

Balanced Christianity 6. Question Answer Session - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

To live a balanced Christian life, one must renew their mind, be born again, and yield to God's guidance, allowing Him to search their heart and fill them with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:00:34

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Holy Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of renewing our minds according to God's interests, overcoming negative thoughts, and seeking God's will. It encourages seeking the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer, denying self-will, and developing a fear of God to resist sin. The speaker addresses leaving churches that do not teach truth with grace and interacting respectfully with members post-departure. The significance of praying for others while struggling with sin is highlighted, along with the need to find acceptance in God's love to combat low self-esteem.

Transcript

We have a number of questions on different subjects and I will try and answer them according to what we think would be most important. So one question is how to overcome in our thought life? How can we stop letting negative thoughts go in our mind? The Bible speaks in Romans 12 verse 2 about renewing our mind. And that means to stop thinking like the race of Adam thinks.

Because all of us think in one way. We seek our own. Our mind is set on man's interests.

And to renew our mind is to have our mind now focused on God's interests. And when we get focused on God's interests, it doesn't mean that God ignores our need. The Lord said that if we seek His kingdom first, all the other things will be added to us.

In fact, the person who can be completely free from anxiety and fear about the future and fear about who is going to look after him when he is old or how his retirement will work out, is the one who has put God's interests first in everything. And if you haven't done that so far in your life, you can start today. It's never too late to start.

And the way to do that is by reading the scriptures. There's only one book in the world, the Bible, that tells us God's mind. So if you don't read it, meditate on it, and if that's not the number one book that you want to study, you can pray all your life about renewing your mind, nothing will happen.

Because the one resource God has given you, you are not availing of. There are many people who want to overcome negative thoughts, bad thoughts. I say, do you read the Bible regularly? Do you meditate on it? Do you memorize it? Do you try to obey what the commandments claim, the promises? You are too lazy to do it.

And some say, well I can't understand. Well, if you can't understand, nowadays there are so many helps to study the Bible. For example, even if you go to our website, cfcindia.com, there are such a lot of resources there to make you almost a Bible scholar in two or three years, if you will spend half an hour a day.

If you can spend half an hour a day, that will change your thought life. Okay, what to do if I am asked, I have asked a Christian person for forgiveness, but this person keeps reminding me again and again, and is angry. See, you are not responsible for making a person to forgive you.

You are only responsible to ask for forgiveness. And if the person doesn't forgive you, that's none of your business after that. It's between that person and God.

Okay, another question is, how to live a real Christian life? Where do you start? How do you stay focused? Well, the first step, of course, is to be born again. See, a lot of people have not had a new birth. The new birth is, the best way I can describe it is, you know, a baby in a mother's womb, with everything in dark and confined space for nine months, and suddenly it's born, and it's coming to another world, and says, I never knew there was a world like this.

It's something like that, that happens when you are born again. If you are really born again, you come into another world, where you become aware of a world that you never knew existed. You become aware that Jesus can be your friend, and God is your father.

And that's why many people, because they have a very shallow experience of being born again, they are like premature babies who are born too early, and they have to be in the incubator for a long time, before they come to a normal life. What I mean by that is, when you have not really repented of your past sins, when you are not really sorry for all that you did in the past, and I am not asking you to give up your sins. God doesn't ask us to give them up.

God says, you must want to give them up. There is a lot of difference between giving up our sins and wanting to give them up. If God told me, you got to give up all your sins before you come to me, I would say, it's impossible to come.

None of us could come. But can you want to give them up? When a person comes to me for baptism, the thing I ask him is, not will you sin again. Nobody can say, yes, I never want to sin again.

Nobody can say that. What I ask him is, do you want to sin even once from now on? That is the evidence that you are born again. You don't want to sin anymore.

And if that hasn't happened in your life, I would say, you are not really born again. You may sin a hundred times after being born again or a thousand times. That's not the point.

But you never want to sin again. That's the new nature that comes. It's something like, a pig wants to be dirty, but a cat doesn't want to be dirty.

And the cat doesn't get that by education. When a cat has a little kitten, right from the time they are kittens, they don't want to be dirty. But pigs, they want to be dirty.

But a cat can fall into dirty water. Sure. And a believer can fall into sin.

A cat can fall into dirty water ten times a day. And a believer can fall into sin ten times a day. But the reaction when you fall, will determine whether you are a pig or a cat.

When you fall into that and you really hate it and you want to get out immediately, you know that you are changed. But what would you think of a cat that falls into dirty water and looks around to see if anybody observed it and say, let me enjoy this a little bit. That's a pig pretending to be a cat.

And there are a lot of believers like that. If you have to look around and see whether somebody caught you, you haven't changed. If you sin, if you are a cat, it doesn't matter if nobody in the world saw you, you'd feel, that's filthy, I want to get out.

So I always say, the test is not whether you sin. The test is what happens after you sin. What is your reaction? And of course we don't want to keep on falling and living like that.

If you really hate it and you want to avoid it over a period of time, God will help you. When striving to fulfill God's will in the small things, denying, trying to deny will, how do you decipher God's will in the small things and know it isn't our flesh or enemy telling us what to do? Like, for example, not to email this to your friend or family member, or not to go there, or to go somewhere. See, some of these things, like, somebody asked, a man of God said, Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice.

