

Being A Heavenly Minded Provider for His Family

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a heavenly-minded provider in the home, focusing on the biblical principle that the man should be the provider. It highlights the need to balance providing for the family's needs while prioritizing God's kingdom and righteousness. The sermon encourages seeking righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit while being careful with money and avoiding unnecessary expenses. It also stresses the significance of honoring God by providing for one's family, including education, food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.

Scripture: Matthew 6:24, Proverbs 6:6, 1 Timothy 5:8, Psalms 41:1, 1 Peter 4:15, Romans 14:4, Ephesians 6:5

Topics: "Heavenly-Minded Provision", "Balancing Family Needs and God's Kingdom"

Description

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Transcript

So, we've been thinking about our ministry as men, we've seen what it is to be a good father and a good husband and a good father. So today we want to think of what it is to be a heavenly minded provider in the home. God has ordained in his original plan for man and woman that the man should be the provider of the home.

He's the one who goes out to work and earn what is needed for the family. In the early days, of course, it was farming and women didn't go farming. And even now, primarily, it's the man who is to be the provider.

And solely if the man is sick or incapable of working, that the woman needs to take up that job as the primary provider. So, when we think of providing the needs of our family, there are a few verses in Matthew 6 that we can look at, especially as the cost of living goes up. For many people, jobs are scarce in many countries and it can be difficult more and more as we approach the end of time.

But yet, whatever the time may be, for the first century or the last century, whichever it is, God's word is still true. Matthew chapter 6, he speaks here about, first of all, verse 24, about two masters we can have. One is God and the other is wealth or mammon or money.

And he says in Matthew 6, 24, no one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one, love the other, or he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

For this reason, it's continuation of that, because of this reason, that is what? That you cannot serve God and wealth. For this reason, I say, don't be worried about your life as to what you will eat or what you'll drink or for your body as to what you'll put on, which includes a shelter over our heads as well. It's not life more than food, the body more than clothing.

Look at the birds of the air. They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, but your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than them? And then he tells us to consider the flowers, the lilies and the grass in the field, verse 30.

And then verse 31, do not worry then, saying, what will we eat or what will we drink or what will we wear for clothing? The reason I took this passage is because the primary purpose of our earning of being a provider in the home is to provide what we read of in food, drink, and clothing in the shelter. And he tells us not to worry about it. He doesn't say you shouldn't seek for it, but the Gentiles, verse 32, eagerly seek all these things.

For your heavenly father knows that you need all these things, but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So don't worry about tomorrow. Now, I don't know how many Christians actually take these words seriously or how many Christians have proved the truth of these words in their life and difficult situations, you know, when you've lost a job or when times are hard and you don't have enough money in the bank.

But I believe that if you're really wholehearted and you're seeking God's kingdom first, whatever job you may be in, whatever your situation may be in, whatever your situation may be, we should be able to prove the reality of these words so that when we come to the end of our life, we should be able to look back over our lives and say, well, I sought God's kingdom and his righteousness first, and he provided everything for me. And whether you're in full-time Christian work like me or in a secular job, even a secular job, there's a lot of insecurity. And we should be able to say that we spent our life putting God first, which meant that we never did anything unrighteous to earn our living, to provide for our family, and we sought to be upright.

And even if it meant as a result, some people may have lost their jobs because they are righteous and wouldn't do anything wrong when asked to do. I've come across people who are in such situations who ask me, what should I do? I say, you certainly shouldn't do anything unrighteous. Your boss is doing something unrighteous.

That's not your business. But in your table, your responsibility, you should not do anything unrighteous. I suppose it's very difficult to find a job in any company in the world today where everybody working around you is righteous and all the bosses are righteous.

No. It's only in our sphere, the area where we have responsibility, where we are working, there we must be righteous. And the rest is, we don't become busybodies in other people's affairs.

It's not our business. We can be working in a store where a lot of crookedness going on, but if you are righteous in what you do, that's it. So we have to earn our living in an honest way.

And if we say, Lord, I want to, what does it mean to seek God's kingdom first? Go to Romans 14 and see a definition of God's kingdom there. This is what I always think of because in the early days when I read that, I thought it meant preaching the gospel and going different places and telling others about Christ. But the kingdom of God is described in Romans 14 and 17.

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. So when I'm told to seek God's kingdom first, it's not that I should be going around preaching, but that I should be seeking righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. So that means I'm, you know, the opposite of righteousness is unrighteousness and the opposite of peace is unrest.

I should not be in unrest. And the opposite of joy is gloom and depression and complaining, et cetera. So you may not be a preacher and still seek God's kingdom first.

You may never travel outside your hometown and you can see God's righteousness first living in your own home all your life, seeking to be righteous in every area, seeking to be at peace with all people as far as possible. The Bible says, pursue peace with all men without which no one will see the Lord. So as far as we are concerned, we must be known as men of peace.

And that's how it should be in our home. Our home should be homes of peace. And the joy of the Lord, that's another thing which I don't know how many people really pursue to have in their homes, the spirit of joy between husband and wife, which will gradually get transmitted to the children.

And even if other people in my office are not cheerful and happy, I can be so this is what it means to seek the kingdom of God first. God's righteousness is not something I manufacture myself, God's peace and God's joy, which he gives to me through the Holy Spirit. And if I seek this, God's guaranteed that he will, he may not make us wealthy.

He does make some people wealthy, but he'll certainly take care of our food, clothing and shelter. And I've had the tremendous privilege of experiencing that. I left my job in 1966, which is 56 years ago.

And I left giving away all my money for the Lord's name with a zero bank account and saying, Lord, I trust you. Now, God doesn't call everybody that, you know, in the scriptures, he called only one man, only one person, Jesus said, go and sell all that you have. He never said that to anybody else.

