

Being A Zealous Builder in the Church

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Transcript

Let's begin with a verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 13, the last part. 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 13, the whole verse says, be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. There is a need for us to act like men.

There's a particular way God wants men to act out. We've been thinking about the calling of a brother as, first of all, a husband and also as a father, and we want to think about a responsibility as one who shares in God's kingdom, participates in building the church. In 1 Corinthians 6, it speaks about a particular sin which many people don't think of as sin.

It's in connection with what I said just now, act like men. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9, don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Look at the list of people here, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers.

There's quite a list of every one of them we can understand except one, effeminate, a man behaving like a woman, and that's categorized in the same category as idolaters, fornicators, adulterers, thieves, and drunkards, and revilers. Do you believe that? I don't think we think of that seriously. We don't even think of that as God's created us to be men, and I've seen many husbands who are effeminate husbands.

The wife is the boss in the house. Now God did create Eve to be a helper to Adam, but Adam was the first effeminate man. When you see Genesis chapter 3 and you see Eve talking to the serpent, the devil, I used to always think perhaps Adam was wandering around somewhere else till I saw in Genesis 3 and verse 6, the last part, she gave the fruit to her husband who was with her.

He was standing there all along while this conversation was going on between the two of them. He never said a word. He just allowed his wife to have a conversation with the devil, and imagine if he had just intervened there and said, hey Eve, forget it, don't talk to that serpent, let's go, because after all God had appointed him to be the head, and there we see the first example of an effeminate man who brought such a ruin into his family, and I believe it's because he was such an effeminate man that his first son grew up to be a murderer.

He probably was an effeminate father as well, that he never thought his son, I mean you don't get a son growing up to be a murderer to kill his younger brother unless the father is a pretty useless father. So, I see right at the beginning of sin in the world, the entrance of sin in this human race, it begins not only with

the unbelieving disobedient wife, but with an effeminate man who was an effeminate husband and an effeminate father who did not act like a man like we read in the beginning, and I think that's why effeminate people are put in the same category as murderers and adulterers, and I believe scripture. I believe there's a reason why God has put that being effeminate right in the middle of some of the worst criminals of all that we saw in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, and I believe this is why many homes have suffered because the man is not the head of the house, many children have suffered because man is not a good father, and many churches have suffered because men don't take the lead to involve themselves, and I don't mean everybody must be a leader, being manly does not mean being a leader, it just means taking responsibility, even if it's a responsibility to clean the restrooms, to take responsibility because if you don't have a gift of teaching, you can't teach.

If you don't have a gift of preaching the word, you can't do it, but you can still be a man. God gives very few people the gift of ministry of the word, so that's not the mark of a man because I find 95% of men in the church who may have no gift of preaching at all, they still got to be men, so it's very important for us to understand the place that God has appointed for men in his church especially, and though there is a place for women and even children to serve the Lord in the church, yet when Jesus prayed, you know, let me just show you this first, in Luke chapter 8, who were the people going around with Jesus when he was preaching? Luke chapter 8, as he went around from city to city, village to village preaching, the 12 disciples were with him, it says also some women, verse 2, Luke 8 verse 2, women who had been healed of evil spirits like Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had come out, Joanna the wife of Herod Stuart, Herod Stuart means a palace manager, so the palace manager, he must have been a very influential rich man, his wife was following Jesus, and Susanna, and many others, these women were contributing to the support of Jesus and the disciples, and yet we read in Luke chapter 6 and verse 12, Jesus went into the mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer, and whenever he spent a whole night in prayer, it was a particular reason, you see the reason in the next verse, when the day came he called his disciples, so I believe he prayed, he wasn't praying all night, every night, definitely not, most of the night he slept, even in a boat he slept, but when there was some very, very important decision which was going to affect the future of the church for the next two millennium, two thousand years, he prayed all night to be able to select the right people, and though there were men and women following with him, the father gave him the names of only 12 men, that's why I showed you earlier that there were many women also in that group following Jesus, but the father never gave him the name of any woman who was to be an apostle or a leader, and that shows that these are the 12 who finally became the leaders in the early church, and so the leadership in the church, as we see consistently in the New Testament, was always with men. Now in the Old Testament, it was not so, under the old covenant, we read at the time when Deborah was a prophetess, and says she would, in the book of Judges, book of Judges in chapter 4 and verse 4, Deborah a prophetess.

Now it's interesting, we read here in chapter 4 and verse 2, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, and the sons of Israel cried to the Lord because they were being oppressed, verse 3, oppressed severely for 20 years, Lord give us deliverance from this strong king, and God gave them a woman. Deborah, that's the answer to the Israelites praying for 20 years, it is not how God answered Jesus when he prayed all night. Deborah, she used to sit, she's the wife of Lapidoth, verse 5, she sat under the palm tree, and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment, all the men and women, and she was the one who called Barak and said the Lord has called you to fight against the enemy.

What do you think her husband was doing? Her husband was probably cooking at home and looking after the children, but Deborah was the judge. Why was that? Is it because God changed his mind from the time of Adam? No, I don't think so. The bravest man in Israel at that time was this man called Barak.

He was a leader of the army. So Deborah tells Barak, the Lord has commanded, go and I will draw, look at the promise she gave Barak, I will bring Sisera out, and I will, verse 7, give him into your hand. What a promise, you can go out with great boldness, the victory is already assured, and he says, sister, if you don't come with me, I won't go.

That's the bravest man in Israel, Barak said, sister, you've got to come with me, I can't go alone. I mean, God's promise is not enough. So this is how God is disappointed with many men.

They don't take the leadership in their home, they don't help with the leadership in the church, and they're not effective witnesses, bold witnesses for Christ, effeminate, brave, fearful. They're afraid to stand up for Christ in their place of work, to be known as a wholehearted disciple of Jesus Christ. Not that we have to preach in our place of work.