And he said, I don't seem to hear his voice, am I a sheep? And the man of God replied very wisely, the lambs have to learn to hear his voice. The sheep hear his voice. So, when you're a lamb, you have to learn to recognize the voice of the shepherd.

It takes time. So the more you hear God's voice, again, it's back to the Bible. You'll get familiar with God's voice.

And then in a situation where there's no clear answer in the Bible about a particular matter, you will know in your spirit what is right. So it's all a question of continuously listening to what God has said in his word. Okay.

Another question is concerning my family goes to a church, but I stay at home and listen to your messages, read the Bible, and practice what Jesus taught as I get light. So I disagree with things taught in my other church. I don't want to create a conflict in somebody's home by reading this whole question.

But what happens when, you know, this is a very common thing in many homes where husband and wife have slightly different convictions on which church to go to or which church to attend. I believe that we should give freedom to one another because in the things of God, we can't force a person to do something. When you force somebody, children we can do because children are under law.

You had to keep the sacrifices. You had to go to Jerusalem three times a year. It was compulsory.

So that type of Christianity is not a forced thing. Jesus always said, if any man wants to be my disciple and if you love me, keep my commandments. In the law there is no if.

I mean if you are a child of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you jolly well do this. You get circumcised and you get tithe or anything. I want to tell you, it's a dead work.

If you were forced to do something and you did it, it's a dead work. Instead of putting that money in the offering box, you might as well have flushed it down the toilet. It's exactly the same.

You are not going to get any reward in heaven for what you did forced because it's a dead work. It's a forced to do. So we don't force people to go to a church if they don't feel free.

When they are children, they are under law, they have to. Whether they like it or not, you come with me to the church. That's what daddy says.

But a wife is an adult and a husband is an adult. You can't force one another to go where you want to go. I accept his advice.

But there are cases where the wife is more spiritual than the husband. Many cases like that. So I wouldn't say that the wife should put her husband above Christ.

Not at all. Because the ultimate authority is Jesus Christ. We must find some way of allowing one another to go whichever church you belong.

We certainly know that Peter was married because Jesus went to Peter's home and Peter had a mother-in-law staying there. Was this a unique time or thing for Jesus and his disciples? Do we need to be concerned about following this example of talking about being single? No. I think if you read 1 Corinthians chapter 9, Paul says that apart from the wife, there is no other wife in the world.

So he says, don't we have the right to take around a wife like the other apostles? So the other apostles were married. The calling to a single life is a very special calling. Perhaps one in a thousand may be called to a single life.

So one Corinthians 7 is pretty clear that particularly for men it's very difficult to remain single and if it's a calling from God, one proof of it will be that you would have victory in the sexual area. It's just like the calling to full-time Christian work. If you are called to full-time Christian work, your mind is on money, money, money, money.

You are not called to full-time work, brother. Go and find a secular job. And if you are called to a single life, your mind will not always be on sex.

And so one can think that it's better if I am single. Paul says that, yeah, that's good, but not everybody can handle that. Jesus himself said that everybody can't accept that calling.

Is it possible to be filled with the Holy Spirit? And it's also possible to be not filled with the Holy Spirit. What are some of the signs of being not filled with the Holy Spirit? So can we watch out for this? Well, Jesus said, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power. Now let me explain something concerning the Holy Spirit because there's a lot of confusion concerning this.

And I don't expect everybody to agree with me. But I hope you will read the scripture with an open mind. That's why I only want to show you scripture.

I don't want to give you my opinion. In Romans chapter 8, in verse 9, the last part, it says, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to him. You don't belong to Christ.

You are not a part of Christ. You are not born again. You are not a child of God.

If you don't have the spirit of Christ, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Christ is not different from the Holy Spirit. There's no four persons of infinity. There's Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of the Father or the spirit of Christ, same thing, Holy Spirit. And if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't even belong to Him. That is one of the clearest verses in the New Testament, which teaches that as soon as you are born again, you receive the Holy Spirit.

In the early days, in the Acts of the Apostles, they would present it like this, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the Holy Spirit. Today we combine the two and say receive the Lord Jesus Christ. You never find in the Acts of the Apostles, they are saying it like that.

They said, believe in the Lord Jesus, receive the Holy Spirit. But it's the same thing. Receive the Lord Jesus Christ, receive the spirit of Christ.

Because when I say Lord Jesus come into my heart, I believe in you, I've turned from my sins and I trust you died for me and rose again. Jesus is in heaven. He doesn't come physically into your heart, He's got a body.

How does He come? For 33 and a half years He was on earth, second person of the Trinity. But the last two thousand years it's been the third person of the Trinity who's on earth. Not the second person.

First and second person are in heaven. So, when we ask Christ to come in, it's the spirit of Christ that comes in, into our heart. But, you may have received the spirit, you may have been born again, but you may not be filled with the spirit or baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The word baptism is a Greek word which means immerse or dip, put your hand, if you, in those days, if you, in Greece, if you spoke about dipping your hand in water, it's calling baptizing or bapto, baptizo, in your hand in water. It's being immersed in water, which is water baptism, immersed in the Holy Spirit, you know, you stand under a waterfall, you're completely immersed in that water. And that's being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, you may have received the spirit, but not be filled with the Holy Spirit. And the way, the best way I can picture it, you know, I find it easier when I use picture language. In my heart, it's like a house with ten rooms.

