

A Message for 2014

by Zac Poonen

The Christian life is a life of rest, not a life of struggle, and God's love and faithfulness are available to those who live with a maximum attitude towards Him.

Duration: 1:02:56

Scripture: Deuteronomy 11:12, Psalm 139:23, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Abundant Life"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life completely surrendered to God, seeking His will and allowing Him to govern every aspect of our lives. It encourages believers to seek the abundant life God has planned for them, to overcome sin, and to be a blessing to others. The sermon highlights the need to have a heart that is completely His, to trust in God's provision, and to live in the awareness of God's constant presence and care.

Transcript

This is an unexpected opportunity to be here. We had no plans to come at this time. But there are many things God plans that we don't plan.

We praise the Lord, His way is best. As I've been sharing with different folks over this New Year time, there's a word that's been on my heart from the book of Deuteronomy and chapter 11, where Moses was preparing the people of Israel to go into the land of Canaan. They had wandered for 40 years in the wilderness.

That was not God's will for them. They had come out of Egypt and God planned for them to be two years in the wilderness, that's all. Then they were to come to the borders of the land of Canaan and enter in.

So they were in Egypt, then they were in the wilderness, and then they were in Canaan. That's a picture of three areas of our Christian life where we can be. One is out in the world, unconverted.

Egypt is a picture of that. And then a life of struggling under the law, never really fulfilling God's will, never accomplishing what God wants us to do. And when God brought them to the borders of the promised land and asked them to go and come into a life of victory where you kill the giants and occupy the land, they turned back.

And you know that out of 600,000 people, men who came out of Egypt, only two enter the land of Canaan. And as I've observed Christians around the world, my personal conviction is out of 600,000 believers who are born again, about two enter a spirit-filled life of daily overcoming sin and the devil. It's true.

It's unfortunate, but that's about how it is. And yet all 600,000 could have entered in if they had trusted God to take them in. Why is it most Christians don't enter into a life of overcoming, even year after year after year I'll tell you why.

Because they're content with their defeated life. The only picture I can compare it to is with a person who's content with having cancer or content with having leprosy when they could be healed. You see, it's okay.

Not so bad. When a day comes in our life when we are really convinced that sin is worse, that the smallest sin is worse than any sickness, when I realize that to sin and disobey God, to lose my temper and to get angry, to lust with my eyes and to have bitterness and an unforgiving spirit is worse than having cancer and leprosy and AIDS all together. The day I'm convinced of that, we'll be serious about getting victory.

I'll tell you two out of 600,000 believers I've met believe that and are serious about it. That's the main reason why most believers never enter into that abundant life that Jesus came to give. And they think it's okay.

I believe it's a slap in the face of Jesus to say, it's all right Lord, you came to give us life and abundant life, but I couldn't care less for this abundant life. I just want to go to heaven when I die. I believe that's a slap in the face of Jesus and I never want to do that.

I want to satisfy the heart of my Lord when I think of that he gave his life for me. He gave everything he had that I might have life and have abundant life on this earth and with the one life that I have to be able to manifest Christ to a world around me that does not know what Jesus is like. Most Christians, most people when they look at Christians, they are not seeing Jesus.

Most Christians are carnal and I believe the reason why God raises up small churches like this is to emphasize that which is not emphasized in most of Christendom, who are just happy to come out of Egypt and wander around in the wilderness for the rest of their lives. God wants us to enter the promised land. So I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 11.

I want you to read what Moses told them. In verse 10, the land into which you are entering to possess it and instead of land, read life. In the Old Testament, it was a land.

In the New Testament, it's a life. The life that you're going to enter into possess is not like the other life which you had before till now, where you know you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot and struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle to produce some fruit. This life which you're about to cross into possess it is one that drinks water from the rain of heaven.

It's not the result of a lot of self-effort, pumping water with your foot from the river Nile, getting water into your garden. This just drinks rain from heaven. It's a life where the Holy Spirit comes down and not by our struggle that we're going to produce fruit.

That's what he's trying to say. The Christian life is a life of rest. Jesus looked around at people who and said to them, people who are struggling under the law, you know like this pumping your water, all you who are weary and heavy laden, or I paraphrase it, those of you who are sick and tired of your defeated life,

come to me.

That's how I paraphrase Matthew 11, 28. Well-known words, come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Jesus says, come to me those of you who are sick and tired of your defeated life.

If you're not sick and tired of your life, defeated life, Jesus says, don't come to me. Stay where you are. Remain wandering in the wilderness forever.

But if some of you, maybe two out of six hundred thousand are sick and tired of your defeated life, come to me. I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you or take my cross in your daily life.