I've worked in a ship, in the naval bases, we're not allowed to preach. I couldn't go around converting the sailors, but I decided that, okay, I'm not going to, the things I'm not supposed to do in the space of work, but nobody's going to stop me from putting a Bible on my table, and nobody's going to stop me from having a Bible calendar with a verse on it, so that it's my own table, or in India, when people hang a calendar on the wall, I'd hang a calendar on my wall with a verse on it, a verse from the Bible. I couldn't preach, but there were ways of making known that I was a Christian, and I remember a Hindu man came up to me and got converted, and I say, if I just kept quiet, he said, I'm not allowed to preach here, and avoided, and all of a sudden, excuse me, I'm not allowed to preach this, I'm keeping quiet, that guy would not have been dead, so if I'm always finding an excuse, why I cannot, or the rules in this office are like this, okay, follow the rules, by all means, don't go against the rules, but nobody can stop you from making it known that you're a Christian, you don't laugh at the dirty jokes, you are considerate and helpful, different from the others who are selfish, and you know, I often think of Joseph, you know how Joseph got to meet Pharaoh, very clear, of course, it was God's plan, but there's something that triggered it, something on Joseph's character, though he was in prison, he didn't sit there moping, and feeling sorry for himself, that he's so far away, and his God is almost forsaken, and his parents are so far away, and this evil woman has accused me, and I'm lying here in this prison, he was not, he was a man, and he saw this Pharaoh's cup bearer, Baker, discouraged, and he went up to them, and say, hey, why are you looking discouraged, I've often thought about that, don't make me like that, like somebody in church is looking like that, or somebody in my office is looking like that, what's the harm in going up to him, and say, hey, can I help you in some way, and maybe after he has a problem, can I pray for you, I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord, well, that's what Joseph did, and because of that, because he could explain that dream to them, that opened the way for him to meet with Pharaoh, so to act like a man, and be strong, not any fear, it's basically, you know, fear is, I mean, men are afraid too, but fear is basically associated with women, or timid, and that must not be there in us, I shouldn't be afraid that if I stand up for the truth, and I'm righteous in my office, I may lose my job, well, if I lose my job, because I'm standing up for the truth and righteousness, I'm ready to, and God will give me something better, definitely, he'll never let me suffer for honoring him, I've always lived by that verse in 1 Samuel 2 verse 30, those who honor me, I will honor, it's a wonderful promise, and I can assure you, I've never yet met a person who wholeheartedly honored God, whom God did not honor, and if you honor God, and God does not honor you, you'll be the first person in the history of the human race whom God did not honor, he always honors those who honor him, I've never

been afraid to do that myself, and I've never been afraid to teach that to others, because we have a whole lot of men in many churches, so timid, and fearful, and afraid, think of all these, even if you read of some of the martyrs in the first three centuries of Christianity, there were women who were bold, there's a story of this young mother perpetual in the second century or something, who became a Christian, and her father, and she had a baby, and because the Roman soldiers came to take her away, and her father pleaded with her to give up the faith, she said no, she finally was thrown into the lions, stood true to them, there were bold women like that, and there were men who were like sissies, and afraid to proclaim that they belong to Christ, so it's good for us to read all this, to be challenged by it, there's a book called Fox's Book of Martyrs, a very good book, we had a copy of it in our home, I read through it, now reads the very thick book, the original one, now there's a smaller version of it, but then there are some stories in that, that we could tell our children, which enable us to be bold, and so we can act like men in different situations, and not be fearful and afraid, and yet it is not the arrogant type of man, that's not the type of man whom God is, you know, sometimes we think firmness means arrogance, no, the one who really lived like a man on this earth was Jesus Christ, he could confront the pharisees, could take a whip and chase a whole lot of people who are making money in the name of Christ, fearlessly, I mean, I find today some preachers even afraid to preach against these preachers who are making money, and even don't use a whip on them, they're afraid to preach against them, they say, oh we must be nice and gracious, well Jesus wasn't gracious to those guys making money in the name of God in the temple, these are examples of what I'm saying, timidity and fear, but yet he was the humblest man that walked on the earth, and he told us to learn two things from him, in Matthew 11 verse 29, the one who was a man's man, the most manly man that ever walked on the earth, says in Matthew 11 verse 29, learn from me for I am gentle and humble, so manliness is gentleness and humility, it's not timidity, but it is gentleness and humility, gentleness is not a female characteristic, it's the characteristic of the most manly man that walked on the earth, so to couple gentleness with firmness when it came to the truth, with the rebuking people who needed to be rebuked, he never rebuked a humble person, never, humble broken adulteresses or despised Samaritan women, the only people Jesus rebuked were those who tried to make money in the name of religion or those who were proud Pharisees who tried to exalt themselves in the midst of God's people, there he didn't spare words, he used some of the strongest words possible, how will you escape the damnation of hell, you want to see how Jesus, the real man who walked on the earth preached, you only got to turn to Matthew 23, and look at the language he uses, remember he's the gentlest and the humblest man that walked on the earth, Matthew 23, woe unto you, I mean it's almost like saying a curse upon you people, and what does he call them in verse 17, you, verse 16, you blind guides, verse 14, 15, hypocrites, hypocrites, verse 13, verse 14, verse 15, hypocrites, hypocrites, hypocrites, verse 16, you blind guides, verse 17, you fools, you blind men, verse 19, you blind men, verse 23, you hypocrites, verse 25, you hypocrites, verse 27, you hypocrites.

Verse 29, you hypocrites, you people who look, verse 27, like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside but full of dead man's bones inside. How will you, you brood of vipers, serpents, verse 33, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Remember, this is the humblest man that walked on the earth, but he was a man. He was not afraid.