And there's one room called the guilt room, where I feel terribly guilty about all the sins I've committed in my life. And I want Jesus to forgive me and light up that room and drive away the darkness. I receive Christ into my heart, the Holy Spirit comes in, and one room is lit up.

My sins are forgiven. Gone. I'm born again.

I've become a child of God. And if you ask, is there light there in that house? Yes, there is light. Is it filled with light? No.

Because nine rooms are still dark. So the Holy Spirit wants to come to all those rooms. Now some people may open up every room as soon as they're born again.

The very first day their surrender is total. They are filled with the Spirit from day one. But in many cases it's not like that.

You know, we usually want to deal with our guilt first and there's a lot of selfishness in our life. You remember when the prodigal son came home. He didn't come home because he had a great love for his father and he felt he had dishonored his father and I want to honor my father again.

That's not why he came. He came because he was hungry. He said, I'm eating one of the pigs' food in my father's house.

It's good food. Let me go back. He came back for food and his father welcomed him.

So what I want to say is if you come to Jesus with a need, even if it's for sickness or food or anything, he'll welcome you but he doesn't want you to stay at that position. If the prodigal son after he came back home was only interested in staying at home to eat food, there's something fundamentally wrong with him. So even though you may come initially for some other reason, the Lord expects you to move on from there to come to the place where you want to be free from your sin.

So, in the beginning you may have just wanted Jesus to get rid of your sin and then the Lord knocks at the door of your heart and says, can I come into different areas of your heart? Can I come and sit with you while you watch television and make sure you don't watch things that are not good for you? And you may not want the Lord to interfere in your television room because you want to watch some things which he will not be happy to sit and watch with you. Okay? That room remains closed. The Lord says, can I look at your library? You say, no Lord, there are some books you may not like.

Can I come and see how you handle your finances? Are you upright in the way you earn it? How do you spend it? And you may not want the Lord to see how you earn your money or how you spend it. He may want to come and look at some of your sisters in your wardrobe. Let me see the type of dresses you wear.

You, the Lord says, do you think I'll be happy if you dress like this in a modest way? Do you think you would be able to walk with me down the marketplace? Do you think I'd be proud of you, the way you're dressing? I may ask you to give up some of these dresses. Throw it away. Get some more modest dresses.

You say, no Lord, the latest styles are this. I don't want to change. Okay, okay.

The Lord says, I will not enter that room. There are many rooms like this we lock. And we say, oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit.

You can pray for a hundred years, you'll never be filled with the Spirit. You can go to some meeting where they will make you babble something and say, okay, you got it. You have got nothing.

Your life is still defeated. Christ is not Lord of your life. This is the great deception.

I am not against the Pentecostal experience. I believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I believe in speaking in tongues.

I have spoken in tongues for 40 years. But I do not believe that most of what goes on today in many Pentecostal churches is a genuine baptism. 95% of it is fake.

There is the genuine, there is the fake. The very fact that there is a fake is the proof that the genuine is valuable. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit.

I mean, people don't make fake toilet paper or fake newspapers. It's, fake is always gold, diamonds, anything that's fake. The original is always valuable.

So, if you tell me there is something fake, fake born again experience, sure, the genuine must be very valuable. Fake gifts of the Spirit, yeah, plenty of it. The genuine must be valuable.

So, don't ignore it. Anything that's fake proves that the genuine is very valuable. So, but don't be fooled by the fake.

You wouldn't go to the market to buy gold if you had to and not get some expert to tell you what is gold and what's fake. So, we have to be very careful. And here is the best way to know that you are really filled with the Holy Spirit.

Don't wait for some experience. You don't have to go to a meeting. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit right in your room.

Just allow the Lord to search your heart and show you what areas of your life have you not yielded to Christ. I just mentioned a few. There could be others.

Ask the Lord to show you. I remember one preacher seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit and he thought he had yielded everything till the Lord told him, you want to be a great preacher, give up that desire. He didn't realize that.

He thought that was a good desire to be a great preacher but he was seeking for honor. When he gave it up, God filled him with the Holy Spirit. I don't believe there is any reluctance on God's part to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

But if you don't open a door, you can pray and pray forever. Nothing will happen. Instead of doing all that, instead of wasting time in such empty prayer, go before God and ask him to show you what are the areas in your life that are not yielded, where you don't want to walk with Jesus.

If there's any area in your life where you don't want to fellowship with Jesus in what you're doing, that's the area not yielded. I remember one young sister came and asked me, how should I dress? I said, imagine that Jesus one day called you if he was living in the next street and he asked you to walk with him down the street. How would you dress when you go and meet Jesus in his house? You're going to walk with him proud to be his younger sister.

Dress like that always, not only when you go to church services, but all the time. Don't you want Jesus to be with you when you go to work? Sure, you need him more there. You don't want to go around provoking other people by the way you dress.

