

# 04 Building Fellowship as Husband & Wife

by Zac Poonen

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*Building a strong relationship with your spouse and family requires fellowship, unity, and seeking God's guidance and mercy.*

**Duration:** 59:07

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:9, Job 1:5, Psalm 133:1, Proverbs 15:4, Proverbs 18:21, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 4:6, James 3:2, 1 Peter 3:7

**Topics:** "Family Relationships", "Marital Unity"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of God's order in earthly families as a foundation for building the church. It contrasts the focus on family in the New Testament with the lack of emphasis in the Old Testament, highlighting the significance of relationships within the family unit. The message encourages acknowledging mistakes, seeking forgiveness, and fostering fellowship between spouses and children, with a focus on speaking graciously and building a home filled with love and unity.

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## Transcript

Jesus spoke most of the time sitting down, only sometimes he stood up, when we stand up and speak, it is like a preacher preaching to people. I like to sit down and speak because it is like talking to a family. The church is a family and our earthly family is a picture of the church family.

So, it is very important that we have God's order in our earthly family before we can build the church. In the old testament, there was not much emphasis on family. It was only the preacher who stood up there in front.

What type of relationship he had with his wife was not important. Moses was one of the greatest men in the old testament. But the last picture we have of him and his wife is in Exodus 4, where they are fighting with each other.

But that didn't make a difference. Because in the old testament, it didn't matter how your family life was. David had 7 or 8 wives and he had children through each of those wives.

But he was a man after God's own heart. All these things show that in the old testament, family life was not all that important. But in the new testament, the church is built on the family.

The family is built on our own personal life. Underneath that is God. So, the church is like a 3 story building.

The foundation is God's love for us. The first floor is our own walk with God. The next floor is our family life.

And on top of that is the church. So, even if you are not a preacher, if you build a good home, you are helping to build the church. So, don't think that only those who stand up in front are building the church.

The church is made up of many homes. And if you build a good home and bring up your children in godly ways, you can build a church. So, in the home, of course we must put the Lord first.

That we speak about many times in the church. But other than that, there are 2 relationships we have in the home. One is our fellowship as husband and wife.

The devil tries to come there between us. The second is between parents and children, there also the devil tries to come between us. Wherever there is a unity, the devil tries to come in between.

If you seek to be one with the Lord, the devil tries to come between you and the Lord. When you try to be one with your wife, the devil tries to come there. When you try to bring up your children in a godly way, the devil comes there.

But I want to tell you one of the most important messages that we need to know for our home life. And for that, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 3. See, all of us who are married will admit that we have failed a lot in our married life. I am the first one to admit that.

Because when we get married, we don't know how to get victory. We do so many wrong things. We speak so many harsh words.

And it takes time for us to come to a life of peace and victory. I remember the other day, one brother, may be about 30 years old. Few days ago, he said, Brother Zach, when I look at your godly life, I am so discouraged when I look at my life.

So, I said, I will tell you something to encourage you. You are 30 years old and I am 70 years old. So, if you come to my level in the next 40 years, that is enough.

Don't think that you can come there in one day. It takes time. So, we shouldn't get discouraged.

Everybody who has climbed this mountain of a godly family life has climbed slowly. And I still cannot say that I have reached the top. You know, you reach the top when you can say, I love my wife like Christ loved the church.

I have not reached there. I am climbing, but I want to go some more. Or where a wife can say, I submit to my husband just like the church submits to Christ.

No wife can say they have reached there. But we should be climbing, the same way with bringing up our children. We have not done it perfectly.

None of us have done it perfectly. But we are climbing a mountain to really make our children whole hearted, 100% disciples of Jesus Christ. So, in Genesis chapter 3, we read about the first married couple.

In chapter 2, God had conducted their wedding. And immediately after the wedding is over, they spent one full day in fellowship with God. That was the Sabbath day, the seventh day of the week.

And the next day, they went into the garden and we read immediately the devil came. And the devil's aim was to separate them from God and to separate them from each other. And in chapter 4, to destroy their children also.

So, you see the devil's method. First of all, make you disobey God. That means he made Eve disobey God.

Then the connection with God is gone. And then Adam and Eve, their fellowship is broken. See, till then we read that chapter 2 verse 25, they did not need to wear clothes.