He wasn't seeking popularity and honor. That's effeminate. It's to act like a woman when you're seeking and you're afraid to stand up for what God wants you to stand up for and you're afraid, timid at the wrong time.

So if you want to know what it is to be a man in God's church, just meditate on the life of Jesus and see the perfect balance of He knew whom to rebuke and He knew whom to comfort. I think of another example where you read in Luke chapter 10 when He was in the house of Mary and Martha and Martha was doing a good job cooking a meal for Jesus and for all the brothers. You know, cook a meal for 13 people is not easy.

Anybody who's tried to cook a meal for 13 people will know that's not easy. It's a lot of hard work and Mary was not helping her and she comes to Jesus complaining, Lord, Matthew 10, Luke 10 40. Don't you care? She's even rebuking the Lord.

Lord, aren't you bothered that my sister is not helping me? You're allowing her to sit alone? And Jesus answers gently but firmly, Martha, you're worried and bothered about so many things. If I were to paraphrase that, you know, in the Gospels, every word is not written of what Jesus said. I think it's always a gist of what He said.

I think He may have said, listen, Martha, I'm not interested. I didn't come here to eat food, first of all. That's not what I came here for.

After we finish the Bible study, then we can cook something light and eat it. I'll come and help you in the kitchen. You can imagine He said something like that.

When you're worried about cooking food now, when you should be listening to God's Word, what is more important? Don't you remember what Moses taught his people? Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth and here I'm preaching God's Word and you don't have time to listen to it. You're busy cooking. You're worried about so many things and Mary has chosen the good part.

Yeah, where a person needed a rebuke, he would rebuke and where people need comfort, he would comfort. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. How he would pick up children and very tenderly and I believe would pray for them and bless them.

It's beautiful to see the life of Jesus and His ministry to see the type of man every one of us should become like. That perfect balance. If you carelessly read the Gospels like storybooks, you won't be gripped by it but if you look at the Gospels, this is what I've sought to do for 60 years, to look at the Gospels to see how Jesus was my example.

He said to me, all these places which I read, he tells me to follow him. I want to look at him and follow him and yet at the same time, he was the type of man who we read in John chapter 6 after he had fed the 5,000 and the people were amazed and they said in verse 14 of John 6, this is truly the prophet who has come to the world. It never got puffed up.

He never got puffed up when he did a miracle or did a priest a fantastic message. Then he realized verse 15 they were going to make him a king and here is a man Jesus. He withdrew into the mountains.

He ran away from there. He refused to allow them to make him a king. He said, I'm called here to be a servant.

He's so different from the average preacher we come across nowadays. It's rare to find a preacher who's like Jesus, who never interested in money, never interested in letting people know his needs and never

wanting to be a leader, even though he was a leader, never wanting honor from anyone and such dignity when they, you read in Matthew 12, when he had cast out a demon who was blind and dumb. It's a rare case, Matthew 12, 22.

Somebody was both blind and dumb possessed by a demon and when the demon was cast out by Jesus, he both spoke and saw a double miracle. The crowds are amazing. This must be the son of David.

This must be the Messiah. The Pharisees said, no, he's ruled casting out demons by, he's the ruler of demons. So he tells the demon to go, they obey him because he's the ruler and Jesus says, Satan can't cast out Satan and immediately he says, it's the only time he said this.

Verse 32, if you speak a word against the son of man, he's forgiven. That's the dignity of a man. They call him the devil and he smiles and says, you're forgiven.

And it's not only their sin that was forgiven. I find it, I call this future forgiveness. Have you heard of future forgiveness for sins not yet committed? I see Jesus' example here and I have to follow him.

Whoever, verse 32, speaks, not you who spoke, in the next 2000 years, whoever speaks the word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven. It's the future. So what I learned from that is I say, Lord, I have to follow this type of forgiveness also, where from now till the end of my life, if anybody does or says something to me, it's already forgiven right now.

It's been forgiven. So if you hear sometime that somebody said something else, you must immediately say, oh, that's forgiven. Or somebody did something else, you heard about it, forgiven, forgiven.

This is a true man, a perfect balance of truth, uncompromising truth, coupled with infinite grace and balance. That's what, that's what we need to, you know, that grace and truth is something like the bones in our body represent truth and the flesh is like grace. It's like when, if our hands were just bones and you shake somebody's hand, he doesn't want to hold your hand if you're totally bones.

The thing that makes it soft, the strong bones in the hand, but the thing that makes it soft is the flesh on it. It doesn't reduce any of the bones in the hand. But it's the gentle hold that we have on a man's hand.

Yet it's firm. It wouldn't be firm if there were no bones there. I see that's the balance that should be in our life, grace and truth.

But when we are helping someone or lifting someone up, we have to be firm. There must be bones there. Otherwise, you won't be able to lift them up.

Bones all the way in the hand, but flesh that holds them tenderly. And it's that balance that only the Holy Spirit can produce in us. You can hear a message like this and say, okay, I'm going to now become this or that.

No, it must drive us to our knees and say, Lord, I can't make myself like Jesus. You know that there's a little book written by a Roman Catholic. It had to be written by a Roman Catholic.

The Imitation of Christ. I read it. There's many, many good things in it.

But that's not what we're called to do. Imitating Christ, the Mahatma Gandhi, who was a Hindu man who was a great leader in India. He believed in imitating Christ.

He would go and bind up the wounded legs of lepers, feet of lepers. And he would wear simple clothes and live very simply and fast often and read the Sermon on the Mount umpteen times. And he said, Jesus is my guide.

Jesus is the one I follow. But he never became a Christian. When he died, when somebody shot him, his last words were, Hey, Ram.

He called out to his Hindu God when he was dying. But yet, it was an imitation of Christ. He was a very humble man, externally as a human being, greatly respected.