The world and the devil will say it's a burden to take up the cross. It's not. My yoke is easy, Jesus said.

My burden is light. If you have found the Christian life to be heavy, you've not got the yoke of Jesus, that's for sure. You got a yoke of the law, of a life of struggle.

You're not drinking water from the rain of heaven. You're watering it with your own, peddling your foot and getting water out. That, I want to say to you, that is not the life God planned for us.

He allows us to go through that in the beginning so that we learn a lesson. That's not the way to do it. But he wants us to enter in.

This is a land, Deuteronomy 11, 12, and this is the verse I want you to see. A life is the Lord your God cares for. Look at this phrase, the eyes of the Lord your God will always be on you from the first day of the year till the last day of the year.

What a wonderful promise as we enter a new year. To take that to ourselves and say, Lord this is wonderful. This is the life I want to live.

Where the eyes of the Lord are upon me from the beginning of the year till the end of the year with not one day left out. Every single day his eyes are going to be upon me, watching over me, caring for me. Caring for me exactly like he cared for Jesus when Jesus was on earth.

If I were to ask you, do you believe that the Father in heaven was watching every single day of Jesus' life on earth? He surely was. Right from the time where Jesus was born in that stable, the Father was watching. His eyes were on him and when his eyes saw that Herod is marshalling some soldiers to kill the baby, he planned for that and took Jesus away to Egypt.

That's how he cares. It's wonderful. The eyes of the Lord always.

There's another time when the people in a synagogue, maybe 200 of them in Nazareth, stopped Jesus in the middle of a sermon and pulled him off from the pulpit and took him to a cliff. You read about Luke chapter 4, to throw him over the cliff and kill him when he was 30 years old. That wasn't the way that the Father had planned for Jesus to die, being thrown over a cliff.

The eyes of the Father were on him. It couldn't happen. And so something happened there and Jesus quietly walked away.

It's amazing. The eyes of the Lord are upon a person. Or when there's a storm in the sea, it doesn't matter.

Jesus is sleeping in the boat, that boat will never sink. Every other boat may sink, but not the one which Christ is in, because that's not the way he was supposed to die. He was not supposed to die of drowning.

So I find that it's a wonderful thing and I think of how the Father cared for Jesus from the very first day of his life. And when I realized this wonderful truth, John chapter 17, where Jesus says he wanted the world to know through us, many people think that the only thing we're supposed to be witnesses to is that Christ died for your sins, folks. That's very important because that's their greatest need.

You're a sinner, but you don't have to get discouraged because every wretched sin you did, Christ took the punishment on the cross. It's finished, he said. You can be forgiven if you receive that forgiveness on the cross, but there's something more that we are to witness to the world.

Turn to John 17. He says, I pray, Jesus says in verse 23, John 17, 23, that I will be in them and you Father in me, so that these children of mine will be perfect in unity, so that the world may know. Here's what the world should know through me, that the Father sent Jesus.

I have to be a witness to that and the world must know that the Father loves me just like he loved Jesus. I don't know how many of you have taken the second part of that testimony seriously. I never did for nearly 16 years of my Christian life.

I didn't even know there was such a verse in the Bible. I didn't even know that the Father loved me like he loved Jesus. I know he loved me, but as much as he loved Jesus, I never knew that.

And not only that, that is something that the world, when they look at my life, must see. Here's a man who's loved by God. There's no other explanation for his life.

Here's a man who's loved by God so intensely. That's why so many things seem to fall into place in his life. There's no other explanation.

Men can be against him, demons can be against him, and it's obvious that God is on his side. The world must know. I want each of you, my brothers and sisters, to please take this challenge in the new year.

And just like the eyes of the Lord, the Father was upon Jesus as he cared for Jesus. He will care for you. His eyes will be upon you.

But there was a reason why the Father was so committed to Christ. You see, it's very easy for Christians to go to the promises of Scripture and claim them without fulfilling the conditions. Can you be forgiven if you do not fulfill the conditions of repentance and faith in Christ? Impossible.

Christ died for the sins of the whole world. 1 John chapter 2 verse 2 says that clearly. Not only for the sins of believers, like some Calvinists say.

1 John 2 is very clear. He's the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. But yet, I think more than 90 percent of people in the world are not converted.

Why is that? Because they haven't fulfilled the condition. The condition is very simple. Turn around from sin and believe.

Such a simple thing, they won't do it. Mostly they don't want to turn around from sin. There are many who want to believe.

They don't get it. You don't get it if you don't repent. So in the same way here, there's a reason why the Father was so committed to Christ.

