



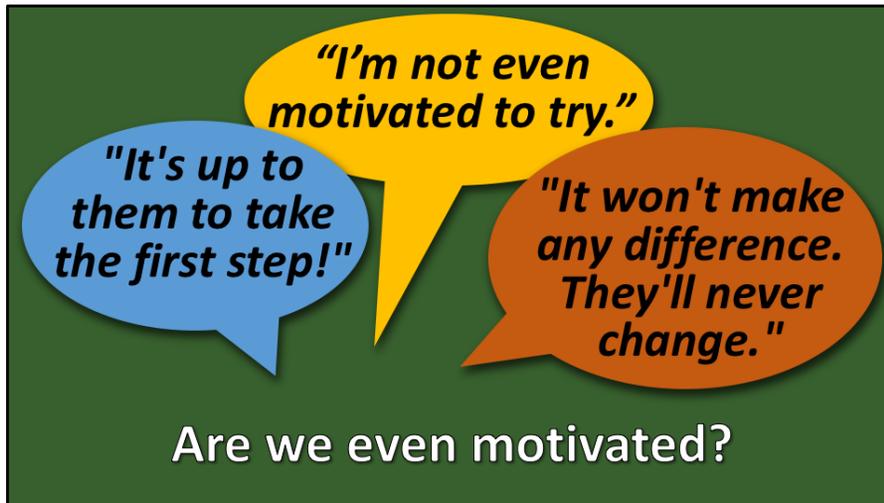
**(Theme Slide)**



## READ SLIDE

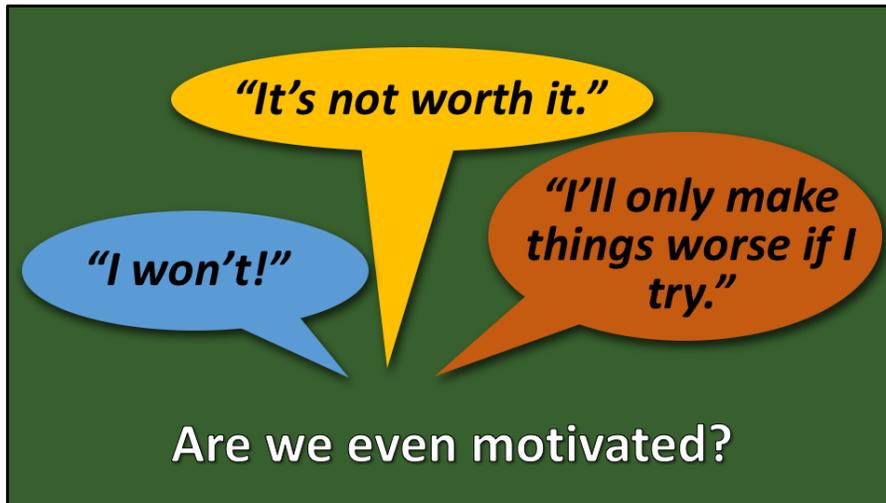
- Our first memory verse reminds us that living in peace, as the prophet Isaiah tells us the millennial kingdom will be like after Jesus returns . . .
- . . . is as foreign to us as the lion and the lamb being friends.
- We think it is a great idea, until we are confronted with unresolved conflict.

**TR: The truth of the matter is that we often don't even have the "want- to" to come to the table and deal with our problems.**



**Inside we stew, with our self-talk bubbling up thoughts and perhaps statements like . . . READ SLIDE (blue, orange, yellow)**

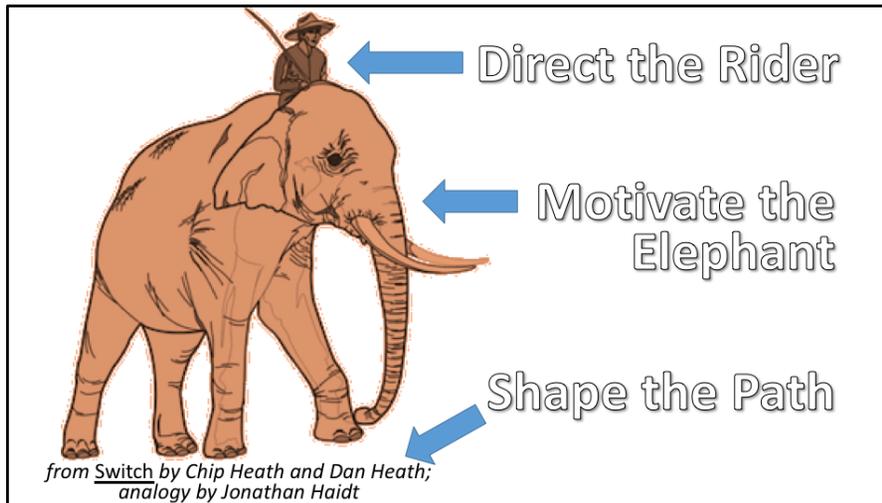
**TR: Isn't it easy for us to just give up on relationships, disposing of them quietly, because we say to ourselves and others . . .**



