

## “ARE YOU A MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER?”

Anthony Robbins. Zig Ziglar. Les Brown. Jeanne Robertson. Patricia Fripp. These are popular names in the world of professional speaking. I know. For the last ten years, I've earned my living speaking professionally, and I've even met some of the “greats” in the professional speaking arena. Often when the topic of my profession comes up in conversation, people say, "Oh! You're a Motivational Speaker!" Well, I confess that I'm not fond of that label. Over the years it has come to mean, to many people, someone who is charismatic, charming, smooth and slick, and one who is always ready to sell you their latest CD, DVD, book, or Success System. "Today only, you get the entire package for just \$1,499...a savings of \$700!" Many who wear the label “Motivational Speaker” tell their audiences of thousands "if you believe it, you can achieve it", "If you can dream it, you can do it!", "There is greatness within you!", "You can create your own Destiny!" And audiences gobble it up. Corporations pay speakers millions of dollars each year to motivate their employees, to increase productivity, and to help their organizations cope with change. A non-celebrity speaker can command a paycheck of \$5,000 to \$10,000 for an hour-long speech, and that doesn't include meal and transportation expenses. Product sales provide additional income, so speaking can be a lucrative business. Don't get me wrong. I'm not against motivational speakers, but rather the impression that the title often leaves. With that thought in mind, I want to discuss the greatest motivational speaker of all time, and find out if YOU are a motivational speaker as well.

The greatest motivational speaker of all time is Jesus. Two Thousand years ago, He walked this earth with humility and simplicity, yet He moved men to abandon their livelihoods to pursue a higher call...that of turning men to God. He spoke not only in the synagogues but in the most unorthodox of locations, including boats on the seashore, on hills and mountainsides, and city streets. Throngs followed Him without thoughts about lunch breaks or lost income, and many called Him “Teacher”. What made him so great was not His divinity, because although He is the Son of God, he divested Himself of all divinity to become fully human (Phil 2:6-8 - *The Message*) No, it wasn't His divinity, it was His MESSAGE. He preached "good news to the poor...freedom for the prisoners and...the year of the Lord's favor." He also preached humility, mercy, peace, righteousness, integrity, honor, and servanthood. Here's the key to this discourse: while motivational speakers' messages are mostly 'I' or 'ME' focused, the inspirational message of Jesus is focused on **OTHERS**. The only area of His message that puts the focus on ME is the need for me to accept Him as my Savior and surrender ME to Him. After that, I must minister to OTHERS. He made that clear in Matthew 28:19 when He said, "*Go and make disciples of all nations*"(NIV).

And if that wasn't enough, He reinforced His commission by providing His presence in the form of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 says, "*...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will BE MY WITNESSES in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (NIV).*" This promise of the Holy Spirit transcends generations and cultures. The disciple and apostle Peter, who walked and talked with Jesus, proclaimed, "*...you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off and for all whom the Lord our God will call*" (Acts 2:38-39 NIV). This is deep: Jesus wants US to be motivational speakers! He wants us to proclaim the truth about Him, by being His

witnesses, and even being His ambassadors! Check out 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 in the New International Version of the Holy Bible: *"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*

Did you catch that? God has commissioned us to be motivational speakers with a message of reconciliation for those who don't know Him. But our responsibility as motivational speakers doesn't end there. We have a responsibility not only to the unsaved but to the saved as well! That's right! We are to be motivational speakers to our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is clear from Hebrews 10:24 (NIV) which says, *"...let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."* Verse 25 (New International Reader's Version) puts it thus: *"Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, Let us cheer each other up with words of hope. Let us do it all the more as you see the day coming when Christ will return."* These verses are reinforced by Ephesians 4:29 which says, *"Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen."*

Yes! We are ALL called to be motivational speakers, and our message should be one of hope, focused on Jesus Christ, His love for a dying world, and His desire to bring all into His glorious family. May our words not be so much about what we can do for and by ourselves, but about what we should do for others with God's guidance and direction.

Professional Motivational speakers are a part of our culture. People will continue to be influenced by their personalities, mannerisms, marketing techniques, voices, and words. As Christians, however, we must continually strive to inspire OTHERS with the message of salvation that reconciles people to God. We must also provide encouragement and inspiration to the household of faith. That, my friends, should be OUR motivation.

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#### ***About the Author:***



Mark Brown is a dynamic speaker whose unique blend of insight and humor leaves his audiences entertained, uplifted, and inspired. Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, he incorporates “everyday things of life” into his powerful presentations. His unique style has delighted audiences from Bahrain to Boston. Among his accomplishments are a 1995 Harlem YMCA Black Achievers Award, a 1996 National Association of Negro Musicians Service Award, and a 1999 Emmy nomination for the PBS special “Words Count with Mark Brown.”