And that's written in the 10th verse of the same chapter, John 17 10, where Jesus says, all things that are mine, Father, are thine. And therefore, all things that are thine are mine. I've discovered through the years that if your attitude to God is like your attitude to the IRS, what is the minimum I have to pay? You'll find God is also like that towards you.

What is the minimum I should give this person? But if your attitude is like your attitude to someone you love intensely, you'll see how these men who are falling in love with a girl, how they're buying expensive diamond rings and very, very expensive things because they love them so much. They don't go to a shop and say, well, what's the minimum cheapest thing I can buy? And that's your attitude. It's pretty clear you don't love that person very much.

But if you examine your attitude towards God and you find that that is how it should, that's how you are, what's the minimum I have to do for God? What's the minimum I have to give to him? What's the minimum number of meetings I should go to? You don't be surprised if God's attitude to you also is, what's the minimum I should give this guy? And that's called life. And abundant life is quite a different thing where God finds other people who say, Lord, with my one life, what's the maximum I can give to you? You find God looks at such a person and says, what's the maximum of heaven I can give to this person? That's what he said. Jesus said, everything of mine is yours.

I don't have any ambitions outside of your will. Every single thing in my life, Father, is yours. Others said, really? Well, everything in his mind is yours too.

That is what makes the difference between one Christian and another. And if you find one Christian triumphant, victorious, overcoming, who seems to be always at rest and you may think he's putting up a front and fooling you. He's not.

That is his real life, 24 hours every day and seven days a week. But that's because he's given everything to the Lord. He said to the Father, just like Jesus said, everything that's mine is yours, Father.

I don't claim anything is my own. And you think that he's pretending because you don't have that type of life because your attitude was the minimum I should give to God. And what regrets such people will have when they stand before the Lord in the final day and discover how much the Lord gave for them.

And they discover how they were so mean and stingy and miserly and selfish in their attitude towards God. Because that's how most of the Christians around them were. It's because most of the people in Israel wanted to stay in the wilderness.

The others said, yeah, we better stay with the crowd. But there were two people who were different. Joshua and Caleb said, we're going to that land where the Lord God had his eyes on them every single day from January 1st to December 31st.

That's the life I want to live in 2014. That's the life I've tried to live even in 2013 and 2012. I want it to be even more wonderful in the days to come.

I want to say to you, my brothers, this is the real Christian life. And just like we, our children go through a school year and they evaluate whether the person's learned everything that was taught in that year so that it can move on to the second grade or second to third grade and so on. It's good for us also to evaluate at the end of a year, how is this year gone? Have I been living in that life where the eyes of the Lord are always upon me? Have I lived in the enjoyment of that knowing that my father is always watching over me? I can live without a fear and an anxiety in this world because my heavenly father cares for me.

It's wonderful. You know, it's like a little child who doesn't have a care in the world because he's got his mother or father watching over him all the time. Wherever he's playing, he's always watching over him.

This is how God wants to care for us. And I'm telling you honestly, most Christians do not live this life. Most Christians, 99% of born-again Christians do not live this life.

They live a third-rate, miserable, defeated life, glorying in the fact that my theology is right. I've accepted Christ, I'm born again. And if God has raised up new covenant Christian fellowship, purpose is that people will come into the new covenant, which is this.

See Hebrews in chapter 8, what it says about this new covenant. Hebrews chapter 8, it says verse 6, Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he's also the mediator of a better covenant, that's the new covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. What is the distinctive feature of the new covenant? Better promises, far better than anything you can read in the Old Testament.

And there are some amazing promises in the New Testament. And God will never allow us to be tested beyond our ability. Isn't that a wonderful promise? That in all the 365 days of the coming year, there will not be a single day or a single hour when I will face something that'll be too much for me to handle.

Which person in the world can say that? How many believers can say that? Most believers come to some Christian and say, oh, this is becoming too much for me. That's not how they're supposed to live. They come out of Egypt, but they're wandering in the wilderness.

New covenant has been established on better promises. 1 Corinthians 10, 13, God is faithful who will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability, but in that trial, he will make a way of escape that I'll be able to overcome. That way of escape is that he gives us grace sufficient for that particular need.

My grace is sufficient for your need. There'll never be a situation that I can face in the future, 2014 or until Christ comes, where the situation will demand from me more than the grace God gives me. That is impossible.

And when I say impossible, I mean impossible. And the only way that can happen if Almighty God is a liar. If he's a liar, then of course we're wasting our time meeting here in any case, but he's not a liar.

I proved it in 54 years of my Christian life since I'm born again. God's not a liar. People ask me why I believe the Bible is God's word.