So, which teaches me that it's very, very rare that God ever tells a person to give away everything. I happen to be one of those. If I had disobeyed them, I would not have been obedient to the Lord.

But I have met one or two people like that, who have told me at some time in their life, God told them to give up everything. And nobody should do that unless God calls them to do that. Just like nobody should go into full time Christian work unless God calls them.

I've seen a lot of people who disobeyed in both these areas and made a mess of their life, either going into Christian work where God didn't call them, or some deciding to give up everything when God never told them to do that, then they have problems. So, I mean, I can certainly say today after 56 years that I've never ever had to tell anybody my need. I've never had to borrow money.

I've never been in debt. I've never had to send any prayer letters in my entire life. God has provided one way or the other for my need.

I've never expected anything from any man. God's taken care of us. God's taken care of me and my family, my children, and taking care of their food, clothing, not only food, clothing, and shelter, but education, etc., as well.

And my wife and I have just trusted the Lord to take care of it all. So, I say this only as a testimony that if you honor God, he'll honor you. There's no doubt about it.

Absolutely no doubt about it. And when you have a few years of experience like that, your faith becomes stronger for other things. So, in this area, the way our attitude to see the main provider means what? Provide money.

That's what we need when we think of a heavenly-minded provider for the family. It's money that we primarily need to earn to provide all that we need for our family. And we look around for jobs, and we're going to trust God to give us a job according to our need.

We move from place to place to find a better job. So, we need to understand our attitude to money clearly, because before he spoke about not being worried about food or clothing or shelter, remember I told you in verse 25, it says, for this reason, Matthew 6, 25, I say to you, don't be worried. There is a reason why he says, don't be worried.

For this reason, I say, don't be worried about what you eat, what you drink, or all this matter of providing for your family. What is this reason? The reason is you make a choice as to which master you're going to serve. And he precedes that with instructions like verse 22, your eye must be clear, then the body will be full of light.

If your eye is bad, your body will be full of darkness. So, in other words, he's talking about our vision. Is our vision, verse 24, on God or on money? That's the point.

If your eye is looking at money, it'll be bad. Then it says your whole body will be full of darkness. I see that verse 22 and 23 is connected with verse 24.

But if your eye is clear that I'm looking only at God, my body will be full of light. So, he uses the same word here in relation to money or wealth that he uses in our attitude to our father, mother. What does it mean, for example, to hate money? Not in the common understanding of the word hate.

It's the same way Jesus said in Luke 14, 26, you've got to hate your father and hate your wife and hate your children. What does it mean to hate your father and hate your wife? And the Bible says husband must love their wife like Christ loved the church. So, you put scripture with scripture and you realize that what he meant in Luke 14, 26 is compared to our love for Christ.

It's our love for wife is almost like hatred. In other words, I compare it the light of the sun and the light of the stars. Light of the stars as we see it on earth is very minimum compared to the light of the sun.

So, that must be the contrast between our love for God and our love for our wife, husband, father, mother, everybody, and the same towards money too. So, we don't hate our wives in the sense that we detest them. We don't hate money either.

It's relative to God. We don't give our wife a place above God. We don't give money a place above God.

We, our wife is, our love for our wives is much less than our love for God. Our interest in earning our living is much less than our interest in God. And this word, I try to meditate on this, hate one and love the other.

So, just like our love for Christ above our love for our parents and wife and all must be permanent, our love for God, it must be so much greater than our interest in our earning our living, etc. And the other word he uses is to be devoted to one and despise the other. So, we don't despise money.

I don't. So, we must be careful with the money. Jesus was also careful with the money.

He didn't despise it. He told Judas Iscariot to keep it. He had a, like, he had a savings account.

That's what Judas Iscariot's bag was. The bank was a bad one, but Jesus kept his account in a savings account. Despise, I looked up the meaning of it, and it is disesteem.

That means you don't esteem it so great. Compared to God, you put it down in a lower, it really basically means the same thing as the previous expression of hate the one and love the other. We devote it to God and don't give such an importance to money.

Now, this is very important because it says it's a question of two masters. The ultimate question is not whether you earn money or not. The question in the first sentence of verse 24 is, does money control your decisions? Is money your master, or is God your master? In other words, when you look for a job somewhere, is it only the money factor that you think of, or do you seek God's will? Lord, do you want me to go there? Do you want me to take up the job? Do you want me, if it's not your will, I want you to close that door.

I don't want to go there. I want you to guide me very clearly. That's what it means to have a master.

Now, I'll tell you honestly that for many people in their seeking for a job, that thought doesn't even enter into their mind. Where can I get more money? Even Christians. Oh, here I can get a lot more.

Let me go there. Okay. I'm not saying God will reject them.

I'm saying, I'm just going to say to the person, money is his master. That's all. There's nothing wrong in getting a high paying job if God is leading you there.

So it's very important to ask ourselves, you know, because I'm saying about being a heavenly minded provider. Provided is providing money. And in order to do that, I must decide that I'm not going to let money be my master.

You cannot serve God and money. You know, I'm not saying that if you, whatever job you got right now, you didn't see God at all. You're here today.

I'm not asking you to leave the job suddenly and go. That'll be crazy. I'll give you a verse to comfort you.

Those of you who are in your job without having sought God's will. 1 Corinthians 7, verse 24. Brethren, each one must remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

He's saying, are you a slave? Don't seek to be released. Let the Lord release you. Verse 21, were you called while you were a slave? Don't worry about it.

If you're able to become free, do it. So the meaning is, if you're in a job today where you didn't see God at all, you just considered earthly factors and money and other things and decided to move. Okay.

And now the Lord has called you. Maybe you didn't have light on what you're hearing today. Don't worry about it.