No interest in money. No interest in honor or any such thing. But it was an imitation.

So that's not, it's not the imitation of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit making us like Christ inwardly. Because imitation or the thing is, imitation is on the outside.

I do things all on the outside. And what about my heart and the inner man? Whereas the Holy Spirit wants to change us in the inner man. See 2nd Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians chapter 3. How do we become like Jesus? It's not by imitation.

If you're under the old covenant, you know, living by rules, the law means, to live under the law means basically to live by a bunch of rules. Maybe you can read the New Testament and follow a bunch of rules, and it is all covenant spirit again. I hear many things we hear in the church rules, get up in the morning and pray to the Father on rule number one, or don't get into debt.

Rule number two, read the Bible every day. Rule number three, you can make lots of commandments. Never get angry with your wife.

Rule number four. Yeah, many, many good things. It's like the 10 commandments.

And that is what many people in the church are doing. Making another list of commandments from the New Testament, and sincerely trying to follow it. You'll be like Mahatma Gandhi.

But true Christianity doesn't come from that. It's from an inner devotion to Christ. Jesus didn't have a bunch of rules saying, I must get up in the morning and pray to the Father.

Or I must do this, or I must do that. I must witness to people. When a lot of Christians are propelled by rules, you know, missionaries, for example.

In some church, the preacher gets up and says, so many people are dying in Africa, in India. What are you guys doing sitting here making money? Come on, come volunteers to come, go and preach the gospel. And a few people are all stirred by that message and come forward and become missionaries.

And some mission board will support them. They go around raising money for their support. And they come to India.

And I have spent 60 years in India, meeting umpteen missionaries from every English speaking country. And 90% of them, I had zero respect for them. I wish they had never crossed the ocean and come to India.

They've caused more harm than good. There are some people who have done tremendous good. There is a 10% like Amy Carmichael and William Carey and a few people like that.

But many others I met, they were not godly. They lived at a much higher level than all the other poor people. And they produced what people call rice Christians.

People became Christians because rice is the staple food in South India. They would give them rice. Okay, I'll be a Christian.

And that's done more damage to Christian work in India. And they constantly send letters abroad saying this is what I'm doing. And this is what I'm doing now.

And they have to get money. They won't get money if you don't send the letters. And all the Indian people who looked at that said, oh, that's how we got to serve the Lord.

Send letters and to foreign countries and get money. So, it's all, you know, you can be an old covenant obeying some things you hear in the New Testament. But here it says, as long as you read Moses, verse 15, 2 Corinthians 3 15, there'll be a way over your heart.

You won't be able to see Jesus. But if a person turns to the Lord, and this is the only place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit is called the Lord, everywhere the Lord is Jesus or the Father Jehovah. But here one place it says in verse 10, the Lord is the Spirit.

So, when you turn to the Holy Spirit, that veil is taken away. Then I'm not following rules. The Holy Spirit's inside me.

There's no veil now. And there's a freedom. There's a liberty, it says.

And now the veil is gone. And what do I see? Not commandments. The Holy Spirit shows me, verse 18, the glory of Jesus as a man, how a man should live and serve.

And then he shows me that glory. And if you have a longing to be like that, he transforms you inwardly into that likeness. It's not a rule you're following now, something you heard in the church that you must do now.

Inwardly, you're changed into that likeness from glory to glory. This is true Christianity, where it's not an external imitation of Christ. But so when it says in 1 John 2, 6, he who says he abides in it must walk as he walked.

I see that challenge. I must walk as he walked. And I can take up the challenge in two ways.

One is by reading and seeing all that Jesus did. And I say, okay, I'll also try and do that. That is the imitation of Christ.

Or to see all that Jesus didn't say, Lord, it's impossible for me to do this. I can never find this true balances. Where do I use a whip on somebody? And where do I comfort someone? I mean, when I speak, when should my words be like a whip? And when should my words be gentle and comforting? I don't know.

Only the Holy Spirit can prompt us. And so the whole secret of the Christian life, if you want to walk as Jesus walked, is to what I call the spirit controlled life. It's a spiritual life means where the Holy Spirit has control over my inner life.

And I can hear him prompting me different situations. That's how I can be a man and fulfill my responsibility in God's kingdom. So, especially in the church, you know, and let me just turn to 1 Corinthians 14, terms of the ministry in the church.

It says in 14 verse 1, Pursue love, when you think of serving in the church, and earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. That's for everybody. It's for men and women, by the way.

Women also can prophesy. That's many people ask that question. Can we allow a sister to share something in the church? Well, it says in 1 Corinthians 11, when a woman prophesies, verse 5, this is a woman prophesying, verse 5. She must have her head covered.

That's all it says. It doesn't say she can't prophesy. A woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered is disgracing her head.

No, let her cover her head and then prophesy. So, men and women can both prophesy. Pretty clear.

That cannot. So, what's written later on in 1 Corinthians 14, 34, the women are to keep silent in the churches, does not cancel what he said one page earlier. So, many people just look at that.

I say Paul doesn't contradict himself. If he says in one person, one place, women can prophesy, another place, he says women should be silent. We must compare scripture with scripture and say, where should they be silent? That is what it says in 1 Timothy 2, that a woman is not allowed to teach or to have authority.

That's why they should be silent. If it's a position of authority or a position of teaching, she must be silent. But prophesying with her head covered, she can do it.

But so, we can't prophesy properly. First of all, let me define prophecy. Prophecy in the New Testament is not foretelling the future like it was in the Old Covenant.

In the Old Covenant, prophecy meant only one thing, basically foretelling the future or speaking on behalf of God, even if he didn't foretell the future. John the Baptist was the greatest prophet. He hardly ever foretold anything about the future, but he was the greatest prophet.