They were not ashamed to be married. But as soon as they sinned, we read in chapter 3 verse 7, they sowed fig leaves together and covered themselves. Why were they covering themselves? There was no other human beings in the garden.

They were not covering themselves from the animals. Why were they covering themselves with fig leaves? They were covering themselves from each other. Before that it was not like that.

The husband and wife, chapter 2 verse 25 were completely open with each other. But as soon as they sinned, they tried to hide from each other. See, we wear clothes to protect ourselves from other people around.

But when a husband and wife have to hide from each other, that's how it was in Eden. There was no other human being in that garden. There were only two human beings, Adam and Eve.

There was no need for them to wear any leaves or clothes or anything. But this putting the leaves shows that something has come between us now. That now we cannot be open with each other.

There is something we have to hide from each other. And that is what happens. When our relationship with God is broken, our relationship as husband and wife is also broken.

And then we have to hide from each other. Then the third stage, first our relationship with God is broken. Then our relationship as husband and wife is broken.

In chapter 4 you read about how one son murdered the other son. And the murderer's son had to run away and God cursed him. What a terrible thing.

One son is murdered and the other son is cursed by God, which is worse than being murdered. So how the devil succeeded in destroying all three levels. The relationship with God, the relationship with one another and the relationship with children.

So these are the areas where we have to be very careful. First in our relationship with God. If your relationship with God is restored, then it will go well with your family life also.

In the world they don't understand that. The main reason why there are problems in the family life is because the relationship with God is not correct. So remember that to solve every problem in your life, first your relationship with God must be restored.

We must not seek God only when we are in trouble. We must always have a good relationship with our heavenly father. But what I want to show you here is this.

That when both Adam and Eve sinned and God came there to look for them. See it says when they sinned, actually Adam should have gone running to God and said, Lord where are you? I have sinned, the devil has messed up my life. He has messed up my family life.

Where are you Lord? But Adam doesn't do that. He goes and hides behind a tree. The Lord comes and says, Adam where are you? Verse 9. So that is a very encouraging thing there.

That even if you have made some big mistakes in your family life, maybe you have messed up your family life, God is still coming to your house and says, where are you? I want you to come back to me. So don't get discouraged if you have done some wrong things in your home. Whatever mistake you have made, it doesn't matter what it is.

God comes to you and says, where are you? I want you to come back. And don't run away from God and try to hide like Adam. The Lord is inviting you.

And when Adam finally said, I ate the tree, he first blamed his wife, he blamed God. And then said, I took it. See here, in Genesis 3. Verse 12.

The woman you gave me, she gave this fruit. God is asking Adam, did you eat the tree? And he is now pointing his finger at God. You, you gave me this woman.

So you are to blame. What do you do when your children blame you for something as parents? It's quite serious, no? Your children point to you and say, Daddy, you are the one at fault. Or Mummy says, you are at fault.

We get very angry. You make a mistake and you blame me. But God didn't do that.

And Adam said, the woman you gave me, that is the cause of the problem. What should God have said? What would you say as a father if your child spoke to you like that? When it is his fault. And he blames you.

God should have got angry with him. How dare you blame me for what you did, some stupid thing. I told you not to do it.

But he never said anything. Have you noticed that? God does not behave like we behave towards our children. They blame him and he does not even reply.

He says, alright Adam, let me talk to your wife. He asks the woman, what have you done? And she also blames the serpent. Even though she doesn't say it like that, this is the meaning.

The serpent you created, that is the one who is causing this problem. If you had not created the serpent, there would be no problem. Still God doesn't say anything.

How good God is. Think if your child comes blaming the father, blaming the mother and you are patient with them. There I see the tremendous loving heart of God towards man.

And then God says, see to Adam and Eve, you got to read the bible slowly and you will see some wonderful things. First of all, Adam, where are you? Who told you you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree? To the woman, what have you done? See how loving he is. Did you eat the tree Adam? Woman, what have you done? The woman blames the serpent.

But God doesn't ask the serpent, what did you do? He asked Adam. He asked Eve. But he doesn't ask the serpent.

No talking with the serpent. He just tells the serpent, you are cursed. I learnt something from that.

That the Lord rebukes the devil. He doesn't rebuke us first. He rebukes the serpent.

He didn't rebuke Adam. He didn't rebuke Eve. That comes much later.