**READ SLIDE (yellow, orange, blue)**

-- As we launch the 70x7 campaign for peace, that is, the Peace Initiative,

**TR: . . . we find ourselves in the dilemma of being a 150 pound rider on a 5 ton elephant.**



The analogy around which the book, Switch, is based has reminded me of why it is so hard to actually see behavioral change in my life . . .

-- . . . and in the life of others.

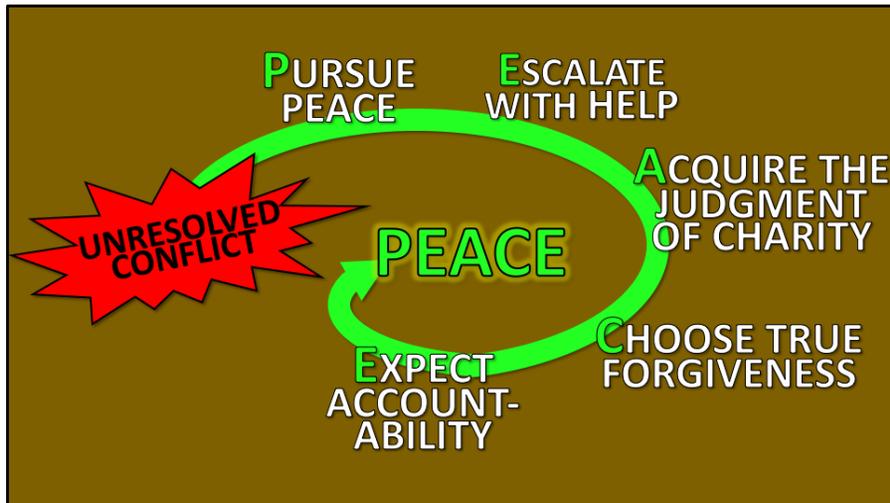
-- The rider is our minds, the rational part of our brains.

-- The enormously powerful elephant is our emotions, our desires.

-- The path is the third component.

-- To influence behavioral change we need to . . . READ SLIDE (direct, motivate, shape)

**TR: Getting the elephant to WANT to go where the rider knows it SHOULD go is a huge challenge when the path is hard and steep.**



Last Spring, as I waited on God, trying to understand why people like and even agree with the teachings found in The Peace Initiative . . .

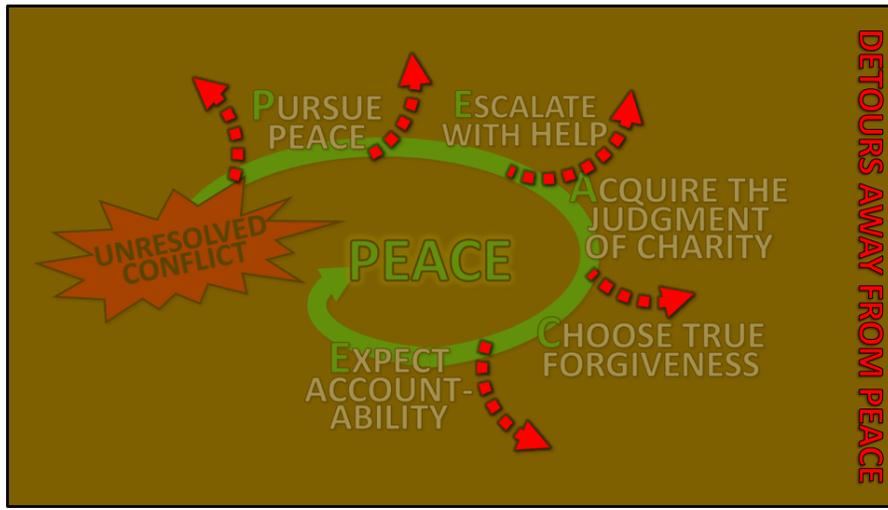
-- but then they don't actually do them . . .