He was anointed to proclaim exactly what God wanted the people at that time to hear, the message of repentance. But in the New Covenant, prophecy is described very clearly in verse 3 here, 1 Corinthians 14, verse 3. And this is where men must take the lead in this. Prophesying is speaking to people, to edification, exaltation, consolation.

Edification means to build them up. So, all of my sharing must be directed to build people up. It's not to show how much of the Bible I know or what I say.

Will this build people up? Second, it must be something that challenges, exaltation, challenge, not condemn. Exaltation is not condemnation, that you see elsewhere. Spirit of condemnation is not from God.

Challenge. And the third is consolation, which is comfort. So, everything I share, if it's prophecy, will always be comforting, not all of them, but at least one of them.

Comforting, challenging, building up. And that may not be in a message. It could be when I'm speaking on a phone.

It could be when I'm writing an email. So, it's not just in the church on Sunday morning I'm prophesying. You can speak to your wife and prophesy to her.

Encourage, comfort, build her up. Greatly needed. That's when a husband acts like a man.

And it is a result of, verse 1, pursuing after love. Lord, let me love people. Let me love people.

Then I'll be challenged to encourage them and build them up and comfort them. Then I'll be challenged to encourage my wife and build her up and comfort her. That's what a man is supposed to be, because a man is supposed to be the leader in this ministry of prophecy.

Otherwise, you'll have Deborah's taking over the job. So, pursue after love. Love for Christ and love for people.

So, I don't believe, according to verse 1 here, that I can effectively prophesy even on a phone or in an email or in a church if I don't love the person or the people I'm talking to. In other words, I start with prophecy and ignore the first two words that are in verse 1. Pursue after love and desire earnestly to prophesy. I ignore the first thing.

And I say, this is what happened to so many people. So many people who want to preach in the church. I've seen that in so many places, even in India.

They're eager to preach, eager to share something. They waste people's time and bore people to death, because it doesn't come out of love. Or they want to get a reputation for themselves and want to present in a way that everybody admires them.

The test is not how clever you are, because there are many scholars who can teach so well and simply. There are some great teachers in colleges and universities who are exemplary in the way they make science or something so simple. I once heard of a physics professor here in Stanford University in California, who was so effective in making the truth of science and physics so simple that everybody wanted to go to his class.

He was not a Christian. He was an excellent physics professor. They could make the great truths of physics so simple and clear.

Yeah, but that was a profession. We're not to do it like that. We should make things simple and clear, but it's because we pursue love.

We love these people who we are sharing, talking to. So brothers, to be a man, to be like Jesus, everything he said came out of love for people. And so that's the thing that we need to ask ourselves.

Is it love that prompts me to share this? Or I'm thinking of your sharing in the meetings, and I believe that all of you should seek to share something in the meetings. But ask yourself, pursue after love. Don't first say, no, what can I share in the meeting? That's not number one.

Lord, let me love all these people here. Give me a love in my heart for all of them, and give me something then that I can share out of love for them. It's just like a father would do to the children.

I mean, you don't function as a father towards your children, providing food and clothing and shelter and all. You love them. That's why you want to do the best for them.

It's like that. Pursue love, then seek for prophecy. And I say this because many people have not done it.

They pursue prophecy. And love, yeah, they try to do, but it's not primary. It says pursue after love.

It says pursue means, the picture that's always come to my mind is, you know, in India, the buses don't have doors. So even after a bus has left the bus stand, you can still run and catch it. That's one of the good things.

You won't miss it. Otherwise, you hear the buses have doors, and you run out, and the door is shut. I've done that many times, you know, when I was trying to catch a bus.

And as I run to the bus stand, the bus has just left. I run after it and catch it. And sometimes the people inside will help you.

They'll tell the driver, slow down, slow down. So I think of this pursue after love like that. I'll miss it if I don't.

I got to pursue after love. I want it. I want to love everyone.

And from a heart of love, God, the heart that really loves God's people, I tell you, God will give you words for them. May not be in the pulpit. Don't have a love for the pulpit.

That is a lust. Have a desire to bless people, even if it's in personal conversation, even if it's by a phone call, or an email. Why does it only have to be in the pulpit? God gives some people a gift to preach from the pulpit.

It's not given to everyone. But every one of us can prophesy, is written to everybody, earnestly desire to prophesy. You know, in one of these places, he says, yeah, I wish you will all speak in tongues, but even more that he would prophesy.

That's what he says. It's not tongues as primary. I wish you would all prophesy.

It's somewhere in this chapter. It's fine. Yeah.

I wish you will all speak in tongues, but even more that you will prophesy. Think of the tremendous desire, probably some of you and many others have to speak in tongues. And the Holy Spirit says, you should desire more to prophesy, to speak to people, to encourage them and build them up.

So that's another mark of being a man. That's what a father does to children, provide for them, care for them. So the men must take the leadership in the church, and I believe there's a great responsibility for that in every church, and certainly here.

And in your home, men must be the leaders in the home, just earning the income, but leading and guiding wife and children. That's why it says, you know, let's see, we looked at that already, but I'll repeat it here. Ephesians chapter 5 and 6, it speaks about home relationships.

And when it speaks about wives, then it speaks about husbands. It speaks about servants, it speaks about masters. But when it says, children, Ephesians 6.1, obey your parents, the corresponding command is not to the parents.

Have you noticed that? Ephesians 5.22, wives, 25 husbands, that's both to each other. And Ephesians 6.9, masters, and verse 5, slaves. But when it comes to children and parents, it says in chapter 6.1,

children, obey your parents, but it doesn't say parents, bring up your children in the instruction of the Lord, verse 4. It says fathers, not parents.

And that's not a mistake because you find the same thing in Colossians chapter 3, children, be obedient to your parents, Colossians 3.20. And again, fathers 21. Notice that he's not telling parents, it's not the job of the mother to teach children the Bible. No, they can do it by all means.