First the devil. That really encourages me. He teaches me one very important truth which all of you must understand.

God is on my side against the devil. Even when we have failed in our family life, God is on our side against the devil. Even with our children.

Supposing for example, your children have gone astray. I don't think anybody's child here is a murderer. But Adam's child became a murderer.

And he killed his own brother. Can you imagine what a messed up family that is? Husband and wife are also fighting with each other. And God encourages them.

And they got a son and the son is a murderer. He kills the other brother. And God comes to tell Cain.

In chapter 4, verse 11, you are cursed. From now on, verse 12, when you cultivate the ground you will get no fruit. And you will have no fellowship with anybody.

All your life you will wander, wander, wander. You will be a lonely man. And this murderer who had no heart for his younger brother.

This is oh God, please have mercy on me. This is too much punishment for me. And now you have driven me from the earth and cursed me.

Anybody finds me, they will kill me. What should God have told Cain? You are afraid somebody will kill you. You had no heart to kill your brother Abel.

And now you are trembling somebody will kill you. You deserve to be killed. You deserve to be cursed.

God doesn't speak like that. We are foolish people. We speak like that.

Notice how God is even to a murderer. See how he speaks. When Cain says, oh God have mercy on me.

This is too much punishment for me. God says in verse 15. Ok Cain, even though you are a murderer, I will have mercy on you.

I won't allow anybody to kill you. And if anybody kills you, I will judge him 7 times, verse 15. I say Lord, you are even trying to protect a murderer.

You have so much compassion on a murderer when he asks for mercy. You know, I see something wonderful in Genesis chapter 3 and chapter 4. That God is on our side against the devil. That is the most important truth you must know as a family person.

God is on your side against the devil. Has the devil come between you as husband and wife? Has he brought a distance between two of you here? Here is the good news. God is on your side.

He won't curse you. He curses the devil. He is on your side against the devil.

Even though you make a mistake, even though you may blame him and say, Lord you gave me this wife, you gave me this husband. He will not say, why are you talking like that? And even if your first son not only has backslidden but become a murderer. God will have mercy on your children also.

It's wonderful to see that God cares for our children. Even when they have gone astray. So everybody sitting here can get tremendous hope from Genesis 3 and Genesis 4. What is that? God is on your side.

God is on the side of your children against the devil. He is never going to take the side of the devil against you or the side of the devil against your children. Your elder brother may criticize you.

Other believers may criticize you for the way you brought up your children. But remember that God will not do that. God is not one who criticizes people.

He helps people. So he comes to help us. So therefore all of us have hope.

So we need never never be discouraged. We can believe that God will help us in bringing up our children. And the most important thing for bringing up your children is your relationship with each other.

So I will just tell you one thing about husband wife relationship. And that is this. Please remember it.

Husbands and wives, be quick to acknowledge your error and to ask forgiveness from each other. We all make mistakes. However old you may be, however godly you may be, we will make mistakes in something we say or something we do.

Be quick to acknowledge your mistake. Adam should have gone running to God and said, Oh God where are you? I am sorry I made a mistake. Don't wait in some corner of your house like Adam waiting for God to come and ask you what did you do.

Very simple rule. Be quick to acknowledge your mistake and ask forgiveness. Secondly, when someone asks forgiveness, be quick to forgive.

Don't act like a big person and say oh ok. Be quick to forgive. And even if they don't ask forgiveness, forgive.

See how Jesus forgave on the cross. They never asked him, Oh Lord please forgive us for crucifying you. No.

Without their asking, he forgave them. That is how we must be. That is in husband wife relationship.

Then with our children, also we must be very patient and forgive them when they do something wrong. They are small. We must be strict with them that they don't do all types of wrong things.

But we must be merciful to them because they got that bad nature from us. See we must be strict with them because they got a bad nature. But we must be merciful to them because they got that bad nature from us.

So both the things must be there. We must be strict and we must be merciful. And we must pray much for them.

Husband and wife, we must pray, pray, pray for your children regularly. Today we have started praying for our grandchildren also. Regularly.

Lord we want them to grow up to be disciples of Jesus. Same prayer we prayed for our children for so many years. Now we are praying for our grandchildren.

We must pray. Only God can change them. If you don't pray, nothing will happen.