It says in verse 21, do not worry about it, but seek to become free from that slavery to money and do that. And then until then remain, verse 24, in the condition in which you were called, because it's life is difficult. Even in those days when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, it was difficult.

And so he says in verse 26, if I were to paraphrase it, since in view of the present difficult circumstances in the world, it is good for a man to remain as he is. So, I mean, I just mentioned that to deliver people from any unnecessary condemnation. But wherever we are, we must seek to put God first.

And I'll tell you this from my 56 years experience, you will never lose out by putting God first in relation to your job or in relation to your family, always putting God above your children, above your wife, above your home. You will never lose out. That is impossible.

In fact, you'll have such wonderful experiences of faith, of God's provision in amazing ways, which you will never have. You're leading a very careful life where you always just seek earthly factors alone, and you'll never experience that. I remember in the times when I used to travel away from home for preaching the gospel to different places.

And I remember once when my children were not too well, they were very small. And I traveled by train, and I had to go to the train station to take a train to a distant place and coming back after three, four days. So, I was wondering what if my children are seriously sick during this time I'm away.

And there were no cell phones or anything those days. And in those poor villages, nobody has a phone even in their house. So, I went to the railway station, and I said, Lord, if you want me to go back home, I'll go back.

I'm sure the brothers at the other end will understand. Because it was our own CFC church meeting only, I could always tell them, I'll come another time. But most of my travels were to CFC churches.

And finally, I said, well, I'm going to trust you. And I took the train and I went. And when I came back, the Lord had taken care of my children, they were perfectly healthy, there was no problem.

So, a few experiences like that when we have, where we see sought to honor God, and discover that he does take care of us. I remember another time when I went to another place, it was a long, much longer period, I was away. And each time we had only three children, each of those three got chickenpox one after the other, you know, one gets it and all get it.

And, and he was alone. But the Lord gave her grace and she never told me to come back. And I, I don't know whether I've traveled to another country or somewhere.

But anyway, I have a number of experiences like that, where God's provided numerous experiences, I don't have time to describe it all. But all I'm trying to say is, God provide takes care of your family. When we say providing for a family, it's not just providing money.

But we have to care for our children in other ways, when they're sick, etc. That's also a provision that the husband must take the responsibility. And so, when I was away, God took care of that.

I'm just telling you that to encourage you to know that in any situation, it's one of my favorite verses, 1 Samuel 2, verse 30. Those who honor me, I will honor. Remember that verse all your life, those who honor me, I will honor, you honor him.

And I believe all of us must have experiences in our life, where we honor God, even if it meant financial loss. Yeah, I've done that in different situations where it meant financial loss. I remember once, you know, I need to provide for my family, but the what I had received from my parents as an inheritance, not very much.

She used to live simply on that. And that's how I lived all my life. But I had to invest it somewhere so that I could get a return from it to be able to continue using it because the value of money goes down every year.

And I had gone away somewhere for ministry. And when I came back, I discovered because I had been away for that period, I lost a fairly large sum of money. In Indian rupees terms, it was a few 1000s of rupees, it was a lot of money.

But I felt the Lord asking if you regret it, I say no, I went to serve you. I have no regret, I believe you let me to go there. So I said, Lord, I'll do it again.

If you asked me to go, I'm willing to suffer this loss a second time. Because your service is far more important to me than earning some money. I don't want to miss this opportunity to make money.

So I can't go for that never. God's work is first. And I said, Lord, I'll do it again.

You can test me. And a couple of years later, at a conference, a brother got up in the meeting and testified that I came to the Lord, when Brother Zack came to this certain such a place, at such and such a time, and that is the time I'd gone when I'd lost this money. And I thought, Lord, is one soul worth more than all that money I lost? Definitely.

What should I profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? The Lord never allowed me to know that for two years to test me. And I'm glad that I passed the test. To serve you, Lord, and to bless your church is always more important to me than any amount of money I gained.

I'm not going to be calculating like people in the world. God is first. And in your own way, God may test you as well.

And I would urge you, put God first, and you must have a number of experiences by the time you finish your life of having sought the kingdom of God first, and if necessary, suffered a loss somewhere. And this has happened to me more than once. And I'd say, praise the Lord, praise the Lord.

So my aim has not been to increase the level of my bank account. My aim is to provide my family and I believe that includes what does provide for our family mean in our day and age. It means providing a house for them to live.

It could be, if you're able to own it, better. If you can't own it, at least able to rent a house and to be able to provide food, clothing, shelter, and education. In our day, I mean, if we were living in the day when

everybody was a farmer, you don't have to bother about education.

Children don't even have to go to school. They just learn how to farm the fields and that's it. That's how people lived for so many years.

They didn't have schools in those days. And when Abraham was traveling around with his family, where are you? His children are not going to school. They just taught them to read and write at home and that was it.

But they were farmers. And sheep, looking after sheep, that's what Abraham and Lot were doing. They were very wealthy, but it was all in flock.

And Job's wealth, for example, was not in gold and silver. It was in camels and animals and all that. That's how it was those days.

But in our day, you can't earn your living with animals. Suppose in some place in farms, they can do that. But most of us live in cities.

We must be able to, as much as we provide food, clothing, and shelter to our children, we must be able to give them a good education. Good food, good residence to live in, and good education because we are praying, give us this day our daily food. That's what the Lord taught us to pray.

So we are looking to the Lord for provision. And we want our children also to get their daily food when we are passed on and they've become, they've grown up. So we must prepare them for that.

And in the cities and towns in which we live, there are no farms. And so they must learn a trade. And I know in India, if you're a carpenter or a plumber, you live in a slum.

You're a carpenter, plumber may be able to live very comfortably, because they are \$100 a day or for a visit. So it depends where we live. But in India, certainly, it's important to, for many people, even an ordinary degree, will not get them a job.