Every mother will want to share God's word with the children. But the father's responsibility primarily to make sure the children are instructed in the Lord, and the father's responsibility to discipline them. And that's where I've seen many husbands who are not men in their homes.

In this area, they don't take the lead in instructing their children in God's word. They leave it to the mothers. They don't take the lead in disciplining their children.

That's what I mean by being effeminate. It's like Timothy's father, because he was not even a Christian. That's why the mother had to do the job.

These are the many areas where I believe what it means to be a man in God's kingdom, and there's a great need for that in the church. Questions. How can I find out what gifts God wants to give me to build the church? I believe by trial and error.

You try to do something and it doesn't work, you know you're not gifted for that. I mean, if you think you've got the gift of healing, just go pray for a few sick people and you'll find out pretty quickly whether you have the gift or not. So I'll tell you in my own case, when I was first converted, I couldn't teach.

I didn't know I could give the gospel. So that's all I could do. Christ died for our sins, brothers, friends, except Christ.

Whenever I got a chance, I would stand on the streets and preach the gospel to people and give out tracts and the buses and trains I traveled in. That's all I knew, and I wanted to be an evangelist. Even when I left the Navy, I said, Lord, if you want me to be a missionary in some part of North India where the gospel did not reach our goal.

But I hardly found anyone. I mean, there were a few who came to Christ through my ministry, but an evangelist should be one who brings a number of people to Christ. You know, if a doctor treats 100 people and one person gets healed, that's not exactly a considerate gift.

So an evangelist will be one who a number of people come to Christ. And I found that I didn't have that. But even in those young days, when I started sharing the word from teaching, I found tremendous freedom and response.

That's how I discovered what my gift was. So trial and error. What are the effective ways of reaching those outside the church to make disciples of them? Well, all of us are working in different places.

We have a, I remember one young brother who was a young elder in our church, in CFC churches in India. When he was testifying at the end of a conference, he said, from John 3.16, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And he said, I've got a little world around me, he said, the people I know, my relatives, the people I work with, and the people I know very intimately, that's my little world.

And God so loved this little world that he sent me, his beloved son, into this little world, that I might show them the truth and lead them to everlasting life. It's amazing. So God has given us all of us a little world.

And God loves that little world. We're not to trust ourselves on them. See, I've come across evangelists who go around putting tracks on, in garages on people, windshield wipers, and those drivers, when they see that, hate Christianity.

And the people who clear that place would have a lot of work to do with all the tracks thrown on the floor. I've seen that happen with people who give out tracks even on the streets. I never did that.

You see, you stand on a street and give out tracks to everybody who comes by. You go 100 yards down the road, you'll see all those tracks on the ground there, creating a problem for somebody to clean up. So we have to be wise.

I've given out lots of tracks in my life, but we've got to be wise in giving it out, see, with prayer. See, Jesus didn't go around giving tracks. He showed his love.

Remember, he showed himself as the friend of sinners first, and then as the savior of sinners. So it's by our life, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. So that's how I felt that, I felt that my, whether it was on a ship or a naval base or anywhere, or among my relatives, that they see a life in me that will make them feel there's something about this Christianity, something about this man.

I've heard of many people who felt like that about me, who were in the Navy years later when they, I could see the effects of them. Some of them didn't come to Christ, but at least they knew I was a witness to them. I'm not, I'm called to be a witness.

I'm not guaranteed that everyone I witness to will be converted, but I must be a light, and may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven, and you must be a light to our relatives. We all have unconverted relatives. I got a bunch of unconverted nominal Christian relatives, but every one of them knows where I stand.

What are some of the practical, what are some practical gifts for introverts? I am an introvert. Basically, I'm an introvert. You won't believe it, but I am, but I believe, you know, if you think of, there are basically about four personalities.

I won't go into that discussion, but think of the two extroverts and introverts. Those four are divided into two groups. Extroverts are those very outgoing people, you know, people who won't slap a pillow on the back, say, hi, great, good to see you, and they're called the life and soul of every party.

And introverts are those who wait for other people to come and talk to them or inquire. I'm basically like that, but I believe both of us, what I, I read a book once, which helped me greatly, Spirit Controlled Temperament by Tim Lange. And I read there something that helped me years ago when I was a young Christian, that the Holy Spirit comes to make up the lack in our temperament to make us like Christ.

The introvert by himself will not be like Christ, but the Holy Spirit comes to make up that. Extrovert also is not like Christ, but the Holy Spirit comes to make up for that. So introvert is a person who would do a job very faithfully, but he will not reach out to others.

And an extrovert is the other way. You give a job to an extrovert, he will do a shoddy job of it. He won't do it properly.

So each has got advantages and disadvantages. And the Holy Spirit comes to make the extrovert careful in the work he does and make the introvert outgoing and meet with people and talk to people. So I must not remain like I am.

The Holy Spirit will come to change you. He's come to change us, make us more Christ-like. Okay, another question.

When we have an opportunity to share God's Word during or after the meeting, how can we be a blessing to the body? Well, first of all, I would say number one with humility. If you're not humble, you'll never be a blessing to anybody because it's only God who can bless people and God gives His grace to the humble. So what must come out of your life is not just words, clever words, but grace.

And God gives His grace to the humble. If grace does not come forth from you, you're not going to bless people. Then you just air something and probably get people to think highly of you because you shared something very clever.

It's a great temptation to share something clever to impress people. Or, you know, many preachers have three points. It's interesting, Jesus never spoke with three points in any of his sermons.

And Paul never wrote any of his letters with three points. I'm not against it. I've used it myself sometimes to make people think particularly.

