have access to the video, the study guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the lesson and study guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — In the Notes section of the study guide, the lesson has been divided into sections that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the study guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each section and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:27)

II. Importance of Motives (3:23)

A. Concept (3:56)

Two basic ways we commonly speak about motives:

- purpose for which we take an action
- cause of an action

Motive: an inward disposition that moves us to action.

1. Complex (5:50)

2. General and Specific (6:47)

3. Known and Unknown (7:33)

B. Necessity (8:22)

Christians often fall into the trap of believing that God does not require us to have the right motives and desires.

1. Heart (9:27)

Heart: the depth of our inner person and the seat of our motives; the sum of all our inward dispositions.

2. Hypocrisy (13:30)

Hypocrisy: the false appearance of morality.

The Bible's teachings against hypocrisy indicate that good behavior must always flow from good motives.

Christians sometimes have motives that do not match their outward actions.

3. Virtue (17:37)

Virtue: praiseworthy moral character.

Virtues: the different aspects of a praiseworthy moral character

When virtues are an inward disposition that moves us to ethical action, they are motives.

Unless we possess the virtues of love and faith, and unless they motivate our behavior, nothing we do can be considered good.

If our actions do not flow from the love in our hearts, God does not count them as good.

The virtue of faith must move us to act in faithful ways. Only then will God be pleased with our behavior

III. Motive of Faith (22:00)

Faith is a central concern of both the Old and New Testaments.

A. Saving Faith (22:52)

Faith: Assent to the truth of the gospel, and trust in Christ to save us from our sin.

1. Means of Initial Salvation (23:55)

Faith is the tool God uses to apply salvation to us.

Saving faith motivates us to repent of our sin and to trust in Christ for our salvation. These good works are the first evidences of our salvation.

2. **Ongoing Commitment (26:35)**

As an ongoing commitment, saving faith consists of continuing assent to the truth of the gospel, and continuing trust in Christ to save us from our sin.

Saving faith involves our hearts; it is an inward disposition that causes us to think, speak and act in ways that please God.

Abraham's salvation by means of faith is the model for every believer in Christ.

Every believer must maintain saving faith as an ongoing commitment, just as Abraham did.

If our faith does not remain in us, then it was never truly saving faith.

Saving faith motivates us to do good works. If we are not motivated to do good works, our faith is counterfeit.

Hebrews 11: The Hall of Faith

- Abel

- Noah

- Abraham

- Moses

B. Repentance (37:32)

Repentance is a heartfelt aspect of faith whereby we genuinely reject and turn away from our sin.

Faith is turning to Christ, and repentance is turning away from sin. These two turnings are the same motion.

- Gentiles
- John the Baptist
- Paul
- David

We fall into sin every day. And this means that we have both an obligation and an opportunity to repent every day.

C. Hope (46:37)

Hope is faith directed toward the future aspects of our salvation in Christ.

- Old Testament — God’s people hoped in God’s future salvation.

- New Testament — confidence in the future aspects of salvation is the great hope of Christianity.
 - Jesus will return to renew the world and to grant us our inheritance in it.

 - Future salvation is based on the promises that were made to Abraham

Hope serves as a motive for good works by giving us a reason to resist sin.

When our hope is strong, we can be motivated:

- to endure life's greatest challenges
- to overcome every obstacle
- because we have our eyes fixed on God, who promises to preserve us

IV. Motive of Love (53:31)

Jesus summarized the teachings of the Old Testament:

- The greatest commandment of the law says that we must love God.
- The second greatest commandment requires that we love our neighbors.
- These two express the general principles that all the other laws explain and apply.

If love is not among our motives, our works can never be counted good.

Love consists of: allegiance, action, and affection

A. Allegiance (56:49)

1. Loyalty (57:07)

Loyalty is the cornerstone of the concept of love.

The most basic responsibility of the people is loyalty to the king

The suzerain's love was expressed largely in the form of covenant loyalty to his people:

- protection
- justice
- met needs

Vassal's love toward the king:

- obey
- support
- honor

Covenant kingdoms of the ancient Near East used many metaphors to describe the relationship between the suzerain and his vassals:

- father to children

- husband and wife

Thinking of these political relationships in terms of family helped the people see that this loving allegiance and loyalty was to be heartfelt.