Because there's so many Indians who have got degrees, they got to be postgraduates. So we have to see the country in which we live, the situation we are in. And providing for our family includes education for our children, taking care of providing for them, they need, whenever they are sick to take care of hospital expenses.

This is what we need money for. And the Bible says we should love our neighbor as ourselves. So I applied to our children.

And it means you should try to give your children, you love them as yourself, as good an education as your parents gave you. That's how I understand that verse. And then trust God to provide for them.

But if you want to do that, you have to be very careful with money in our time. And that means we have to learn to live frugally. Frugally means simply avoid unnecessary expenses.

If you are going to live in a lavish lifestyle, frequent vacation trips, and lavish lifestyle at home. And as a result of that, that your children, you're not able to give your children as good an education as you have. And they grow up.

Have you loved your children as much as you love yourself? As much as your parents get for you? And our parents were not even converted, perhaps some of them. So that's important. That's why in the Bible, it doesn't speak much about educating our children, because they were all farmers.

So I believe that I'm not saying this to bring anybody under condemnation. But that was my understanding of how to love my children as love myself, do unto others, as you would have others do unto you or as you as your parents did unto you, do unto your children in the same way. So I'm saying this, therefore, those are extremely wealthy millionaires and billionaires, of course, can afford to live as they like and still educate their children.

But the rest of us who have to make ends meet and living if not month to month, year to year, let's say, we have to be careful that we don't waste our money and unnecessary purchase. My wife and I were extremely careful that because we had very little, and we had to follow these principles I was just saying. And so we were very careful, we wouldn't waste anything, food, we would keep it in the fridge until before, I mean, we don't want to get spoiled, then you have spent more money taking the children to the hospital.

So I'm not saying that long, but we thank God we had a fridge because we could have keep food if we got extra, we would keep it for the next day or two. And I'm just telling you some practical things. And we want to make our children happy, but we don't have to buy everything that they ask us for.

We got to teach our children also frugality and to learn to be careful not to waste anything to be careful with their books and pens and pencils when they go to school and take care of their things and take care of their clothes and not to lose anything when they go different places. So teaching our children to be careful is a very important thing. Many rich people don't bother about all those things.

But it's a very, very good habit to teach our children to be careful. And if you don't have enough, what my wife and I did is we denied ourselves. And that's what every parent does, it's not something special, we did so that our children could get the best, which means we'd give them the best food and we could deny ourselves some of that.

And in everything, I mean, if you get clothes that we don't have to get so many clothes for ourselves. So many things like this, being a good provider for our family. Let me read this verse in 1 Timothy and chapter five.

Here, it's speaking about widows primarily, but the principle applies even beyond that. 1 Timothy five verse four, if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, that is the children or grandchildren must take care of the widow, their mother, or their grandmother, and make some return to their parents for what they did for them. This is acceptable in the sight of God.

So to practice piety in their family first means to provide for the needs of the family, that's the meaning here. It's called practicing piety in regard to the family. So we have to take care of them.

And it says in verse eight, if anyone does not provide for his own, and apply this to your children, wife and children, especially of those of his own family, 1 Timothy five, eight, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever because an unbeliever provides for his family. So here it says that our providing for our family, what they need is a test of our faith. If you don't provide for your family, you've denied the faith.

That includes everything that you need for the family, medical care, food, clothing, shelter, and um looking for a job that can will give us enough earn enough to take care of our family, not forgetting that ultimately our faith is in God. We seek his kingdom first and his righteousness. And another verse I'd show you is 2 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians in chapter 12.

We know the verse which says, don't lay up treasure for yourself. It's quoted in Matthew and Luke. Don't lay up treasure for yourself.

But here it says in 2 Corinthians 12, 14. In the last part of verse 14, it says children don't have to save up for their parents, but parents must lay up for their children. So put those two verses together.

Don't lay up treasure for yourself, but save up for your children so that then they can have a good start in life. So that is why I believe it's right to have some savings. Providing for our family is not living hand to mouth as far as possible and some people may be so.

There are many people who live month to month. I don't believe it's ideal if that's all they can afford. Okay, God bless them.

But if at all possible, I believe we should save enough. And I feel that almost anybody can say, I remember I used to do this as an elder in CFC Bangalore. I'd say we don't, we should not be in debt.

And here's a brother. I think of one brother. I remember he was not very well off.

He was earning very little and he came to CFC. And I always check people when they come to the church, are you in debt? I ask personal questions. I say, I'm not trying to be inquisitive, but it's part of my responsibility.

Romans 13, 8 says we should owe no man anything. And my duty as an elder is to make sure nobody in this church is in debt. So this brother came to me and said, he's quite pretty heavily in debt.

So I said, can you take, give me a, I said, I want to look at your income and expenditure. Now you don't have to show it to me if you feel I'm interfering in your private affairs. I don't want to, if you think I'm being a busybody in your affairs, forget it, take care of yourself.

But I want to try and get you out of debt. That's the reason why I want you to give me exactly how much you're earning, exactly how much you're spending, where all you're spending, how much for milk or groceries or whatever it is. And then I'll teach you how to get out of debt.

But I say it's voluntary. If you don't want to tell me anything, I don't want to be knowing your private affairs. No, he said, brother Zach, please go ahead and tell me.

I'll be happy to help you. He was, I think he was earning the least in our church there. And so he made the list and he put on top type.

I said, forget that. Cut it out and tell the Lord I told you to cut it. Use that for your family.

And I told him where he could be cut out, where he could be more careful, et cetera, et cetera. And you know what happened to him? He came to a place where it's not only a care of debt, he got a good job and he was driving a car one day. And to drive a car in India is a luxury.

I mean, I couldn't afford, my mom had a car you would let us use, but I couldn't afford the petrol. So it was a luxury in India in those days. Anyway, I'm talking about 40 years ago.