-- it became clear that there are five core commitments that a true, biblical peacemaker has to make.

-- These five spell . . . PEACE . . . READ SLIDE

-- Not all these terms may be perfectly clear to you right now, but I hope they will be in the next 70 days of adventure together.

TR: The point I'm making today is to say that this PEACE path is very hard to follow . . .



... and it is much easier to just take a downhill detour ...

TR: Instead of dealing with the conflict and having that crucial conversation, wouldn't the elephant find it easier to ...

- *Abdicate our responsibility*
- *Remain in abusive relationship*
- *Abandon the relationship*

PURSUE PEACE    ESCALATE WITH HELP

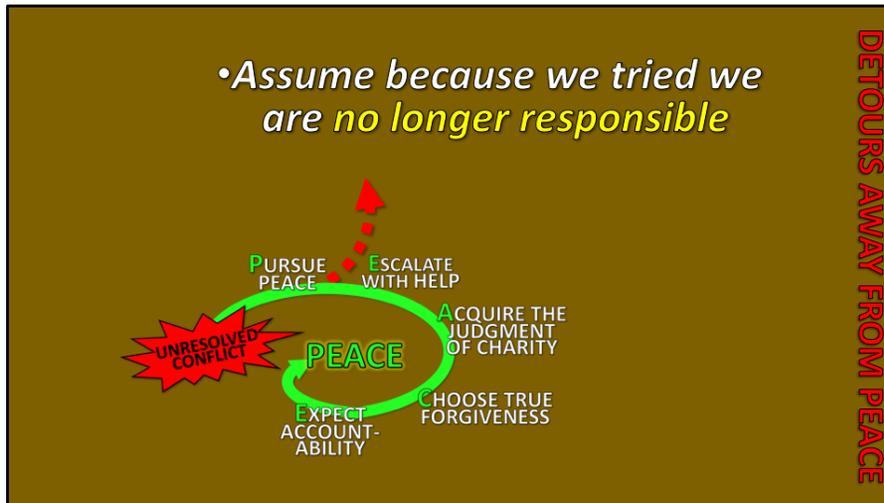
UNRESOLVED CONFLICT    PEACE    ACQUIRE THE JUDGMENT OF CHARITY

EXPECT ACCOUNTABILITY    CHOOSE TRUE FORGIVENESS

DETOURS AWAY FROM PEACE

... READ SLIDE

TR: Even if we make the commitment to Pursue Peace, the grade gets steeper and it is easier to . . .



... READ SLIDE rather than Escalate with the Help of Others.

TR: If we can get the elephant to seek help, isn't there the easier out of ...

- The help we seek is only to allow us to “vent.”
- Or to seek *support in our blaming* of others.
- Or to seek *pity* for our pain.

**PEACE**

UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

PURSUE PEACE

ESCALATE WITH HELP

ACQUIRE THE JUDGMENT OF CHARITY

CHOOSE TRUE FORGIVENESS

EXPECT ACCOUNTABILITY

DETOURS AWAY FROM PEACE

- ... escalating with the help of others by ... **READ SLIDE**
- I'm not mocking the pain, it is real ... and it can easily make the elephant run downhill.
  - Think back to conversations you've had in the past month about others ...
  - I am stunned at how many of these interactions slide toward gossip ... saying bad things behind people's back and **NOT** to go deal with the problem ...
  - ... just to vent, blame, or seek pity.

**TR:** What seemed like a mystery to me about why so few, including myself at times, **SHOW ALLEGIANCE** to Jesus in the matter of being peacemakers, suddenly becomes clearer, doesn't it.



**DETOURS AWAY FROM PEACE**

UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

PURSUE PEACE

ESCALATE WITH HELP

ACQUIRE THE JUDGMENT OF CHARITY

CHOOSE TRUE FORGIVENESS

EXPECT ACCOUNTABILITY

PEACE

- *“I forgive them but I won’t allow trust to be rebuilt through the fruits of repentance.”*
- *“I demand that they deserve my grace. They will have to earn my trust with 100% perfection.”*

... when we say things like ... **READ SLIDE**

**TR: Today, I’m not so concerned that you understand all the detours and backtracking specifics . . .**



**. . . I just want us to admit that this spiral path toward peace is like the piece of paper that is spiral cut and then pulled up like a spring,  
-- . . . or, like the twisted road in the Alps that seems scary and for those of us with a one speed bike, virtually impossible.  
-- The rider knows we should make the commitments, but the elephant wants to head downhill.**

**TR: This leads us to the question of the day . . .**

**Why should we be  
*motivated*  
to make and keep the  
five core commitments  
of a peacemaker?**

**READ SLIDE**

- The Bible says we are transformed by the renewing of our minds . . . the rider is very important.
- But, I think the renewing also stirs us much deeper.
- At TF one of our four core values is HEAD AND HEART . . . not just balanced but BOTH!
  