God's fatherhood is just a metaphor. Behind this metaphor is the fact that God is our king.

Jesus is our Lord and King, and we are to render love to him through:

- loyal obedience

- loyalty to his church

2. **Orientation (1:04:07)**

God and his kingdom must be:

- our highest priorities
- the focus of our desires
- the center of our worldview

We must be inwardly disposed to work for the benefit of God and his people in everything that we think, say and do.

Jesus oriented his entire life around God, and around the people he came to save.

When we orient our lives around God and his people:

- we pursue the agenda of his kingdom
- we are motivated to live in ways that please him

3. Responsibility (1:08:05)

Our loving allegiance to God should motivate us to seek out additional ways that we are responsible to him.

The 10 Commandments — the Bible regularly applies these commandments to every area of our lives.

When understanding that we are obligated to him in every area of our life, we are in a better position to make decisions that he approves.

B. Action (1:11:50)**1. Atoning Grace (1:12:02)**

All God's actions are perfect expressions of his character.

Scripture exhorts us to pattern our character and actions after God's.

Scripture teaches that we should love each other in imitation of the love that God has shown for us.

The Scripture tells us to show the same kind of love for others that God showed to us in the atonement.

2. Common Grace (1:16:47)

Common grace: God's kindness to those who will never be saved.

Because we love God, we should also love the people he loves.

It is easy not to have God's kind of love for our enemies:

- We ignore their needs.
- We take vengeance against them.
- We rejoice when they suffer injustices.
- These are not the attitudes that characterize God.

We should have genuine concern for our enemies' well-being:

- be kind to them
- pray for them
- protect them
- provide for them when they are in need

Love does not preclude a desire for justice.

God's love is complex. It includes both a desire for justice and a hatred of evil.

C. Affection (1:24:10)

Christian teachers sometimes speak of biblical love as if it consisted entirely of actions and thoughts. The Bible gives us a very different perspective on the matter.

Good works are morally good when they are motivated by heartfelt affection. But when they are not, they are worthless.

1. Gratefulness (1:26:40)

In Scripture, gratefulness:

- should be our normal response to God's grace and benevolence
- should motivate us to obey God

God's benevolence deserves our love and obedience.

The good works we do are not a form of repayment to God. They are the loving responses of those who appreciate what God has done

2. **Fear (1:31:24)**

“Fear” in the life of the believer:

- has nothing to do with terror or fright
- is composed of reverence and awe

Fearing is rendering wholehearted, loyal, active obedience to God and his commands.

Fear of God: Awe, reverence and honor for God that produces adoration, love and worship for God.

Reverential fear of God is the sense of living in his constant presence. It is the understanding of who and what God is, and of what he requires of us.

Reverential fear is an aspect of love because it is an affirming and appreciative response to God's grandeur and goodness.

Reverential fear motivates us to good works through our desire to honor and glorify the one we love.

V. Conclusion (1:38:37)

3. How does saving faith serve as a motive?

4. Discuss repentance as a primary expression of faith.

Application Questions

1. Why are motives so important to God? Does it bother you that he doesn't just ask for outward conformity?
2. Besides those discussed in this lesson, what are some inward dispositions that the Bible points to as legitimate motives for good works?
3. Reflecting upon your own heart, what motivates you to action? Does your outward obedience flow from a heart truly committed to God's and his Word?
4. How can we guard ourselves from acting hypocritically? What measures should be taken to insure that both our actions and our motives coincide with our God's word?
5. Do you remember when you first came to saving faith? If so, how did this experience affect your motives and behavior? How have your motives and behavior changed over the course of your ongoing life of faith?
6. Is your life characterized by repentance? In which areas and in what ways are you actively in rebellion?
7. What practical steps can believers take toward ongoing repentance? How can we successfully overcome temptation?
8. Have you ever felt abandoned by God or unsure that our faith was true? Have you ever felt confident that your faith was true? What difference do these attitudes make in the ongoing lives of believers as we strive to make biblical decisions?
9. In what ways can you or your church reflect God's common grace to those outside the Christian faith, and even to your enemies?
10. Is your past understanding of love different from the description of love presented in this lesson? How? What impact will this have on the way you make future decisions?
11. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study?