So I'm saying that how we should not be in debt when we make provision for our family. If you are careful to make a budget, we can live within our income. And if we learn to live with little, what we did, Annie and I, we had very little and we learned to live with that little.

And when our income increased, we did not increase our standard of living. Yeah, we weren't living comfortably as even before with the little. We lived with that little and we didn't buy unnecessary things before.

We didn't buy unnecessary things later for ourselves. We'd get for our children and then thereby we could have some savings, even though we had little, we could have some savings for our children. And that's based on Proverbs chapter six, where Proverbs is a great chapter, a great book.

It's one of the closest to the new covenant in the old covenant, in the old Testament, rather. It's an amazing book. There's so many things here, which are new covenant wisdom.

Here it says in Proverbs six, it's talking about if you're verse one, if you've become a sure fee for a neighbor or given a pledge for a stranger, and you've been snared with the words of your mouth and caught with your words and you're in debt. The point is you're in debt. You shouldn't have done that.

Don't be a guarantee for your neighbor for some amount. Don't sign up as a guarantor when a neighbor is taking a huge amount borrowed from the bank and you sign again, your friend, I'll sign a guarantee. He says, yeah, don't do it.

I wouldn't do it. So I've saved myself from so many problems just by simply obeying the word and willing to let people think I'm not such a good friend. Okay.

But I want to obey God's word. So I said, this guy did that. He made a shorty.

And then the stranger debt was not paid. This guy had to pay it. So it says, no, go and humble yourself.

It says in verse three, the last part, and please beg your neighbor to release you from that. Don't give sleep to your eyes, but deliver yourself from like a bird from the hand of the fowler. You became shorty for your neighbor.

Deliver yourself. Okay. Then it says, verse six, go to the aunt, you lazy man, observe her ways and be wise.

Can we learn something from an aunt and be wise? Aunt is no chief, no overseer, no ruler, but it prepares its food in the summer, gathers its provision in the harvest time, because it knows when the harvest time is over and the winter comes in, there won't be so much food around. And the aunt is just crawling around our house. And when the harvest time is plenty of food, they're probably throwing around a little bit here and there.

And the aunt just picks it up and say, hey, I'm going to store this up for the future. Gathers a provision for the winter. So there it says, go and learn, you lazy man, observe her ways, verse six, and be wise.

Lay up something for the future. Save for the future so that when the time comes, you don't have to go begging, brother, can I borrow some money from you? Or go somewhere or even go to a bank and try to borrow money. I thank God, by the grace of God, I never had to borrow one cent from anybody.

I firmly believe that I should not be in debt. And I say, but then I've tried to follow the rules from very early in my life. So I don't blame others because some people, they bet, I always say, man, they had poor teachers.

Their pastors never taught them what I'm teaching people. So many of them get into debt. I mean, we have a number of people who came to CSU so severely in debt.

And that's because they were never taught the importance of being free from debt or never taught these types of things like I'm saying now. So it's right for us to save. It's right for us to have a righteous attitude to money, but it doesn't mean we have to be selfish because if we find people in need, we must give.

I've sought to do that always, even when I was in the Navy. I earned such a lot of money. I'd find people who I could buy somebody a Bible or something like that, meet people and help people and even financially.

And we will never lack because of that. See this verse in Proverbs 11, 25. It's an amazing verse that Proverbs 11 and verse 25, the generous man will be prosperous.

And he who waters others will himself be watered by whom? By God. But he who withholds grain when people need, I'm talking about essential food, people will curse him. So this is so contrary to this, what the world thinks.

The generous man doesn't become bankrupt. Of course he must be wise, but the generous man will prosper. You care for the poor, God will care for you.

I've found that through many years. I never lacked. The main reason why I decided to marry Annie was when I heard that after she finished her medical studies in India's top medical college at that time, when almost everyone in her class did the American college board exam to come as a doctor in the United States to make money.

She went to North India to a colony of lepers in the middle of a remote village because there were no lady doctors there. The women lepers didn't have lady doctors. And in India, a woman will not go to a male doctor, completely out of the question.

They'd rather die, I'm telling you the truth. So she decided to go there, the first lady doctor to go to that leprosy hospital. And when I heard that, I heard that before when I was considering her, and I said, boy, that's the type of person I want to marry who cares for the poor.

And she's been like that all through. She never earned one rupee as a doctor, one cent as a doctor, all her life. But she's helped hundreds and hundreds of poor people and saved many of them from death and healed many of them from sickness.

In the village churches, we'd always have a free medical clinic wherever we went. Because many of our village churches, the villages, there are no pharmacies even, leave alone a doctor. Doctors don't go to a village where they make money.

So nobody goes there. So they're all helpless. So we'd run a clinic there.

Every time we went for a conference, we'd also have a, she'd run a clinic. And she'd run a clinic. So even though she didn't make any money, she blessed those people.

Because the main reason why she stopped working was to bring up our children, to be a mother more than a doctor. So to help others, God sees that, blessed are those. Let me show you this verse in Psalm 41.

I'm talking here about how to care for your family, remember? Be a good provider for your family. This is how you may become a good provider of your family, by caring for the poor. How blessed is he, verse one, who considers the helpless or the poor.

The Lord will deliver him in the day when he's in trouble. The Lord will protect him, keep him alive. And he shall be called blessed, or he shall be blessed on the earth.

And he will not be given over to the desire of his enemies to sin. The Lord will sustain him when he is sick. In his illness, the Lord will restore him to health.

What did he do? He just considered the poor. We must all have an experience of that. But we've also got to be wise in this.

In India, particularly, we've got to be very, very wise in helping the poor. Because in the early days when we started CFC, you know, many people found this is a good church. People are very generous and good.