- How can you and I have a conversation with ourselves, empowered by the Spirit, to get motivated to DO what we KNOW we should?
- TR: I can only share what God has used in my life . . .

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

ESV

**... and then let that be part of my obedience to Hebrews 10:24-25 ... READ SLIDE**

**-- Perhaps so few of us FEEL like taking the high road because we aren't putting ourselves in a position to be stirred up and encouraged.**

**TR: Today I want to stir us up and encourage us as summarized by the words, Blessing, Duty, and Honor.**

MOTIVATED BY THE HOPE OF:

**BLESSINGS** *for us*

16

**First, we can motivate ourselves by remembering the BLESSINGS that are in store for us if we make and keep the five core commitments.**

**-- We have to renew our minds with the benefits of taking the road less followed.**

**TR: There is the blessing Jesus promised in the Sermon on the Mount . . .**

Matthew 5:9

**“Blessed** are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- I want to be identified as a child of God.

TR: I also place high value on wisdom which Jesus' half-brother addressed in James 3

**James 3:17-18**

But the **wisdom from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>And **a harvest of righteousness** is sown in peace by those who make peace.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- **Wisdom, the ability to take knowledge and practically apply it to real life, is something I want . . . not just in my mind but to the core of my elephant.**
- **And I want a harvest of righteousness in my marriage, children, church, and life.**

**TR: I am motivated by the hope of the blessings God promises us if we pursue peace. Additionally, I renew my mind with what the Bible teaches about our . . .**

MOTIVATED BY THE HOPE OF:

**BLESSINGS** *for us*  
**DUTY** *for others*

19

... READ SLIDE

**TR: The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians . . .**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us **the ministry of reconciliation**; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 20**

Therefore, we are **ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- The Gospel, our greatest treasure, is that Jesus was made to be sin, even though He knew no sin . . .
- . . . so that we might become right in the eyes of God, clothed in Jesus' righteousness.

**TR: As ambassadors for Christ, my elephant is stirred deeply when I remember that my choice to make and keep the five commitments has a huge impact on others.**



**I picture others having to be imprisoned, ensnared, held captive by the Evil One because they looked at me and could not put together how . . .**

**-- . . . someone could claim to be a follower of Jesus and be so cynical, bitter, judgmental, and unforgiving.**

**-- . . . how could someone who no longer has their trespasses counted against them be so quick to add up a record of wrongs.**

**-- I picture on the bars of their prison cell the pictures of all who have left the church because of some unresolved conflict.**

**-- Pictures of their children who not only left church but left God because of what they witnessed.**

**-- This “duty” is really the duty of love. To love others, whether they are little ones in the faith or not yet believers . . . to love them enough to stir the elephant to make the climb.**

**TR: I guess love is at the core of all this, even as I use the word . . .**

MOTIVATED BY THE HOPE OF:

23

**BLESSINGS** *for us*

**DUTY** *for others*

**HONOR** *for Christ*

. . . honor to capture a third head and heart renewer . . . honor for Christ.

-- How often I've heard, "But I don't love them, not enough to do that."

-- My answer is, "Do you love Jesus enough?" "Do you love the honor of Christ enough?"

TR: Isn't that the message of Philippians 2 . . .

**Philippians 2:1-2**

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

-- The implication is that there is encouragement, comfort, participation, affection, sympathy . . . so now show the same to others.

-- Perhaps the reason the elephant won't go up the hill is because he is not convinced that it matters . . . or that Christ is worth it all.

TR: Paul continues . . .