I said, because I've studied it for 54 years and never found anything, any promise that has failed me till today. I didn't fulfill a condition. Sure, I failed, but where I fulfilled the condition, I found every single promise works.

And dear brothers and sisters, why am I saying all this? So that you will not be satisfied with the type of life you have lived up to this day in your life. I said, Lord, I want to enter into that abundant life that you have promised. I want to be like that two out of 600,000 who enter the promised land, the land where the eyes of the Lord are always upon me from the beginning of the year till the end of the year.

I remember when this truth first hit me that God loved me like he loved Jesus. I realized a couple of things. One, that what God did for Jesus, he would do for me.

See, if I love all my children equally, or you as a father love all your children equally, wouldn't you do for your youngest son what you did for your oldest son or your youngest daughter what you do for your oldest daughter? There wouldn't be any partiality. Jesus is the eldest brother and I'm a younger brother. And if God loves me as much as he loved Jesus, he'll do for me everything he did for him.

I don't know whether you've noticed that before Jesus came to the earth, he was called the only begotten son. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. But the day Jesus rose from the dead, he's never called the only begotten son after that.

He's called the firstborn. What's the difference between an only son and a firstborn? You know the answer. When a man's got only one son, he says, my only son.

When he's got other sons, he says, he's my firstborn. That's what happened on the day Jesus rose from the dead. He told Mary Magdalene in John chapter 20, go and tell my brothers.

That's the first time in history that almighty God came in human form and called human beings his brothers. See the wonder of that? Go and tell my brothers that I ascend to my father and your father. It's the same father we have now.

Little, little things in scripture which we read carelessly. I find most Christians would read legal documents more carefully than they read the Bible. If your billionaire father had written a will for you, would you read it carefully? To see which all banks his account is kept in? Where all does he have property? Oh boy, you'd read it 10 times and get a lawyer to look through it.

Because we love money. And if you're careless, some crooked lawyer could cheat you of it. That's exactly how I feel.

The devil's like a crooked lawyer who's cheated believers of their inheritance. And they live poverty-stricken lives when they could be spiritually wealthy. Believe that.

Don't let the devil rob you of your inheritance anymore in this coming year. That applies to your family. So many believers, I find, they've come to the Lord, but they're not serious about bringing their family, every one of their family members into that life.

They're sort of casual and laid back and say, yeah, it'll happen. Nothing will happen. He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Jeremiah 29, 13 says, you will seek me. And find me only when you search for me with all your heart. We must teach our children to seek God with all their heart.

My seeking God with all my heart is not going to help my children to find God. I have to urge them. Seek God with all your heart.

You'll find him. And you'll find he's more wonderful than you ever thought. You'll find he's far more wonderful than what the average Christian knows about God.

That's the reason. When I realized that God loves me just like he loved Jesus, then I realized, hey, there's no partiality with God. What he did for Jesus, he'll do for me.

The eyes of the Lord was upon Jesus from the first day of the year to the end of the year, every year. His eyes will be upon me first day of the year to the end of the year, every year. I'm going to be a very privileged person.

Jesus was the most privileged person to walk on the earth. He may not have been the richest. He was not.

He didn't live in a palace. He lived in a very simple house. But he was the most privileged person walking on earth when he was on earth, because the eyes of the Father were upon him all the time.

Nothing could happen to him without the Father knowing. And if someone was scheming or planning something, the Father would deal with it. I want to live like that.

I want to live like that. If people are scheming and things against me, I'm not worried. My Father will take care of it.

Why? Because he loves me like he loved Jesus. And as he cared for Jesus, he will care for me. It's wonderful to know that.

If you care for your oldest child, you'll care equally for your youngest child. It's a wonderful thing to know that. And when God is on your side, who can stand against you? No demon in hell.

The eyes of God, your Father, upon you from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. There will be no need for you to be anxious, afraid, wondering how things will turn out. May God may allow us to go through some very tight circumstances.

He certainly allowed me. Difficult circumstances with people opposing me and all that. But it, you see, that's fine, Lord.

If your eyes are upon me, I don't mind a tight circumstance. It's, it'll be a wonderful opportunity to know what miracle is God going to do for me over here. In this extremely difficult circumstance, where it doesn't look as if there's a human way of escape, there must be some miracle God wants to do for me and show me his power.

You know, when I look at the miracles like this, that Jesus stilled the storm to teach his disciples, there's no storm I cannot still. It's good to know that. There's no storm he cannot still.

When they ran short of food, he could handle that. There was no situation that Jesus could not handle. To me, the message in the miracles, I took a series of studies in the miracles once, and the overall title I gave for that study was, God Can Solve Every Problem.