A lot of people would come pretending to be interested in the Lord, but they were only interested in financial help. So, and we did help them financially, and after some time, they drifted away. Not only financial help, some of them would want practical help, like they'd come and leave their wives in my house, and they went out somewhere, and my wife had to take care of them for a whole day or something.

So, but we don't regret it. We were learning, you know, I didn't have anybody to guide me or advise me. So, we had little inconveniences, but I don't regret it, because we were trying to be good to people to build the church.

And if as a result, we suffered a little bit, I'm willing to suffer that for the sake of the church. All of us need to ask ourselves, how much have you suffered in your home life, because you wanted to build a church? And yeah, we were, of course, we were planting the first church. But some people are so careful that they never allow themselves to be inconvenienced in any way.

But they want to be a part of the church. They want to receive the messages, they want to fellowship with people, but they don't want any inconvenience in their own homes. Well, that's fine.

I'm not here to judge them. But I wonder whether God will ever use such people to ever build a church anywhere. They will just be meeting attenders online, or otherwise.

I never wanted to do that. I wanted to build a church. And if we have to sacrifice, my wife and I also agreed on that, if you have to sacrifice an omen, sacrifice, quite okay.

We want to build a church. If people take advantage of our hospitality, fine. If we build a church, it's worth it.

Because you're always wondering, is this guy really interested? So he'd say he's interested. And we invite him to come and visit us in Bangalore. Of course, they stay in our home, because if I invite somebody to visit our church, they always stay in our home.

Where else? As an elder, I would not stay somewhere else. And many people took advantage of us. Fine.

I don't regret it one bit. God bless them. But finally, we built a church.

So we're very thankful. And we don't feel we have sacrificed anything, nothing. When I think of what I got in return of wonderful brothers and sisters and a fantastic church, I mean, I say we don't even remember what we did.

It's all forgotten. It's like, you know, when you see your children grow up and they are established, you forget what all you had to do to bring them up, you know, all the problems and taking them to the hospital when they were sick and taking them and getting educating them and so on. It's all forgotten because you see how they've developed.

So in the same way, we feel like that about our church. So, you know, providing for our family and our children, let's not be selfish. So that's all I have to say, because I want to spend some time for the questions.

Okay, the first question is, how can I test myself realistically to know whether I love money? I don't know how daring you are to ask God to make you suffer a loss, make you suffer a loss to find out whether I love God or love money. I can't say anyway, God deals with each of us in different ways. I would say, ask the Lord to show you.

Lord, I used to pray like this. I don't know how many times I cried out to God, Lord, I don't want to love money even one bit, not even 0.01%. And if you find there's a little bit of that, take it away from me one way or the other. Do whatever you like.

Do whatever you like. Bring us down to nothing if you like. I'm quite happy.

I do not want to love money. I don't mind having money, because I don't want to be dependent on anybody at any time. I believe in saving money, but I never want to love money.

I cannot tell you how it should be in your life. Ask God to show you. One way He can show you is when you lose something, when you lose not a few dollars, when you lose a huge amount through some carelessness of your own, or through some situation, you lose any sleep over it.

Ask yourself, do you ever toss around in bed thinking how to make more money? I'm not saying we shouldn't consider if you're poor, you should certainly consider how to, but if you're tossing around in bed, and early morning, the first thing you get up, what should I do? That's one of the ways by which we can find out whether we love it. It occupies our mind so much. We need to think how to earn, definitely, and you can find ways of earning more by all means.

Sure, but ask God to show you. Next question is, how do we practically balance the responsibility of providing good earthly opportunities for my children, while putting God's kingdom first? Well, I believe you've got to tell God, Lord, I will never sacrifice your kingdom to give good earthly opportunities for my children. I believe we should, as I told you, we should provide education for our children, and I'm not in

favor of sending our children to some boarding school to study while we ourselves are serving the Lord in some other place.

I know a lot of missionaries that had to do that, and I really admire them for doing that, but if you have a calling like that, God will take care of your children. Sure, you can be sure, but otherwise, putting God's kingdom first can go along with providing good opportunities for our children to study within our means. Don't compare your children with somebody else's.

What school they can send their children to, maybe you can't send your children to that school, never mind. God will help you in whatever limited situation you're in. You can look around and see, even within a church like this church or any church, we had a wide range of income in our church in Bangalore.

There were some very poor, some rich. Many people in Bangalore would never afford to take their families for a holiday. Anyway, I could not in my entire life.

We used to visit my parents, my wife's parents, that was a holiday. They lived in different towns, and I told our children, that's all, then I think once when they finished high school, I took them once, and not too far away, somewhere in South India itself where we lived. And then of course, we, I'm not saying other people shouldn't do it, I'm just saying that I couldn't do it, because we didn't want to get into debt.

So there's nothing wrong in providing good earthly opportunities for our children, particularly education, as I said, and we can see God's kingdom first there too. So I tell people when you're looking for a job somewhere, do look and see if there's a church there that you can be a part of. And if there's a choice, and you earn a little less money in that place where there's a church, and you want to live close to the brothers and sisters, make that sacrifice.

God will honor you, and your children will be blessed. But if you go pursuing money and say, well, church is not important, you will reap the consequences in your children years later. How seriously should I pursue success in my earthly work, especially if I enjoy it? I don't think there's anything wrong in pursuing success in our earthly work.

I felt when I was in the Navy, that every commanding officer in every ship and naval base I was in should give me a good report about my work. And I got that in every single place I was employed. On a ship or the naval base, I always got an excellent report.

They would, of course, qualify it by saying, unfortunately, this officer does not come for dances and drinks, and he doesn't come join the other officers when they play cards and things like that. That is, to me, a good testament. But as far as work, I always got very good reports.

