

## Believe and Be Changed Life Group Leader Guide

**Sermon Title:** Mixed Motives

**Date:** December 7, 2025

**Scripture:** John 7

### Big Idea

Behind every action is a motive. In John 7, swirling opinions about Jesus reveal that **what we seek determines what we see**. Jesus invites us to examine our motives, trust the Father's heart, and believe, not for personal gain or control, but for the glory of God.

### Icebreaker (5–7 minutes)

**Question:** Have you ever misunderstood someone's actions—or been misunderstood yourself—because you didn't know the motive behind them? What changed once the motive became clear?

### Setting the Scene

John 7 takes place during the **Feast of Tabernacles**, a celebration remembering God's provision in the wilderness and His nearness to His people. Against this backdrop of remembrance and worship, questions about Jesus' identity intensify. People are divided, fearful, ambitious, and confused, revealing that belief is often less about evidence and more about the posture of the heart.

### Discussion

#### 1. The Motive of Getting Famous (John 7:3–8)

Jesus' brothers urge Him to go public and prove Himself. Their ambition reveals unbelief masked as advice.

**Read:** John 7:3–5

#### Discuss:

- What do Jesus' brothers assume about leadership, influence, and success?
- Why do you think ambition can so easily disguise itself as faith or wisdom?

- Where do you see pressure today to “prove yourself” spiritually or publicly?

Jesus refuses to operate on human ambition. He trusts the Father’s timing, not public approval (see also John 2:23–25). How good are you at trusting Jesus’ timing? Score yourself from 1–10.

## **2. The Motive of Control and Fear (John 7:9–20)**

The crowds quietly debate Jesus while fearing religious leaders. Control thrives where fear silences truth.

**Read:** John 7:12–13, 16–18

### **Discuss:**

- What fears do you think keep people from speaking honestly about Jesus in this passage?
- Jesus says that those who *want* to do God’s will will recognize truth (v.17). Why is desire so important for discernment? What negative desires might be keeping you from recognize God’s truth for you?
- How might fear or control distort our ability to trust God today?

**Cross-Reference:** James 3:13–17

- Which kind of “wisdom” do you most often see shaping decisions in our culture? In your own life?

## **3. The Motive of the Father’s Glory (John 7:28–30, 37–39)**

Jesus reveals His true motive: not self-glory, but the glory of the One who sent Him.

**Read:** John 7:18, 37–38

### **Discuss:**

- How does Jesus define truth and trustworthiness?
- What stands out to you about Jesus’ invitation: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink”?
- What does it mean, practically, to glorify God in everyday life?

**Leader Note:** To glorify God is to make Him known, honored, and trusted by how we live—so His true character is seen and valued.

## **Reflection: He Is the Gift and the Giver**

Jesus does not demand trust; He **earns it by coming near**. In contrast to distant or demanding gods, Jesus reveals a Father who is generous, humble, and approachable.

**Read:** John 4:10 or Isaiah 55:1

### **Discuss:**

- Why is trust so hard for people who have been hurt or disappointed?
- How does the incarnation (God coming near in Jesus) reshape the way we see God?
- Where is a place God is challenging you to trust Him?

## **Application This Week**

- **Personal:** Ask God to reveal one motive beneath a habit, reaction, or decision.
- **Relational:** Practice speaking truth graciously instead of staying silent out of fear.

## **Further Scripture Reading**

- John 8:
- John 2:23–25
- Psalm 139:23–24
- Matthew 5:14–16
- 1 Corinthians 10:31