But I find a lot of Christians are more concerned about what other ladies will think about them than what Jesus thinks about them. How in the world can such people be filled with the Holy Spirit? I cannot imagine that. If you're more interested in what people say about you, then we have to stand against this world system in every area.

So, that's how we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Okay, and then ask God to give you an assurance. And don't wait for speaking in tongues or any gift.

That is a separate thing. If God wants to give it to you, he'll give it to you. Not everybody speaks in tongues.

If it is God's will, he'll give it to you. If it is not, he'll give you some other gift. How do I battle with sexual urges? Why does God allow me to fall into the sin constantly? You can't say God allows you.

God hates sin. Any type of sin. But there are urges in us that God has placed with a good motive.

For example, there's a tremendous desire for food in our body. Because otherwise we would die. The body needs food and God has created hunger.

But that doesn't mean I can go and steal. No. God wants me to work and earn my living and get food.

And even begging is better than stealing. There's no word in the Bible which says don't beg. There's certainly a word which says don't steal.

So the hunger and desire to sleep. But I must do it in the right way. Not in the wrong way.

In the same way, the desire to sleep. God has given us the desire to sleep and that's why he darkens the sky for many hours a day so that we can go to sleep. And so that we can be refreshed the next day.

It's a cycle and God does that. So the desire to sleep is good. But you shouldn't be sleeping at the wrong time.

So just like that, you know, when you've got work to do, that's not the time you should be sleeping. In the same way, the sexual urge is something which is normal. God has placed in it for the propagation of the human race right from the beginning.

And so there's a natural attraction that God brings between a man and a woman. From the time of, you get into the teenage years there's an attraction. But why has God given that desire to come up even in your teenage years when you know that, and God knows you're not going to get married for another ten years.

I believe it is so that you can learn to battle it and overcome it even before you get married. So that it's not through marriage you overcame it. Because you're going to be tempted with sexual urges even after you get married.

Go and ask any honest married man. Temptation is there. Temptation doesn't mean they're evil.

Even Jesus was tempted. Was Jesus tempted sexually? If he was not then I have to say you are not tempted like me Lord. But the Bible says he was tempted like me.

And since the sexual urge is one of the strongest urges in the human body and something very difficult to battle and overcome. If Jesus was not tempted like that and I am tempted and I overcome it I will stand in

heaven as a greater conqueror than Jesus Christ. Can you believe that? Not at all.

He was tempted like us and he overcame and he says follow me. He never sinned and he was a man, a strong full blooded man just like anybody else. And he had the sexual urge that came at a teenage, in his teenage just like everybody else.

So I remember when I used to be tempted in this area I say Lord Jesus I remember you were tempted just like me in Nazareth when you were a young man and I wanted to do what you did in Nazareth. How did you fight it Lord? To me the thing that's helped me most in overcoming sin is to see Jesus as my example. Tempted like me, was a man just like me, grew up just like me and I used to say Lord what did you do in Nazareth when you were tempted like this? I want to do the same thing.

The Bible says run away from immorality. If I can avoid it, run away from it. When you are tempted to the computer, to pornography, don't try and sit there and battle it.

If you can get up and turn off that computer and go away for a little while and come back that's the best thing to do. The Bible says flee from immorality. It's a very powerful force, sexual urge.

It's more powerful than other desires. Do you know that the Bible tells us not to flee from Satan but to flee from immorality. Do you know that? James 4 7 says you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

But when it comes to temptation from a woman, you better run. So, who is stronger, the devil or a woman who is tempting you? The Bible says if you resist the devil, he will run. He will flee from you.

That's James 4 7 but 1 Corinthians chapter 6 I think it's verse 19 or something. It says flee from immorality. It doesn't say stand there and fight.

Run. When David got up from his bed and walked on the terrace and he saw that woman he was tempted, he should have just immediately run back into his bedroom and closed the door. He wouldn't have sinned.

There wouldn't have been that sad story there. But if you're not willing to run, you will fall. So, that's my advice.

God wants you to overcome. He wants you to be strong. How to live in grace and humility.

If you look at Jesus, do you know that pride always comes by comparison? Humility comes by comparison. If you compared yourself with other people who are far better than you, you would be humble. If you compared yourself with or jealous, you would be jealous of them.

If you compared yourself with people who you feel are inferior to you, you become proud. All pride comes by looking at other people you feel are inferior. For example, you get, I used this example, a boy who gets ten marks out of a hundred in mathematics in class.

Can he be proud? He certainly can if all the others got four and five and three and zero. He came first in the class with ten out of a hundred. How did he become proud? By comparison.

Now you put that same boy in another school where everybody is getting 98, 99 and 100, he all of a sudden becomes humble. How did he become humble? By comparison. He compared himself with people who got three and five and zero and he felt he was better.

He compares himself with people who get 98, 99 and 100, he feels all of a sudden very small. So, pride comes through comparison. If you look at your life, the areas where you are proud, you are always unconsciously comparing yourself with somebody else who is not as intelligent as you are, not as good looking as you think you are and not as clever or smart or whatever it is, not as accomplished as you are or doesn't have such a big car or a better house as you have, whatever it is.

It's always by comparison. And that's how we despise others and you can compare yourself with people who are better than you and become jealous of them. So, humility can come by comparison.