**Philippians 2:3-4**

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant** than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to **the interests of others.**

ESV

**. . . with the practical applications of us REALLY believing that the honor of Christ is worth THAT much . . . READ SLIDE**

- To count others as more significant**
- To look to the interests of others**
- We are to do this out of honor and appreciation for Jesus and all He's done for us and does for us even after salvation.**

**TR: For me, the following is the most critical text that motivates me to take the high road of pursuing peace . . .**

**John 17:20-21**

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup>that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, **so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**”

ESV

**Jesus' prayer in John 17 . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Verse 22 . . .**

**John 17:22-23**

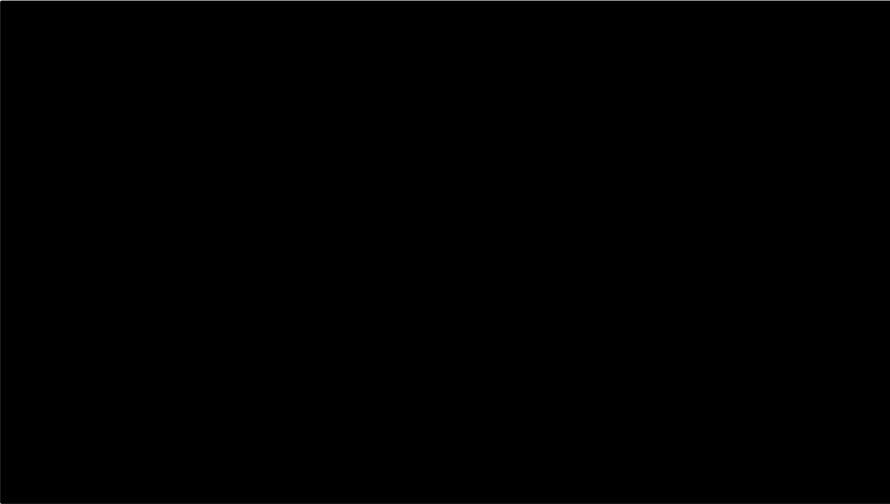
The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, **so that the world may know that you sent me** and loved them even as you loved me.

ESV

**READ SLIDE**

- Last week I showed you part of our son and daughter-in-law's vows . . . that the world may know that you have sent me.
- It is about Jesus getting the honor that He is do . . . that the world may know that He was not a charlatan or an imposter or deluded.

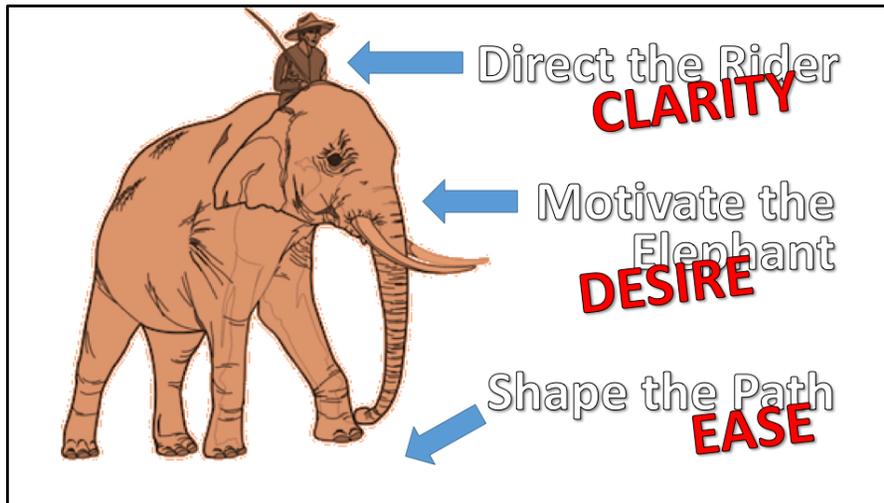
**TR: I share the blessings, the duty, and the honor with you . . . but until the gospel is your greatest treasure, even these will never get the elephant of our desires to take the uphill trail.**



**For me, all these things renew my mind . . . and that burrows deep into my soul, my emotions, my desires . . . when I remember stories like this one:**

- Story of boy caught up in making fun of a waitress with a burned face . . . not joining in . . . joining in a bit . . . but then walking past the door and hearing the woman crying . . . repenting and declaring . . . “That woman is my mother. She was burned saving me from a fire. She is the most beautiful person in the world to me.”**
- I can only imagine the grief of our Savior when we act like what He has done for us means so little.**
- That His honor means so little to us that we won’t stand up and be counted for His kingdom.**
- When we say join in to the mockery by not loving Him and others enough to make the five commitments.**

**TR: To see behavioral change in our lives we are told that . . .**



- . . . the rider needs clarity,  
-- the elephant is motivated by desire,  
-- and the path is shaped when it is as easy as possible, downhill if it can be arranged.  
-- In one culture, those who are willing to be the first to cross the threshold of someone with whom they have had a falling out . . . are called first steppers.  
-- What will it take for us to be motivated to be a first stepper?
- TR: Is it enough for us to be motivated by the hope . . .