That is the message of the miracles. There was never a single situation where somebody came to Jesus with a problem and he had to scratch his head and say, boy, that's a tough one. Never.

Not even one. He always had a solution. It wasn't what the disciples thought.

There was a solution. Now, God may not do miracles in exactly the same way that he did then, but he still has a solution for every problem. That's the main message I get out of it.

I'm not asking that he takes five loaves today and feeds 5,000 people. That's not, no. What I get from the miracles is one message, God can solve every problem.

The way he solves it may not be the way I think he should, but he does solve it in a far better way than I think, because his eyes are going to be on me from the beginning of the year till the end of the year. Take that promise. Say, Lord, I want it to be true in my life in this coming year.

There's another aspect to it which I want to show you, and that is in Proverbs in chapter 15 and verse 3. The eyes of the Lord are in every place watching the evil and the good. The first verse we saw is the eyes of the Lord upon you from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. This verse says, the eyes of the Lord are in every place watching the evil and the good.

That's the second thing I need to realize in terms of the eyes of the Lord being upon me throughout the year, that I'm now free from living before the eyes of men, because the eyes of men can't be in every place watching me. And if you look at your own life as a Christian, perhaps you'll discover that you're more careful when the eyes of men are watching you and not so careful when the eyes of men are not watching. You're not so careful in the way you speak to your wife at home as you're careful when you're speaking to your wife in a church meeting like this, after a church service or in a public place.

You need to be very careful how you speak because the eyes of men are watching you. What about when you're at home and only the eyes of the Lord are watching you? That is the place I've discovered whether I fear God or fear men more. Just face up to it.

If you are more careful before the eyes of men in how you behave, how you conduct yourself, and less careful when men are not around and only God is there, whatever type of Christianity you may claim to have, I will tell you to your face, my brother, my sister, let me tell you lovingly, you don't fear God at all. You fear men, sure. You value the opinion of men tremendously.

You don't care much what God thinks about you. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, just like we saw it is going to be upon us in every day. Deuteronomy 11, eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the good and the evil.

He doesn't manifest himself in his glory to frighten us. You know God could have appeared in glory in the Garden of Eden just as Eve was about to reach for that forbidden tree, for that forbidden fruit. God didn't do it.

Why didn't he do it? Because he wanted to see how will Adam and Eve behave when they think I'm not around. God is in every place. He was right there in Eden when he was reaching out for the fruit.

It was not as manifest a presence as it was on the Sabbath day when they were with God. But if we can recognize this is something which I've sought to live by. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the good and the evil.

When you handle money, a lot of people don't know how you're handling it, but the eyes of the Lord are there, watching you write your accounts and watching you every little thing. Do you think you can get more by cheating and telling lies? That would be an act of unbelief. That would be saying, God, if I honor you,

I'm going to suffer financially.

Really? He said if you seek God's kingdom and his righteousness in money matters, everything that you need on earth will be supplied to you. You may not become a millionaire, but that's not the point. That's up to God to decide how much he gives.

He gives more to one and less to another. That's his choice. He draws different sizes of financial circles around different people for his own sovereign reason and purpose.

And through it all, he's testing us. I've been through times when the circle around me was extremely small, and I knew he was testing me. Then he made it bigger.

He was testing me there. But the eyes of the Lord were always there. You know, it's one thing to say, Lord, I want your eyes to be upon me throughout the year.

I don't want to recognize that his eyes are in every place, in every situation. It's a blessing. I want the eyes of the Lord to be upon me all the time, because it's not only a protection, it's my salvation.

And if I live in the light of that, it'll change my life. There was this Roman Catholic monk called Brother Lawrence who wrote a book called The Practice of the Presence of God. He wasn't an educated person, so they didn't give him jobs in the church.

He was a cook, working in the kitchen most of the time. But he was a God-fearing man. And he said, when I wash the dishes in the sink, I can worship God there.

I feel his presence when washing the dishes in the sink in my kitchen as much as when I'm kneeling down and taking part in the Lord's table. Call him Roman Catholic or whatever you like, he knew God better than a lot of Protestants, that's for sure. God is no respecter of persons or denominations.

A man seeks him with all his heart, he will find him. Don't glory in accuracy of your understanding doctrine. The Pharisees were the most accurate in doctrine in Jesus' time, and they killed Jesus.

Pilate, who did not know head or tail about the Bible, wanted to free Jesus. It's not accuracy of doctrine that really makes us more acceptable to God. It's a humble heart.