So I believe we must pursue, if it's an earthly work, if you have to study a little more to get a better job, go ahead and study. Sure. Get a better job.

If some people want to get a postgraduate before they start working, go right ahead. Okay. Can you give advice on providing for our parents in their old age, especially if they are unbelieving and irresponsible with money? You know, Jesus once said in Matthew, Mark, I think, chapter 7, in relation to parents, Mark 7, he said, verse 9 onwards, you Pharisees are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your own tradition.

Moses said, honor your father and mother. But you say, verse 11, if a man says to his father and mother, whatever I could have given to help you, I'm sorry, I've given it as a gift to God. So I don't have money to help you.

And you don't permit him to do anything for his father and mother. Jesus rebuked that person. He says, give to your parents, not to God.

Thus you have invalidated the word of God, which is a tradition, and you do many other things like that. So there he made it clear that taking care of our parents is more important than giving to God. Read it carefully and see.

So that's because there are many verses in Proverbs, I don't know if I'm sure you've read Proverbs, there are many, many verses like don't despise your mother when she's old and care for your parents. But if we must provide for them, they don't necessarily have to stay with us, unless they are weak and sickly. But otherwise, if they can stay on their own, good, because we'll feel a sense of dignity when they feel that we can live for ourselves, but we can provide for them and take care of them in every way, while still enabling them to have a dignity.

They should not feel, oh, I'm helpless and I'm dependent on my children now. It's never robbed older people of their dignity. And I know my own parents, as long as they could take care of themselves, you know, in India, they have help in their homes, barely cheap to get a maid to help.

And there was someone always to help them. And when they became incapable of living on their own, then I said, till then they were on their own. And I think it's very good for them to have the dignity of being able to live on their own, but providing for them.

We would take care of them if there are any needs, or if there are medical needs, we'll go and help them. So it's right. But helping them financially, well, if they are irresponsible with money, we should not give them more than they need.

We've got to tell them straight, see, I've got to provide for my children's education or something. It's best that they don't, I mean, if they are irresponsible, then it's better that they don't know how much you earn. And then we'll take care of you, but you have to be wise because it's God's money.

If it becomes possible to spend a small amount of time working part-time or full-time or fully passive income, and still provide enough for our family's needs with savings, is it best to work less and spend more time in the family, in the church, or is it better to continue to work full-time to avoid idleness? I don't think you should work full-time just to avoid idleness. I would say work as much as you need for, my God should supply all your need, according to his riches in Christ Jesus, is Philippians 4.19. So our need, not what we want, but what we need, if we have enough of what we need, I would say use the spare time for, if you want to work somewhere else and earn some more, that's fine. But if you don't need that extra money, definitely spend more time with your family, very, very important.

These days, you know, the last verse of the Old Testament, Malachi says, I want to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers before the dreadful day of the Lord. So this is that time when parents have spent time with their children. It's a very busy world we live in.

Sometimes they go to school, they come back, they got to do their homework, and we're busy with other things, and you don't get time with the children. I believe parents should spend time with their children, go

out to their children, to the beach, or to the park, or somewhere as much as you can. You know what, if you can't afford to take them on a vacation somewhere, it doesn't matter one bit.

Let those who can afford that do that. Don't envy them, bless them. You take them to the park.

That's what we did. We took them to the park. There's a place where we could be with them.

That's more important is to build fellowship. And so if you can do that, it's fine. A limited amount of work will be enough for you, for your income.

Definitely, I would say spend more time with your family. They won't regret it. If you want to do an additional job, if it's necessary, you know, for example, some people have family needs like extra expenditure for medical treatment, and all they have sometimes take another job for that.

So this is not a law we can make for anyone. But I would say family first, even before church. You know, ministering the church will be good if you take care of your family first.

You neglect your family, one day you will, and say church is first, one day you lose your family. So remember that. I've often taught this on the first floor or the ground floor is a personal walk.

The next floor, second story, the family life on top of that is the church. Okay, how much should we consider the ethics of a company itself? When deciding to take a job, if our day to day responsibilities does not require any compromise or conscience personally, for example, IT services for an entertainment company, or accounting for an e commerce company and public that's publicly supports LGBTQ. See, I don't believe we'll be able to work in anywhere nowadays, if you're going to examine every little thing that's going on.

And what is it? Where does this company send its money? And are they donating here to the LGBTQ? What is the boss's view? I couldn't care less about boss's view. Does he ask me to do anything unrighteous? That's the only question I have. In my table, where I work, I will not do anything unrighteous.

The guy next to me here next to me there may be doing a whole lot of unrighteous things. Not my business. I because it's impossible to find a job, I think where every single chap from top to bottom is honoring God.

They don't care for that. And particularly in the world in which we're living, they'll be doing all types of unrighteous things, even people who call themselves Christians, or the company itself may have some policies which are determined by a board members, or even your boss may not have a say in it. I don't believe we should be too bothered about it.

Only your own responsibility that we say, I will not do anything wrong here. I will not. Sir, please don't ask me to tell a lie.

Please don't ask me to cheat. I, you're a salesperson, and you're asked to tell a lie about your product. You say, sorry, sorry.

Do not tell a lie. And ask God for wisdom. And the best things to ask yourself, what would Jesus do here in this type of, would Jesus do anything wrong in the carpenter shop he worked in to earn a little more money? Never.

I'm sure even with the limited amount he earned for his eighth member family, he would help the poor and bless the children who came into the store and be laid out. Any other questions? Okay. So we have four more questions.

I'll just say them here, and then I'll hand it right back to brother Zach. Similar to previous question, but a little different. Do you have any advice for how to interact with homosexual or transgender people in our workplace, whether they're co-workers or clients, especially when leadership of large organizations encourage such things? I don't know all that's involved or what type of things they encourage, but I have no problem if I'm working in office, working with anybody.

