

along, he spotted a young boy jumping up and down on the front porch of a beautiful old house. He was trying to reach the old-fashioned doorbell that was set high next to the door, but he was too short.

Feeling sorry for the youngster, the minister went up the walk, stepped up onto the porch, and rang the bell vigorously for him. Then he smiled down at the young lad and said, "And now what, young man?"

"Now," exclaimed the young boy, "we run like crazy!"

The man misjudged the motives of the little boy in the story, but God makes no mistakes about our motives. When they're not right, our prayers have no power. James 4:3 says, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives."

Sometimes even knowing our own motives can be difficult. In my experience, I've observed two things that quickly expose wrong motives:

1. A PROJECT GREATER THAN OURSELVES:

Big projects—ones that put us in way over our heads—force us to examine why we are doing them. And that process exposes our motives. Think about someone like Noah. God asked him to build an ark at a time when the earth had never seen rain. It was definitely a project that he couldn't do on his own. When his neighbors came to laugh at him and ridicule him, Noah must have searched himself and examined why he was doing it. And that reminded him of his responsibility to God.

2. PRAYER: When we pray, God speaks to us and shows us our motives. If we are acting out of pride, fear, possessiveness, self-satisfaction, convenience, etc., God will show it to us, if only we are willing to listen. And if we are willing, He will change those motives.

Because I always want to try to keep my motives pure, I ask Bill