It's a heart that's sensitive, that wants to please God in every situation, that recognizes the eyes of the Lord are in every place. Connected with that, I want to read 1 Peter in chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3, it says, verse 10, it is actually a quotation from Psalm 34, verse 12 to 16. David, I mean, Peter is quoting from Psalm 34, and he says, 1 Peter 3, 10, let the one who means to love life and see good days, which of us doesn't want to see good days in 2014? You want to see good days? I want to see good days every day of this year.

Let him, first of all, take care of his tongue. That's a good area to where we can ask God to help us to be not so careless in the use of our tongue in 2014, as we have been in past years. Refrain his tongue from evil speaking.

We all understand what evil speaking is. It's mostly about other people. And his lips from speaking guile.

That means telling lies. And let him turn away from evil and do good. Even to those who do evil to us, let's turn away and do good.

And let him seek peace. When people want to come and fight with me, let me pursue peace and pursue it. Why? Listen to this.

Then the eyes of the Lord will be upon you. These are the righteous on whom the eyes of the Lord are always there from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. And when such a person offers a weak prayer, the ears of the Lord are open to listen to that prayer.

We live in a Christendom where a lot of emphasis is placed on long hours of prayer. Such and such a man of God used to spend two hours in prayer. Somebody else used to spend four hours in prayer.

I don't know how they found out. He was supposed to keep everything secret, how long he prayed. But anyway, but I've discovered that the important thing is whether the Lord has heard that prayer.

A lot of prayer is like speaking on a telephone and God hasn't even picked up the receiver at the other end. I'm going away talking, talking, talking, talking. For example, it says if I read a God iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

If I haven't forgiven somebody, God will not hear me. You can pray hours if you like. He won't hear you.

If you've got a grudge against somebody, God won't hear you. There are many things that break the connection between us and God. He doesn't listen.

His ears attend to the prayer of the righteous. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. You want your prayers to be answered? Seek to be righteous in your life.

Seek to recognize the Lord is having his eyes all the time. Say, Lord, I want to live in your presence. I don't care if other people are not.

I'm not here to judge them. I'm not here to find fault with them. But I want to make sure that I live in your presence every single day of my life.

Ask God for grace. Do you think that God would say this is the life I want you to live and say, no, no, I won't give you the power to live that life? Impossible. Impossible.

Look at the pains even a schoolteacher sometimes takes, a good schoolteacher, to teach his children. And there are some really good schoolteachers in some schools who take so much pains to teach their children a subject on which the child is weak. Or if you're a father or mother doing homeschooling, how much time you will take with your children to explain something which they can't understand.

You think God is less interested in enabling us to overcome something that we are struggling with? Your child may be struggling with multiplication. You want to help him. When God sees his child is struggling with lust or anger, God wants to help him.

He will. He's better than any earthly father or mother. So let's remember this.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. He's looking always. I want to show you a couple more things.

Turn with me to Psalm 139. Psalm 139 we read, and verse, you know, David is speaking about the time when he was being formed in his mother's womb. He says in verse 16, Psalm 139 verse 16, the eyes of

the Lord, it's again the eyes of the Lord, saw my unformed substance.

You know, when it was a little embryo, when David began as a little embryo in his mother's womb, still not formed, eyes of the Lord were upon him. Because God sees the future. God saw this little baby that's coming out in nine months time.

He's not going to be like his older brothers. He's going to be different. He's going to have six older brothers, but this one's not going to be like that.

He has six older brothers. This one's not going to be like that. He's going to be different.

He's going to want to live in my presence. He's going to have a fear of me. He's going to be a young man after my own heart.

So God had his eyes on him and gave him the abilities and gifts that would prepare him to be a Psalm writer and to be the type of king he was supposed to be. He did slip up once or twice, but God prepared him. And what I want to say to you is, my brothers and sisters, that if you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ as Lord, then you can be absolutely sure that God chose you before the worlds were created.

And when you were a little embryo in your mother's womb, you did not know it. The eyes of the Lord were there watching you in your mother's womb, forming you, giving you the personality and the gifts, natural gifts. Later on, he'll give you spiritual gifts after he fills you with the spirit.

But right there in the womb itself, he is preparing you with natural gifts and abilities and personality and temperament that would equip you to be the type of witness he wanted you to be. I believe that with all my heart. His eyes were upon me when I was in my mother's womb nearly 75 years ago.

I knew that much later. And that shows the intensity of God's care for his children. He's very careful about, he's planned, and he makes sure if you're really seeking to live under his Lordship, he will arrange circumstances that we don't miss out on his will.

By shutting doors that I tried to enter. I thank God he shut doors that I tried to enter. And he's opened other doors and said, that's where I want you to go.

It's wonderful, I mean, it's wonderful to have what I call a God-planned life. I think that's the way he wants all of us to live. Because his eyes planned our life.