Compare yourself, deliberately compare yourself with Jesus Christ, everyday. In fact, the Bible says that, Hebrews 12.1, Let us run this race looking unto Jesus. In other words, every single day of my life is a race.

And I have to fix my eyes on Jesus who has gone ahead of me in this race. And I'll tell you one thing, you cannot live with Jesus day by day and become proud. You cannot even be proud for a single second.

You can be tempted, but it's impossible to be proud. No matter what you've accomplished, no matter how good looking you are, how intelligent you are, how spiritual you are, whatever you may do or anything, you cannot become proud if you look at Jesus. It is impossible.

If you study Jesus in the Bible and you see what he's like in the Gospels and you've seen him clearly and you keep looking at him, I'll tell you what I see myself as, a speck of dust. Lord, where am I compared to you? Almighty God walked on this earth. I remember once when I asked the Lord this question.

I said, Lord, why do you keep saying you're the son of man, you're son of man, son of man? And I got an answer. It meant, Jesus was saying, I'm an ordinary man. And I tell you, that really humbled me.

I said, Lord, Almighty God, you walked on this earth and you called yourself an ordinary man. What am I? I'm ashamed. If I ever think I'm anything more than an ordinary man.

All my life, I want to be an ordinary man. I'm amazed at how Christian leaders take titles like reverend and right reverend and all types of titles and try to show off that they're bigger and better than others. Even the title of pastor is to elevate yourself over other people who are just brothers.

You're only a brother. I'm a pastor. I'm a reverend.

I don't want to be anything more than another person. Imagine, Almighty God walked on the earth. He never took a title.

Did anybody call him reverend Jesus or pastor Jesus? He would have shut them up immediately. He said, I'm an ordinary man. Many people don't take these things seriously.

Jesus said, don't ever be called rabbi, father or any such thing. Deliberate disobedience to that command. Most of Christendom, every single, almost every Christian leader disobeys that command because they don't care for the teaching of Jesus.

Oh, they say it's a small thing. What is a small commandment? A commandment given by Almighty God is never a small commandment. I'm just giving you an example.

There are things in scripture which you don't take seriously because you don't take the word of Jesus seriously. Do you know Jesus said that every careless word that you speak, you'll give an account in the

day of judgement. That's in Matthew chapter 12.

You read that whole section, Matthew 12, 34 to 40 or so. Every careless word, idle word you speak, you'll give an account in the day of judgement. If you really took that seriously, you'd be very, very careful about the words you speak.

Colossians 4, 6 says, let your speech always be with grace. And every time you use a word which is not gracious, you repent and you go before God and you gradually begin to see how small you are. That with all your Bible knowledge and apparent spirituality, you're really nothing.

Say, Lord, what a long way I have to go to become like Jesus. It really humbles you. So, pursue humility and you'll get grace all the time.

Okay, another question is, okay that's already answered. I'm a young man, I have a job where I have to do certain things which a God-fearing person would not do. But I have to do it for the safety of my customers.

If I don't do that thing that I'm supposed to do, I'm dishonoring God. My heart wants to, but I know it's wrong. What should I do? That means you're being asked to do something which your conscience does not permit you to do.

Well, I'll tell you if you keep going that way, one day you'll destroy your conscience. You'll keep your job, but you'll destroy your conscience. You have to make a choice.

I faced this when I was in the Navy. And in a number of situations with my senior officers, and I had to tell them, Sir, I'm a Christian. I'm sorry, I can't do that.

My conscience doesn't permit it. I remember one officer, senior officer, told me you better forget about your conscience if you're in the Navy. I just kept quiet.

I wouldn't argue with him, but I said, I'm sorry, Sir, I can't do that. And I suffered some consequences. They wouldn't give me a good report because they were my senior officers.

My promotions were hindered once I got transferred away from my position in 30 minutes because I wouldn't submit to something. And in the military, it's a very serious thing to disobey. You're not just fired from your job.

You can be imprisoned. And disobedience in the military is a very serious thing. It's called a court-martial.

And you get imprisoned. But somehow God protected me. But those are the days, and I was only 22, 23 years old.

I wasn't a very old man. Just, I was young, but I was convinced that I had to please Jesus more than I'd please my military officers. And I believe the Lord saw all that.

And that's why he anointed me when I was a very young man, and gave me the gift to preach, and called me out to serve him full-time. You know, it's possible that God has a calling for you, but He tests you in these little, little situations. Be faithful, and don't compromise at any cost, even if it means you lose your job.

It's better to lose your job than to violate your conscience. I remember one man, he, and it's a true story, in India, he was in another state, and he was in a situation. He was working as an accountant in a company where he had risen, not because of qualification, but because of experience.

Then he became a Christian. And it's a very common thing in companies. I suppose it's true all over the world.

They've, you know, fudge on the accounts, and write wrong accounts to fool the tax people, and etc. He was doing that. He became a Christian.

He told his bosses in the company, I've become a Christian now. I can't write these fake accounts and cheat the tax people. They said, well, we want somebody who can cheat the tax people.

So, if you can't do that, you've got to quit your job. And he knew that he wouldn't easily get another one, because he had no qualification. So, he consulted other believers in his church, and they said, see, if you live in this world, you've got to adjust to these circumstances.