So that is the thing I want to tell you in relation to your children. Pray for them. Be patient with them.

By God's grace, all our four children are following the Lord. They married God-fearing believers and because of that they are trying to bring their children in God's way. But I was not at home most of the time.

I was travelling most of the time. My wife was at home for 28 years. Just looking after the children.

So she will tell you how to bring up the children. There is no secret about bringing up children except that the Lord gives us grace. When my husband was talking about fellowship with our husbands, I was thinking of one particular aspect.

Most of us in India, we feel that we are inferior to our husbands. We feel that spiritually we are not up to the mark. We feel that we are so busy with the home matters.

Our husbands know our failures and weaknesses. So we don't make any effort to have fellowship with our husbands. So we suffer in our home because of that reason.

So from my experience I can say, looking back, it's the devil who, like he came to Eve, it's the devil who comes to blame us and criticise us and accuse us. But thank God, in the church we can get words of encouragement. Even if we have fallen, we can ask God for forgiveness and come back to relationship with God and have fellowship with our husband and pray together with our husband.

That's very very important. Prayer in our personal life is also important. Prayer with our husband is also important.

I found as a wife, there was so much work to do in the home that I pushed God many times off to a corner. But God in His mercy, like we heard in Eden, He comes looking for us and calling us. And wants to restore fellowship with us.

All the success in bringing up our children depends only on Him. It's only God who can bring up the children for His glory. Please remember that we have been married for 41 years.

So we have been climbing a mountain for 41 years. So if we are little higher up than you, it's not because we are better than you. No, I don't think so.

We are all the same. But we have struggled for a few more years than you have. So therefore we have gone little higher, that's all.

And if you keep struggling, in 41 years you may go ahead of us. It's very easy to look at some other couple and say, oh that will never happen to us. Don't look at some other children and say, no no no, our children will never be like that.

Don't speak those words of unbelief. What did I tell you? God is on your side against the devil. Please remember that.

If you forget it, then please write it on some cardboard or something and keep it on a wall in your house. So that you remember it all the time. God is on our side against the devil.

That will encourage you like anything. Whatever problem you face in your house. See the bible begins with the story of a problem in a marriage.

And then the next chapter is a problem with the children. That is the beginning of the bible. As soon as the man is created, first chapter is a problem between husband and wife.

Problem with children is the next chapter. And how God can, in both cases, shows he is on our side. He is there to help us.

So that is a message to all of us here. However deep you may have fallen in your family life, remember God is on your side. Don't get discouraged.

And I want to share a little bit about building fellowship with husband and wife. You see in India, we don't have much fellowship as husband and wife. You have fellowship with brothers, but you don't have fellowship with your wife.

Why not? Your best friend should be your wife and not some brother in the church. Because God allowed you to become one, so that you might fellowship together. So the most important thing for family life is fellowship between husband and wife.

I don't mean praying together and reading the bible together. A lot of people do that, but they don't have fellowship with each other. Even if you don't read the bible together, even if you don't pray together, have fellowship with each other.

There must be a longing in your heart for that. You know, just like there is a great longing in your body to be physically united with your wife, nobody has to tell you. Inside your body itself, there is a great longing to be physically united with your wife.

Spiritually also, ask God to give you a great longing to be spiritually united with your wife. You must spend time talking to each other. Many Indian husbands and wives, they don't talk to each other much.

In this new year, I want to encourage all of you to spend a lot of time talking to each other. Otherwise we can't have fellowship. See, if you read the song of Solomon, it's quite an amazing book.

Even though it is a picture of Christ and the church, the bible says, love one another as Christ loved the church. So, even if the song of Solomon is a picture of Christ's love for the church, then that is an example for husbands how they should love their wives. It's wonderful to read that book and see how this husband

and wife loved each other.

It's a very sad thing that in India, we think husband and wife loving each other is only for the cinemas. As if it is a bad thing. But the bible only tells us that husbands must love their wives.

And a wife must love her husband. So, we don't have to be ashamed of that. That you have a deep love for your wife and a deep love for your husband, it is very very important.

Only if you have that, your children will be able to grow up in a good atmosphere at home. So, can I suggest something for all of you? I want you to say in the next two weeks or so, read the song of Solomon. And read it, husbands read it and learn how to talk to your wife.