It says further in that verse, in your book, this is Psalm 139, 16. In your book, we know there are no literal books like this in heaven, but that means one section of God's mind. That's what a book means.

And there was section of God's mind, which has got Zach Poonen written on it. In that are your name. The days that I was supposed to live on earth were all written down there.

Before my very first day on earth. It's all written there that he's, this is what I planned for him. And this is where he's going to be.

And this is how he's going to go. And this is where he's going to disobey me in his stupidity. But I won't give up on him.

I'll still bring him around. And it's wonderful. And finally he will surrender to me.

He'll see how wonderful it is to give all of his life for me. It's at such a time. And even though it's some years, I'm willing to wait.

Wonderful. His eyes are on us. And he's written down his plan for our life before my very first day.

And we've all disobeyed him in so many ways. Can we fulfill his plan when we have messed up his life for so many years? Yes. I think of the Apostle Paul saying at the end of his life in 2 Timothy 4, 7, I have finished my course.

I fought a good fight. And I say, Lord, can a man who messed up his life for the first 30 years, killing Christians, persecuting Christians, and going completely in the wrong direction, still finish his course in the next 37 years? He died when he was 67. Nearly half of his life, lived in the wrong way.

That's the amazing thing. That God factors in even those years of disobedience. Like it says in Acts 17, 30, he overlooks the times of ignorance.

Wonderful. It's tremendous encouragement to me. We've all had years of ignorance.

God overlooks it. Men don't overlook it. They keep a record of all the stupid things we did in our days of ignorance.

Not God. He says, I don't remember your sins and iniquities anymore. He's overlooked them.

What a comfort it is. And that's what's taught me to overlook the stupidity of other believers around me. Because God's been like that to me.

Free to others the way God treats you. You'll have a much happier life. So God can still fulfill his purpose in our life, even though so many years we did so many wrong things, and we didn't take the Christian life seriously.

We didn't take sin seriously, especially. God factors that in. So merciful and long-suffering.

And in God's long-suffering, it's spelled L-O-O-N-G. Suffering. It's a very long suffering.

He's like that. He factors that in. That's why we have an encouragement as we look to the future.

I don't have to sit in regret and say, oh Lord. You know, I sometimes say, Lord, I wish I had known all these wonderful truths when I was 19. I wish some older brother had laid a hold of me and grabbed my shoulder and said, Zach, this is the way you must live.

I never had a spiritual father. By 19, a lot of things I had to find out for myself. I say God factored in all those things.

It's okay. I can make him learn something even through his failures. And I can certainly say that.

So don't get discouraged because some part of your life was messed up. God knew you from your mother's womb. His eyes were on you.

And he steered your path. I can certainly say he steered my path. You know, I joined the Indian Navy not because I sought God's will.

I wasn't even born again then. I was a good carrier to go on. I wanted to be a naval officer and got all set up to be someone great in the Navy.

But God had planned it. Even that. And trained me there with the discipline and other things needed that I needed to be his servant.

I say the Navy was my Bible school where I learned things that they can never teach in any Bible school. I learned to be tough with everybody making fun of me. Then one more verse.

2nd Chronicles 16 and verse 9. 2nd Chronicles chapter 16 and verse 9. It says here again about the eyes of the Lord. The eyes of the Lord are moving to and fro throughout the earth. You know how carelessly I used to read that in the early days? I used to read it like this.

Sometimes we read the Bible carelessly. The eyes of the Lord are moving to and fro throughout the whole earth to find out who all are wholehearted. No.

He doesn't need to look around the earth. He already knows who all are wholehearted. Here it says, it's moving throughout the earth to support those who are wholehearted.

That's what the eyes of the Lord are moving around the earth. In other words, God's planning your life and mine in such a way. He says, I don't only want to bless you.

I want to make you a blessing. You know what God told Abraham? I will bless you and in your all the families in the earth will be blessed through you. That's what he promised Abraham.

And it says here in Galatians 3.13 and 14 that the promise that God gave to Abraham, that blessing is for us through the Holy Spirit. That means when God fills me with the Holy Spirit, I get that blessing of Abraham, which is I will bless you with power to be an overcomer in your life and every family on earth that you encounter will be blessed through you. Isn't that wonderful? I wanted to be like that.

I don't want to be a curse and a nuisance to people I meet or to the families I meet. Every single family that comes in touch with me must be blessed. That's my inheritance in Christ.

I believe it and I claim it. I mean, it can be yours too if you believe it and claim it. Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that I will be blessed with power in my own life for my own needs.

And I'll be a blessing to every family that I encounter. It's a wonderful thing. They may curse you, that's fine, but you'll be a blessing to them.