You can't just be so fanatic. But his conscience still didn't permit him, and he decided to tell them I can't do it, and they fired him. He lost his job, and he didn't know what to do.

He'd read one of my books. He took a train journey all the way from where he was to where I live. Came to see me in my house, saying, Brother Zak, you don't know me, but I read your book.

I want to ask you something. I was confused, because he explained the situation, and he said, my fellow believers in the church said, you've got to adjust with the situation there, and I didn't, my conscience didn't permit me. What do you, do you think I did the right thing? I said, I believe you did the right thing.

And if, because of this, your wife and daughter starve, and all of you starve to death, praise the Lord, starve to death. It's worth it to keep a good conscience. But, I said, I don't believe you'll starve to death, because there's another promise in the Bible.

1 Samuel chapter 2, and verse 30. 1 Samuel 2 30, which says, those who honor me, God says, I will honor. And I don't know how God's going to honor you.

I don't have any influence to get you a job. But I know my father in heaven does. And you've honored him, and I can guarantee one thing, he'll honor you.

I don't know how. And sure enough, God gave him another job, and he was okay, and he got a better one. Okay, how to find God's will, and how can you know, know it is God's will? I've got a book there called, Finding God's Will.

I would encourage you to read it. First of all, we know God's will by reading the scriptures, and by our conscience. If it convicts us, and doesn't permit us to do something, we seek also the advice of godly older people.

And ultimately, by the witness in our spirit. It's more in detail in that book, you can read it. Finding God's will is the title.

And if it's not there, it's also available online. All my books are available online at our cfcindia.com website. You can read it online as well.

What is the primary evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Exactly what Jesus said. You can't get it any better than Jesus' own words. Acts 1 verse 8, you will receive power.

Power to be a witness for Christ. That is by my life, and by my words, to be a witness for Christ. I'll get power for that.

And if you don't have power to live a Christ-like life, I don't mean perfection. I mean that you're making progress to become more and more like Christ. Then you need to seek God for the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is the proof. You will get a power, and you'll get a boldness to tell others about Jesus. This is one of the things that made me seek God.

I said, Lord, I don't seem to be bold. I'm a bit of a coward when it comes to being a witness for Christ. I will not believe that I'm filled with the Holy Spirit until I have that boldness.

So I sought God till the boldness came. What are the most important books a growing believer must read, other than the Bible? It's very difficult to say. A lot of books that I've written are what I have experienced through many years, and what I've learned from many other godly people through the years.

I'm not, I haven't plagiarized. I've not taken other people's writings and made it my own. But there's a sense in which the only original person in the world was Adam.

Everybody else since then has learned something from others. So we've learned from others, and it's, to read a book, a good Christian book, is like listening to a sermon. So some people say, I don't want to read books.

I said, you ever listen to a sermon? He said, that's okay. Well, what's the difference between a sermon and a book? It's the same thing. What the person said is written down.

That's all there is to it. So there's nothing wrong in reading good Christian books, and I would read books that speak to my heart, not to the head. There are Christian books, you read it.

I've taken commentaries and books, they instruct my head. I put them down after a few pages. I say, I don't want that.

But if something challenges me, you find a book challenges you to live a godly life, I would encourage you to read it. And that's the only type of book I ever want to write. And, you know, as I said, go to our website and look through all those books.

You don't have to buy any of them. It's all free. Skim through the contents page of each of those 25 books and see if they appeal to you.

Read a chapter, see if it helps you, and that way you can read all of them. Can a person be filled by the Holy Spirit by laying of hands by a godly man? I think in the early days, the Lord gave the Apostles and some a special gift to be able to lay hands on people and lead them into the gift of the Holy Spirit. But I haven't met anybody in my life in 57 years who can lay hands and impart the Holy Spirit to anybody.

I believe in laying on of hands and praying for people, but praying for them when they are sick, I do that. And even praying they'll be filled with the Holy Spirit. But I want to tell you my hands are empty.

You won't get anything from there. I tell people, why don't you ask Jesus to lay his nail-pierced hands on you? That's what I prayed. I said, Lord, lay your nail-pierced hands on my head and anoint me.

So you don't have to go to a man there are a lot of people who claim and I, if it encourages a person, I lay hands on them and pray for them. But I tell them, don't, you're not going to get anything from me. You go to God and ask him.

The best thing is, I saw God in my room. And was filled with the Holy Spirit in my room, not in any meeting. I'm always afraid of experiences you get in a meeting.

Because in a meeting, there's a whipping up of emotions. And you don't know whether the experience is emotional or from the Holy Spirit. But when you're alone in your room and praying to Jesus and he's there and there's nobody to whip up your emotions.

If you get filled, it'll be genuine. You can be sure of that. That's the advantage.

Okay. Is having a bad thought a sin? How do I distinguish between a thought and God's word to make, make or take a right choice? When a thought is flashed into your mind, that's temptation. It's not a sin.

Turn the stones into bread. Thought flashed into Jesus' mind by the devil. Jesus says, no.

Did the thought come into his mind? Yes. He rejected it. No sin.

Jump down from the top of the temple and the angels protect you. No. Did the thought come in? Rejected it.