MOTIVATED BY THE HOPE OF:

**BLESSINGS** *for us*

**DUTY** *for others*

**HONOR** *for Christ*

30

of the blessings of being recognized as God's children, of having heavenly wisdom, and reaping a harvest of righteousness?

-- Is it enough to understand our duty as ambassadors of Christ to love others, whether believers or not. To understand that for the sake of their eternal souls and our duty to them, we must embrace the high and hard road?

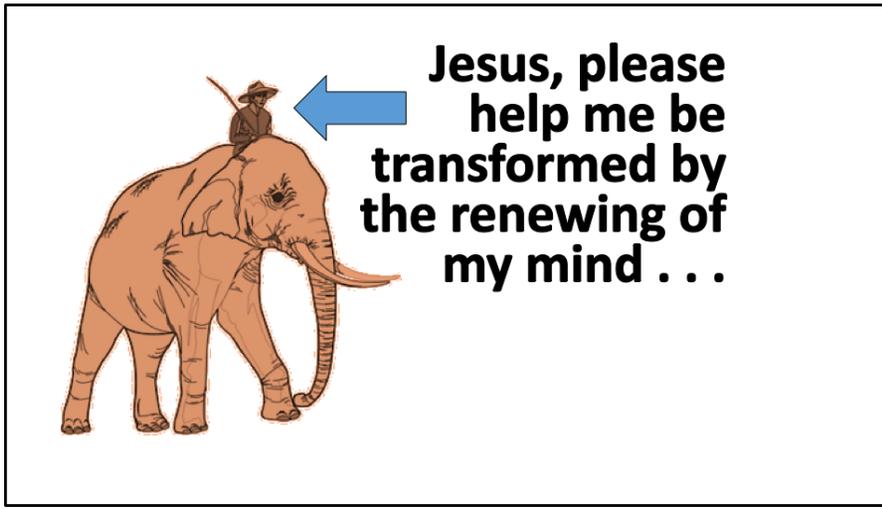
-- It is enough to love Christ because He has loved you, honoring Him by counting others as more significant than ourselves, seeking out their interests?

-- It is enough to picture people imprisoned in bitterness and resentment because they've turned away from Christ . . . not able to believe in Him because they witnessed the lack of unity in our marriages, families, and churches?

-- It is enough to imagine the gentle sobs of Jesus when we practically renounce that we know Him because we want to fit in

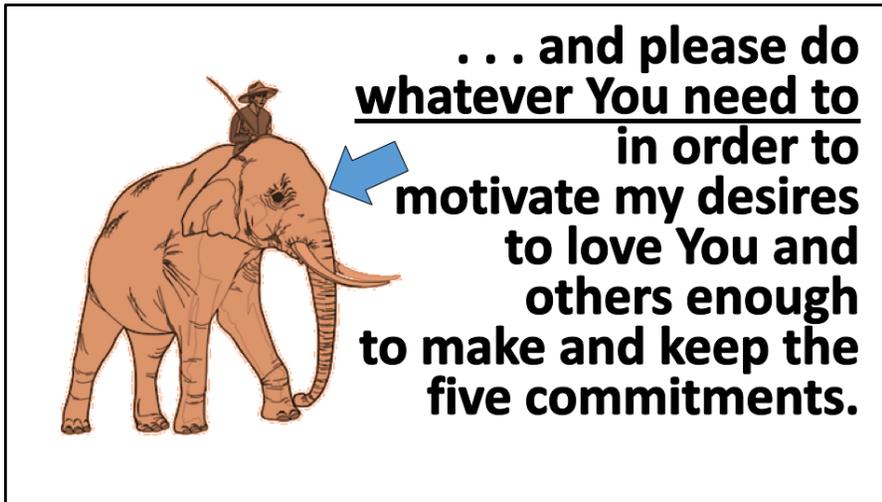
**with the crowd running down to the bottom of the hill?**

**TR: I simply want to invite you today to admit that there are situations and relationships that you have no desire to deal with, repent and pray with me . . .**



**READ SLIDE**

**TR: And then to finish the prayer with an vulnerable honesty that says . . .**



### **READ SLIDE**

- This is a most serious of prayers.
- The awakening, revival we seek begins with radical prayers like this.
- We know we should, we ought, it is the right thing to do . . . but we don't want to . . .
- so, Jesus, all-wise Savior, do whatever You need to do to change my want-to.