That's the blessing of Abraham. The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the whole earth to strongly support these people whose hearts are completely His. 2nd Chronicles 16 9. That's why I want to make my heart completely His.

That's what it says in that verse. That means, Lord, I don't want there to be anything other than Jesus who occupies my heart. Everything is in relation to Jesus.

Everything is in relation to the kingdom of God. What does it mean to seek God's kingdom first? It doesn't mean doing missionary work. It doesn't even mean supporting missionary work.

The kingdom of God is a word kingdom we don't use nowadays. That's the problem. We get all confused with that word.

In the olden days, every nation on earth was a kingdom. Today, the word is government. Every nation on earth has a government.

So it says, seek the kingdom of God. I translate it as, seek the government of God first. What does it mean, the government of God? That means to allow God to govern every area of my life.

So how do I seek the government of God every day in my life? Well, when you go to work, you don't do anything which is violating God's governing principles. Your mind may not be occupied the whole day with missionary work or giving money to missions or even studying the Bible. But the whole day, I will never do anything outside the government of God.

That's the meaning of seeking the kingdom of God or the government of God first in my life. That means every single day and every single thing during the day, I will not tell a lie because that would be violating the government of God. I will not sign a false statement.

I will not repay another person with evil if he does evil to me. I will not scheme and manipulate in my office to push other people down and climb on their shoulders and get on top of them. They may try to do that for me, but God will work strongly to support me because my heart is completely His.

Maybe He doesn't want me to get that promotion. Maybe He's got some better plan for me. So many things.

It's so wonderful to live under the government of God and He strongly supports me. His eyes are moving all the time to see how can I support this person for single people. How can I find the ideal marriage partner for this person so that he can serve me, so that she can serve me.

It's a wonderful thing to be at rest in God like that. My heart is completely His. You know whether your heart is completely His or whether you've got other ambitions in your life and other plans for yourself.

You say, Lord, I have no desire outside of your perfect will for my life. That is new covenant life. To walk on earth as Jesus did, a new covenant Christian fellowship must have people who live like that.

It's not going to be a huge number. I don't expect people in the Bay Area to get all excited of saying, I want my heart to be completely His. No, it'll be two out of six hundred thousand.

That's enough for me. Jesus was quite happy with twelve disciples at the end of His life. Imagine the greatest preacher that walked on this earth.

He couldn't produce a mega church. He could only produce twelve disciples. But boy, what quality of disciples they were.

They turned the whole world upside down and kept Christianity going for 2,000 years. I'd like to find disciples like that. Not the wishy-washy type of Christians who major on theology and explanation and music and things like that.

Not really interested. I'm interested in those whose hearts are completely His. Not those who can sing well or even preach well.

God works on behalf of those whose hearts are completely His to support them, to strongly. It's a wonderful verse. The eyes of the Lord are seeking, how can I strongly support this child of mine who has decided to give me all of his life, all of his ambitions, all of his heart, this son of mine, this daughter of mine.

I'm going to look for ways to strongly support him in this part of the world, in that part of the world, the other part of the world, everywhere. I want to give him the blessing of Abraham that every family that comes in touch with him is going to be blessed. You want to live like that? That's the only way we're supposed to live.

And it's not for some special people, my brothers and sisters. It's for every one of God's children. There is no partiality with God.

What He's done for Jesus, He'll do for the least of us. I hope you'll believe that. Please meditate on all that you heard today.

Listen to it again if needed. And say, Lord, this is how I want to live throughout this year. With my heart at rest in you at all times.

Let's bow before God in prayer. It's one thing to say I belong to New Covenant Christian Fellowship. Quite another thing to live in the New Covenant, which has been enacted on better promises Life you're to live is not one where you have to pump with your legs and pump the water up the drinks, water from the rain of heaven.

That's the life He wants you to live. Not trickles of water that come through human effort, but tons of water that fall down upon you because the heavens are open over you. Don't be satisfied with a substandard Christian life.

Say, Lord, I want your best in the coming year. I want to make progress. I want to be more like Jesus in this coming year than I've ever been in all my life.

And I don't want it to be just a New Year resolution that's forgotten after two weeks. I want to renew that covenant every day with you. I want it to be a daily affair.

Jesus said you've got to follow me daily. Daily I make a decision. And I can tell you something, what you will be at the end of the next year, 2014, will be the sum total of all the decisions you made every day of that year, day by day by day by day as you steadfastly chose to make your heart completely His, to hold nothing back from Him.

You'll find that He held nothing back from you. Heavenly Father, I pray this will be true of everyone here, that no one will be cheated of their inheritance by Satan. I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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