We are tempted in our thoughts. Thought just comes into your mind. You say, I don't want it.

You haven't sinned and you don't need to condemn yourself. Oh, a thought came into my mind. Well, that was only temptation.

But if you relished it, yeah, that's something I'd like to think about that and you relish it for a while, then you've already sinned in your mind. So we must develop the habit of rejecting as soon as it comes. In the beginning, because we've used to so many years of sin, we tend to relish it for a while and maybe wake up a little later and say, hey, I shouldn't be thinking that.

It's okay in the beginning, but we must resist it and resist it till gradually we reject it immediately. And so we shouldn't condemn ourselves if thought, we need to distinguish between temptation and sin. In James chapter 1, you read verse 13 to 15 onwards.

James 1, 13 to 15, you read that temptation can become sin. It's only like a woman conceiving. You know, a woman has an egg.

We can compare that to temptation. When that egg is impregnated, then a baby is born, then only sin is born. So it's like a woman gives consent to something and then only the sin is born.

Till then, it's only a temptation. So we can say a woman having an egg in her doesn't mean a baby will be born. So thought is like that.

No possibility of sin, but if I yield to it, then that temptation gets impregnated, James 1 says, and sin is born, a conception takes place. But that it's a result of my choice. I exercise my will and say, yes, I want

that.

But if I say, no, I don't want that. Any number of temptations can come to your mind. Should I go to a church? I'm born again now, but should I go to a church which does not preach new birth? Well, it's like asking whether you'd like to live in the cemetery, in the graveyard.

I mean, some people like to live in the graveyard, that's fine. But I don't object to that, but I don't like to live with dead people. I think it's good to be with those who are living and to be a witness to others.

And there we should not seek to please our family members and relatives. We must be willing to take a stand and if your family feels otherwise, don't, I mean, if you're a young boy or so, then you have to be wise in the way you speak respectfully to your parents. But otherwise, we shouldn't let our family influence us in our following the Lord.

Where do you suggest we get baptized? I believe you should get baptized in a place where people know you. Find a church, if you don't have a church that does baptism, find a church that will baptize you and invite your friends. Don't go and get baptized in a place nobody knows you.

You may be hiding to acknowledge that fact. Get baptized in a place where everybody knows you. And ask your friends to come along and watch how you're testifying that I've finished with the world, I've finished with sin, I want to live for Christ.

This is again a question of how do you say Jesus came in the flesh? How is it similar and how is it different? How can I follow him? Jesus' flesh was not different and I explained to you that the way I understand the word flesh in the New Testament is self-will. Jesus had a will of his own when he came to this earth that he had to deny in order to overcome sin and please God. And that's where I have to follow him because I've got a will of my own as well.

And I have to deny it and say no, I don't want to do that. Not only in sinful areas, you know, Paul says in another place all things are lawful for me, 1 Corinthians 6 verse 12. But all things are not, all things are not profitable.

So here's a whole lot of, you know, there are three levels. One is unlawful. I never go there.

Unlawful, unrighteous. But then above that is a lawful level. But in that whole area called lawful, the top level is profitable.

So you have below the line unlawful, you never go there. Above the line in this whole area of lawful things, there's a top level, maybe 10 percent that's profitable. And a wholehearted Christian will seek to do things that are profitable.

He doesn't sin if he does the lawful things. But his effectiveness for God will be hindered if he doesn't always choose the profitable. That's not a strain because I believe it's the most effective way to live.

Even in the world people realize that I must choose what is most effective. All companies prosper in that way. They don't, people, the most disciplined people are the people who choose to spend their time not just doing a whole lot of lawful things, but what is more profitable.

So that's the way to spiritual growth. Okay. I want to live a holy life and I try my best to deny myself, but I realize that I'm unable to most of the time.

I'm too weak. What shall I do? You need to pray that God will help you to take up the cross and follow Jesus. See, you don't have to fully understand the doctrine of Jesus coming in the flesh.

You know, that's that earlier question about what does it actually mean? If you're a teacher, if God calls you to be a teacher and that may be again one in 500 people who are called to be a teacher, then you may need to understand. But the rest of us, it's like our digestive system. You don't need to know how your digestive system works for it to work.

If you're a medical professor or something in a medical college, then you need to know how it works. But otherwise just so long as it works is okay. So all you need to know is Jesus was tempted like you and he did not sin.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he prayed and resisted it and he overcame and he tells me, follow me. You don't have to worry about explaining all that. Okay, what is the appropriate way to leave a church that's not teaching the truth and how do you interact with the members of it all after you depart? Well, I believe you must be gracious always.

If you feel free, go and explain to the pastor that thank you for the years I've been here and I would like to leave now and go somewhere else where I feel. But if you feel the pastor is a strong man who will try to brainwash you, then don't go anywhere near him. Just quietly leave and when you're strong enough, you could tell him.

There's no clear way. You shouldn't hate anybody there. We should not even hate Hindus or Muslims or anybody.

There's no, we don't have a permission to hate anybody in the world. God so loved the whole world that he gave his son to die for everyone. So we cannot hate anyone.