And you wives, you read it and learn how to talk to your husband. You never find the husband or wife talking in song of Solomon. No, that is all our sinful culture that teaches us that.

Just read song of Solomon for two weeks. Please do it for my sake. Best is do it for the Lord's sake.

I am not asking you to read it to each other. That is too much for our Indian culture. But first you just read it.

And with a prayer. Dear brothers, please pray like this. Lord, brother Zach has told me to read song of Solomon.

He is my elder brother. I am going to listen to him. And I believe it will be good for me.

And now Lord, as I read this book, just teach me one thing. Not two things. One thing.

Teach me how to speak to my wife. In Jesus name. That is all.

Just pray that prayer. Every day when you read it for the next two weeks. And sisters, as your elder brother, I want to give you an exhortation.

You pray and say Lord, I have also been told by my elder brother to read song of Solomon. Now as I read it, teach me one thing. Teach me from this book how to speak to my husband.

That is all. In Jesus name. Amen.

And then read it. I tell you, your home will become like a heaven. Heaven on earth.

What is it that has made our home into hell? The way we speak to each other. We know how to speak to the stranger who comes to the door. Supposing somebody knocks at your door.

You don't even know who he is. How do you speak to him? Maybe postman or some other man. How do you speak to him? You say, ah, why have you come here? You don't talk like that.

That is how you talk to your wife. This is stranger you have never seen in your life. You speak so nicely.

Ah, why have you come? Can I help you in some way? Why don't you talk to your wife like that? Why do you only talk to strangers like that? So we all need to read this song of Solomon and learn how to talk to our wives. And then when we talk to our wives like that, we will start talking a little more kindly to our children also. You say, Brother Zach, don't we have to be strict with our children? Yes, we must be strict

with our children.

But we don't have to call our children pig and dog and all these funny names. Call them by kind names. Be strict.

But don't be rude and speak like all the people in the world. Sometimes we have to punish our children. Yes, we have to do that.

I have done that as a father. Because God punishes us. So we have to do that to our children.

But we don't have to speak rudely. See these words in Ephesians chapter, sorry, Colossians chapter 4. What a wonderful word this is. Colossians 4 verse 6. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned as it were with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.

See, as soon as you eat some food, immediately you know whether there is salt there or not. And you know how bad the food tastes if there is no salt. You say, ah, I don't feel like eating this.

There is no salt in it. It's so little salt. But it makes such a difference.

And it says here, when you speak to your wife, to your husband, to your children, there must be that grace, which is like salt, that the other person must taste something. There is a kindness in my husband today. There is a kindness in the way my wife is speaking to me.

There is a kindness in the way my daddy and mummy are speaking to me. My brothers and sisters, if you listen to me, I tell you, your home will become like heaven. Let me tell you another thing.

This will not happen in one day. Even in one year, it may not take place. I did not come to this life in one year.

I made so many mistakes in my speech, at home, with my wife, with my children. But I said, Lord, I'm not going to give up. I'm going to climb this mountain.

I want to come to the place where my speech is always with grace. Always people must taste in my speech, some salt is there. Isn't that the word of God in your Bible? Have you read it before? Okay, from today, let us take it seriously.

Lord, I want to take this seriously. See, I have not given you 25 rules today. I'm only telling you to be faithful in one area.

And that is, in your speech. Be careful in your speech during the whole of this year. And say, Lord, I want there to be more grace in my speech at home, with my wife, husband, children.

That is the first step. Because the Bible says that if we can control our tongue, we can become perfect. And so much of evil comes through the tongue.

And so much of good can come through the tongue. In the Proverbs it says, a wise tongue is a tree of life. You can have a tree of life in your house.

So let us pursue this. And let us not accuse one another with our tongue. Don't say you have sinned.

Say like Job, perhaps I have sinned. So, brothers, are you going to do that? Okay. Sisters, you heard it, no? What they said.

I want to ask you and your brothers, listen. Sisters, are you going to do that? Praise the Lord. Next year when we have a conference, we want to have many heavenly homes in your home.

That is, it will delight the heart of God so much. God bless you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, help each one of us, especially in the area of our speech. To forgive one another. To ask forgiveness from one another.

To have faith that you are always on our side against the devil. That you will defeat the devil in our homes. And even children who are going astray, you will bring them back.

Have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon our families. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Music Music

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