I don't care what is, whether he calls himself transgender or he or she or whatever it is. And if he changes his name, I mean, a lot of people in India change their names when they become Christians. They don't call them by their own name.

If this guy changed his name for some reason, I'm not here to examine why he changed his name. Or does his name sound, does his name sound female or male? You listen to some Indian names, you'll think it's female. The guy's a man.

So what do you do? So those things don't bother me. You can be picky about these silly little things. It doesn't bother me.

The guy says, this is my name from today onwards. Okay. I'm not bothered with all those things.

Too silly a matter for me to fight. I want to reflect Christ in my life. He has a problem in this area himself about gender.

That's his business, not mine. And so, but I'd say, don't ask me to do something unrighteous. That's all.

Because every man is, every human being has got a right to choose what his name is. So if somebody says, call me it, I'll call you it. I mean, that's his preferred pronoun or whatever it is.

I'm not thereby endorsing him by that. That's my conviction. But some people have a conviction on it.

No, thereby I'm endorsing his. Yeah. I have a verse for all this.

Don't be a busybody in other people's matters. It says in 1 Peter 4. Now, if your conscience bothers you, go by your conscience. I'm just telling you my conscience does not bother me.

Romans 14 is a great chapter for me. One person wants to keep the Sabbath. Another person doesn't want to keep the Sabbath.

Hey, give him freedom. To me, he's not disturbing me in doing what I want to do. So I want to respect every individual, but these people don't know God.

So what should I do? I want to reflect Christ to them. Jesus came to the world to be the friend of sinners. That was one of his titles.

And you say, this guy's a terrible sinner. Okay. I'm called to be his friend.

I don't want to drive him away. My aim is to win him to Christ. I don't care what his P or Q or R or whatever it is.

I want to bring him to Christ. So that's my conviction in a place where if you have a place where you are in responsibility and you have to make a decision, which is going to affect something that disturbs your conscience, you say to the whoever's over you saying, sorry, sir, I can't do that. Okay.

The next question. If we work with someone who is a member of our church family, either in authority over us or under our authority, do you have guidance for how to balance respect for workplace authority versus the loving brotherhood we should have in our church family? It's very, very difficult. I'm telling you from my experience in India, for a person to work for someone in the same church or to have employ someone in the same church, because it requires a remarkable degree of godliness on the subordinate to respect that person who is a brother in Christ.

And give him the respect that he's due. Think of a guy called Philemon. Have you heard of Philemon in the Bible? He had a slave, not a servant, a slave called Onesimus.

But the Onesimus was a brother in Christ. So Sunday morning we, hello brother Philemon, Philemon, how are you? Onesimus says. Once the service is over, he says, sir, master.

So in the church, Onesimus would require tremendous wisdom to not take advantage of the fact that Philemon was the elder of the church there and he was a servant. Many people I've seen in CFC and some people just take advantage of it. I consider them ungodly.

I'd say they don't know God. Pretty close to being unbelievers. They're probably just very close to losing their salvation.

They don't fear God, because it says masters must serve as slaves, must respect their master. Servants must respect their masters. Very clear in Ephesians and Timothy and everywhere it's in there.

And then on the part of the masters, it's very important that they don't show any favoritism. There were a number of employees and one of them happens to be a believer. I worked in the Navy where I had people working under me who were believers, sailors, and I was an officer.

I made sure that I would show absolutely zero favoritism to any of them. They were exactly the same. I would not, I would consider them all the same.

It doesn't matter if he's a, I wouldn't call him brother as a place of work. Call him whatever I'm supposed to call him. And since he's working under me and nobody could ever accuse me of showing favoritism to anyone.

So we had to be very careful both as bosses and as subordinates that we glorify God by manifesting the spirit of Christ in such a place. The next question, do I love money if I try to avoid expensive restaurants, even though I can afford them? Do I love money if I avoid or if I go? What is it that if I try to avoid, if I try to avoid, if I try to avoid expensive restaurants, thereby you prove that you don't love money, even though I can afford them. Even though I can afford them, it seems to be a, I think if you, I mean, it should be that do I love money if I can afford an expensive restaurant and I go there, but he's not saying go there, he doesn't go there.

He's trying to avoid going there. He could afford it, but he's trying to avoid it. In this area, I would only say one thing, don't judge another brother who goes to an expensive restaurant.

You go wherever you like, whatever you can afford, because I'll tell you how it is in India. You guys live in a country where almost everybody has a car. In India, some people have a car, some people have expensive cars, some people have a cheaper car, and some people have a scooter.

That's what I rode for 42 years. Some people have a bicycle. I was wealthy compared to people who had bicycles.

And the guy who has a bicycle is wealthier than the guy who takes the bus and comes because he can't even afford a bicycle in the villages. So there are different levels of, so these different people will be, when they travel by train, some will travel unreserved compartment because they can't even afford to pay for the reservation in the second class. And then the second class air condition, some people would take that because they can afford more.

And there were believers who would travel in all of these when they come for a conference. I'm not here to judge. Don't say that brother's traveling unreserved, so I also should travel unreserved.

No, you travel whatever level you can afford. And whether you can go to an expensive restaurant or not, I'm not here to judge that. I wouldn't judge anybody.

I did not do it myself because we couldn't afford it. We never did it once. But my case was special.

I didn't learn so much. So I didn't want to get into debt. So I say, if you don't get into debt, and you can also help the poor with the excess that you have, go where you like.

Don't waste money. That's all I say. And don't, if it's expensive, I'd say don't do it too frequently.

Because what's the need to go so often there? Because you can also teach your children some bad habits by always giving them the very best of everything, the best clothes, the best this, the best that, the best restaurant. No. So it's good to deny ourselves sometimes.

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