We disagree with people, but we don't necessarily hate and there could be born again people in a church. I would leave a church because they're practicing the baptism of babies and say, I'm sorry, I don't agree with that. So I'll have to find another church or they take sin lightly or they're preaching things which are not leading me to godliness.

So I need to find another place where I can be led to godliness. But I don't have to go and tell them you fellows are not spiritual. I don't have to say.

Sometimes the best thing is just to keep quiet and find another church and go there and attend it and later on, if you feel strong enough, you can go and tell the folks there that I've decided to leave. Should I pray for others when I'm captive? I mean, when I'm struggling with sin? Should you pray for other people to be delivered? Well, we don't have to become perfect before we preach, because if we have to wait till we become perfect before we preach, we'll never start preaching. We will have to wait till we go to heaven.

As we are progressing, you know, when Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ. Do you know that all of every one of you can say that? Think of the Christian life like climbing Mount Everest, 29,000 feet. Jesus has reached the top.

He's perfect. Paul was following Christ and maybe let's say he reached 10,000 feet. He's looking down at those at the lower levels and say, follow me as I follow Christ.

Maybe you've reached only 500 feet. There are some people still behind you. Look at them and say, follow me as I'm following Paul and Christ and others.

All of us have got some people who are younger than us. And if you are really sincerely seeking to follow Jesus, you can say to those who are younger than you, follow me as I'm following Christ. If you're sincerely seeking to follow Christ, you don't have to reach a great height of perfection before you ask others to follow you.

How can I say no to myself? Did Jesus do it? Was it by the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer? Absolutely. And by another quality called the fear of God. Fear of God is a reverence for God.

There are two types of fear of God. Listen carefully. One is the fear that God will hurt me.

You don't have to have that fear. The other is the fear that I might hurt God. That's the fear you must have.

I might hurt God if I do this or if I speak like this. I don't want to hurt God. If you have that type of fear of God, it's a good fear.

I don't want to hurt God. And a reverence for him. It says in Hebrews in chapter 5 and verse 7, how Jesus prayed to be kept from spiritual death or from sin.

In the days of his flesh, that means during the 33 and a half years when he was on earth, he offered up prayer and supplication with loud crying and tears. Can you picture Jesus crying and tears? Not for other people. He did cry at the tomb of Lazarus.

He did weep over Jerusalem. But this is for himself. And what was he praying for? He wasn't praying, oh, don't let anybody persecute me.

No, no, no. He was praying, Father, I never want to sin. To be kept from spiritual death, which is a result of sin.

And God heard him. And it says here in the King James, it's very clear, because of his godly fear. God will, if God heard Jesus' prayers because of his godly fear.

That's what the Bible says. Perhaps you're not being heard because you don't fear God like that. So if I fear God, I'll hate sin.

I say, I don't want to displease my heavenly father. And prayed with loud crying and tears. You don't have to make a lot of noise.

You can cry in your heart loud without making any noise. There's a cry in your heart to God. I believe there should be great weeping every time you slip up.

I want to ask you, when you slip up in sin, even in your thought life, do you find that you have such a sorrow? For example, you, somewhere you were sitting and you just lusted after some woman. Nobody saw it. Nobody knows anything about it.

But you have a deep sorrow. Lord, I let you down there. Nobody saw it.

Nothing happened. But you think about it maybe the rest of the day. God, why did that happen? I don't want it to happen again.

And at night, you go to bed at night and you weep on your pillow. Lord, why did that happen to me at 10 o'clock this morning? If you have that type of desperation and sorrow that you let down God once at 10 o'clock in the morning and you're weeping at night in the pillow, I tell you, you'll get victory very soon. The thing is, a lot of people don't have that type of sorrow.

They seem to, ah, Jesus died. Yeah, so what? It's your sin that nailed him to the cross. It's those dirty thoughts of yours and your anger and your wrong attitudes to others that nailed Jesus to the cross.

And if you see that, you will hate it. You'll hate it every time you spoke an angry word. You'll hate yourself for it.

And you'll cry before God. Lord, why did I lose my temper again? Please help me. You keep wetting your pillows like that with your tears a few nights.

You'll get victory pretty soon. Again, Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears. There's no easier way for us.

Okay, we'll answer some of these questions in our next session. But before we close, there's a little article here, which all of you are going to get a copy of it. It's just two sides of a sheet.

It's called Jesus Loves Me. This I know. It's written by a godly man, I don't know, early part of 20th century or something, many years ago.

It helped me so much at one time in my life. You know, we all want to be accepted by others. And here he tells us, the only way to self-acceptance is to find acceptance with God.

We need desperately to see ourselves through the eyes of God's love, accepted and loved just as we are. How God loves us. Otherwise, we'll always be wanting to be accepted by people.

It's a wonderful article. I've read it many times. And I would encourage you to keep it with you, to read it, especially those of you who have a low self-esteem, frequently condemning yourself.

Read this. It'll really bless you. Without a shadow of doubt, I'm sure it'll help you.

Each of you will get a copy. And if it blesses you, you know what you should do? Make a copy of it and bless others with it. That's the best thing to do.

That's coming your way, one copy each. Let's have a word of prayer. Our Heavenly Father, please help us to remember the things that we have heard and answer our questions, we pray, the things that have not yet been answered.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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