



FAITH
MADE
SIMPLE

Episode 216 - Compulsion

Can you be compelled for the wrong reasons? And how do you know?

Copyright Faith Made Simple 2025

Jerry Green:

Welcome, friends — glad you could join us as we kick off season nine of Faith Made Simple with our pastor-teacher, Todd Smith. I'm Jerry Greene. If you've listened before you know Todd loves to explain Scripture clearly, and we believe understanding and obeying God's Word matters. James 1:25 reminds us that obedience brings blessing. Now here's Todd with today's thought.

Todd Smith:

Thanks for tuning in. Hard to believe January's almost behind us — for the month we've been looking at character traits to shape 2026: courage, conviction, compassion — and today I want to talk about compulsion, but in a good sense.

Paul says, "The love of Christ compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). That Greek word for compel (sunecho) literally pictures being squeezed or gripped so tightly you can't wiggle free. It's not duty; it's love with its arms around you. Paul was ambushed by that love on the Damascus road — he didn't follow Jesus because he had to; he followed because he couldn't not.

Most of us live under a thousand lesser compulsions — fear of failing, needing to impress people, worry about tomorrow. What God wants is to replace every one of those with one beautiful obsession: Christ's reckless, ridiculous love for people. When that love grips you, it makes you do crazy, impractical things: forgive people who don't deserve it, give sacrificially, risk reputation and comfort. Bob Goff's test is helpful: "If it looks like love and feels like Jesus, quit stalling and do it."

Practical possibilities: send the text you've been avoiding, buy the plane ticket to visit someone who needs you, let the love of Christ compel a big life change (quit a soul-draining job, adopt a child, clear out that spare room). Love isn't a good bookkeeper — it'll cost you — but it's an amazing guide. My prayer for 2026 is that God would ambush us with that love so we stop doing "manageable faith" and start living like we're all-in.

Jerry Green:

That's powerful. Can compulsion be wrong? How do we tell the difference between a godly compulsion and an unhealthy one?

Todd Smith:

Motivation matters. Compulsion can point us toward sin if it's driven by selfish desire, performance anxiety, or fear. But Paul's compulsion came from being overwhelmed by what Christ did for him — a compulsion rooted in grace. If you're motivated by Christ's transforming love, it will bear fruit and endure. If you're motivated by lesser things (pride, fear, or impulse), it'll eventually run out of gas.

Jerry Green:

Thanks, Todd. Friends, that wraps this episode. Faith Made Simple is a free ministry — please help by subscribing, sharing, and leaving a rating or comment. If you're local, join us at Crossroads Community Church in Valencia, California. For more info, visit FaithMadeSimple.net. On behalf of Todd and the Faith Made Simple team, we'll see you next week — remain faithful, be a doer, and live blessed.