So I'm not saying against it, but don't become a slave to that. Obviously, share with humility, and then you'll always be a blessing to the body, even if you speak two minutes. How can we test ourselves to see whether we are wearing off in the teaching? It'll be very easy.

You know, the spirit in which you're speaking will indicate to you whether you're a teacher or not. Now, some people are teachers among the perhaps, then you must teach. And God's looked at me to a teacher and so I teach, I don't hesitate.

But you know what James 3 says, my brethren, don't be many teachers. You read that? Brethren, don't many of you become teachers, James 3 verse 1. Now, James is a teacher. That's why he's writing this episode.

He couldn't have written this if he's not a teacher. But he's telling other people, don't many of you become teachers because your judgment will be very strict. So you cannot assume, even when you share, whether you share from the pulpit or from your seat.

If you're a teacher, teach. You're not a teacher. God hasn't given you that gift.

You can't teach. You can share something from your heart, definitely, which can be a great blessing. Maybe you're an encourager.

You know that brother Joseph, who was an encourager, have you heard of him? Who remembers? Barnabas, right? That was not his name. You know that his name was Joseph? Where was he from? Wasn't he from Cyprus, where they first went on their missionary journey? Acts of the apostles chapter 4. Yeah, he was from Cyprus, the Levite. Acts 4.36. Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth.

That's where Paul, this guy went on their first trip to Cyprus. He was called Barnabas. The apostles gave him that name, called son of encouragement.

He was not a teacher. He was an encourager, but he was such a tremendous encourager that they say, hey, we ought to change your name, man. You know, even today people don't know him as Joseph.

I don't know how many of you knew that that was his name, Joseph. So some people have that gift of encouraging. Take something to encourage you, and you don't need a long time.

I'll tell you, you know, I believe you can speak a very powerful message in five minutes from the pulpit. You really think about it, and don't waste people's time, and because if you prepare for it, there are tremendous things that you can do in just five minutes. So judge, and one of the best things to do is to judge yourself after you care when you go home.

You know, what did I say? Ask your wife. Tell her to tell you the truth about yourself. She's supposed to be a helper, you know, even supposed to be a helper.

So a helper means to help you to correct me. I often ask my wife, and not only that, I sometimes, many times, I listen to myself from the YouTube videos, listen to the whole message, just to, I say, Lord, I want to improve my preaching. I don't believe I do it perfectly.

I've done it for years, listening to myself, listening to myself, listening to myself. I want to do it better. I want to do it better, and I would encourage you to do it, even if you don't listen to your whole message.

Okay, how can we be sure we are accomplishing the work God has given us, and not any work? John 17, verse 4. John 17, verse 4 is that Jesus said, Father, I've glorified you by finishing the work you gave me to do. So we glorify God by finishing the work God gave us to do, and God has got a specific task. You know that verse I've often quoted from Psalm 139, verse 16, that before we were born, God made a plan for our life.

It was all written down. God's book means in God's mind. Before there was a single day of mine, a single day of mine on earth, it was all written down, all the way to my last day on earth, what I was supposed to do, where I was supposed to live, what I was supposed to do, and again, if I seek God, Romans 12, verse 1 and 2, that's the way to know it.

First of all, present every part of your body to God. If you want to know God's will, Romans 12, 1 and 2 is the way to know God's will. Present every part of your body to God.

Say, Lord, take my hands, my eyes, my tongue. Let me offer it up to you completely. That's verse 1, and verse 2 is, Lord, change my mind by through the scriptures to make it more like the mind of Christ, to think like Jesus.

Then it says in Romans 12, 2, you will know the perfect will of God. Not know it, but you will prove it. Prove it means not by some word from heaven like Abraham, Abraham do this, or Samuel, do this.

No, but prove it in real life. That is how we know God's will, and he doesn't show us the whole future day by day by day. If you're obedient, he'll show you the next step.

You know, like I said the other day, if you have a torchlight, thy word is a lamp unto my feet. As you obey, you'll see more. You keep walking forward with a torchlight.

Okay, when we read the New Testament, the apostles seem to be convinced of their calling, ministry, and gifts. How can we be convinced of the same? Well, that I've already answered by you exercise yourself in a fair area, and you discover whether you have it or not. How can we keep from getting discouraged or feeling down in the work we do in the church that it is not good enough? I believe we should overcome discouragement completely.

We get discouraged because we have high thoughts about ourselves. I think I'm in the 10th grade, and I'm actually in the second grade, and then I should just recognize you're in the second grade, brother. You're not in the 10th grade, so you have to have a lowly estimate of yourself.

You know, you get up and preach like the way you heard somebody else preach, but you're not supposed to be that person. You're supposed to be yourself. Be humble yourself and speak at your level.

Otherwise, it looks so odd, like a child trying to imitate an old grown-up man and talking as awkward as a child wearing his father's trousers and walking along in that. I've seen sometimes people try to talk way above their own spiritual level. I really admire those who recognize their limitations and say, this is the level I'm in.

Don't seek to impress, and you won't get discouraged. And say, Lord, this is all I can do. When you don't have anything to say, don't say anything.

Simple. When you're finished speaking, don't try to drag on. I had to tell some people, even in CSU, I said, brother, for the first so many minutes, even those who were sharing in the main meeting, gifted brothers, I said, for the first 15 minutes, there was a real anonymity on me.

And then it was over, and you should have sat down. But you didn't. I said, oh, it's going to sound nice if I don't speak at least 25 minutes.

They go on and on, and the next 10 minutes, you spoil the whole thing. And I said, the example I use is, think of Jesus as a carpenter, and you're a carpenter. Jesus hires you to do the carpenter.

And you have to work from 9 to 5. And you finish the table perfectly, but it's only 4.30. Oh, I've got another half an hour. So you take the plane again and start planing the table and mess up the whole thing. It was perfect at 4.30. And you should have finished.

That's what the example I use, that when you're finished, don't try to drag on. OK, another question is, how do you maintain a balance of a healthy home life while not neglecting usefulness in the church? I've often said, the first floor is, the ground floor is the first story, is your personal walk with God. The next, the second, or on top of that, second story is your family life.

Only on top of that, you can build the third story of the church. Your ministry in the church has got, must have the foundations, which God's perfect love for me. I know him as my father.

Walking with a clear conscience every day, that's the first floor, first story. And walking in humility in my home and love in my home with my wife, bearing with her, recognizing that she's a weaker vassal and considering her an adjoint heir of the grace of life. And at the same time, being the head in the home, not letting her take over the headship.

Some people, when they hear that we must love our wife, they allow the wife to take over the headship, take major decisions in their home concerning the home of children or especially in spending of money. Many, I believe one of the areas where you really need to be a man at home is the way you spend money at home. You must be the head to decide how, you're the one who's earning the money.

You must decide how the money is spent. And if you're faithful in all those things, then you can build on top of that. I don't believe a woman must be allowed to handle the finances.

That must not be the authority. I mean, you can give her money to use, but you must be the one who decides and controls. It is not lavish and beyond your means.

And that you have enough to save for the future. And if you've got small children, you've got to educate them. College expenses are very high.

Only you as a man must take the lead in that. Those are things that if you're there, then you'll be useful in the church as well. So I don't think we should neglect our home in these areas by thinking church is more important.

And we must offer ourselves also in the church to do any type of job the elders give us. A lowliness of mind. If we are in a location without a church that preaches the new covenant, okay.

How can we know whether to submit to a local church eldership that is acceptable versus attempting meat or the like? Yeah, that is purely an inner witness of the Holy Spirit. We can know the will of God. If you read my book, Finding God's Will, I've given these two passages, Romans 12, 1 and 2, and Proverbs 3, 5 and 6. Trust in the Lord with all of our heart.

And in all that we acknowledge him, we will direct you. These are two verses on which I base that book. Proverbs 3, 5 and 6, and Romans 12, 1 and 2. And then I said the ultimate test is the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

So that is how we know what to do in a particular situation. So there's no way I can give a standard answer to this. If you see God, God will give you an inner witness whether you should continue in that church or meet with other like-minded believers and start another fellowship.

And the next question is, apart from prophesying and speaking the, what are the practical ways that the church built up? Do ordinary things like picnics, games, etc. Definitely. We found tremendous blessing in picnics and games, especially children.

The children feel they're involved in a church and a picnic, where we get them to play and they realize that any of the adults also join with them. The games that the children and adults can play together, we used to have something like that sometimes in indoor, indoor games. And also those who are not capable in other areas, you know, in such picnics, sometimes we have a long time out in a park or something that you can sit and talk to people at length.

And it's a great opportunity to talk one-on-one and to play games with them. And we used to have games, soccer games in our picnics, where you'd have two teams, and we'd have enough men on both sides to play that game. And there were some very good players.

And to ensure that no, at the end of it, one team did not feel we won. We'd have a break, you know, there's a halftime break. And after halftime, I would say half of you can join this team now and half of you go to the other team.

So we'd mix up the teams up at halftime, so that at the end of the game, nobody could say we won. Nobody won. So the aim of the picnic was to get everybody to have a good time playing, not to see who won.

So we found it and built a lot of fellowship. And I'll tell you, it exposed a lot of people's anger. If they want to judge themselves, you try playing soccer and you'll be able to find a lot of areas to judge yourself and become more like Christ.

That's also building the church. So I believe in that also. Okay, the question is, what is the inner witness of the Holy Spirit? In the Old Testament, God spoke from outside.

Abraham, Abraham, Samuel, Samuel. But that's because the Holy Spirit was outside. He came upon people, upon, upon, upon, upon.

But in John chapter 7, he speaks about the rivers of living water flowing from inside. That is only possible after the day of Pentecost. Now we would wish that today also God would speak to us from the outside, calling us from outside.

That is not the best way, and I'll prove it to you. Jesus was with the disciples all the time, those three and a half years. And they were never scared of anything.

If the Lord was there, not enough food, the Lord would take care of it. Storm in the lake, the Lord would take care of it. He was always there, always there to guide them.

What shall I do next, Lord? He'd tell you. Where shall I go now? All, everything. When I go, what should I do? When he sent out the disciples to do business, clear directions.

But he said to them, it is good for you that I go away. They couldn't understand that. How can it be good that the physical presence of Jesus speaking, speaking, speaking, in spite of all, here's the proof of it, in spite of all that Jesus taught them for three and a half years.

On the last night, when they knew Jesus is going to die and go away to heaven, what are they discussing? What? Who's going to be the next leader? What did they learn in the three and a half years of Jesus? Nothing. They learned about humility. They all wanted to know who's going to be the leader.

They're not worried about Jesus going away. Who's going to be the leader? Who's going to take over now? That teaches us that even if you have Jesus with you on the outside, you will not change. That's why he said, it's good for you that I go away.

And they were scared like anything with the door locked up, even though they saw Jesus physically after the resurrection, they were still locked up. But the day the Holy Spirit came in, inside, then they threw open the doors and they began, they were fearless. So the Holy Spirit coming inside is what we need.

That's why you always need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit will witness to our spirit, what we should do. Particularly in matters of conscience or guidance and important things, what we are to do.

I mean, you can become ridiculous now, which shirt should I wear today? Or ridiculous things like that. I'm talking about the prompting to not only in matters of conscience, but also particularly, should I marry this person? Should I take this job? Should I go here? The more you hear God, the more you'll be able to understand that witness of the Spirit within. If you don't develop the habit of listening to God, you cannot have that inner sense.

You have the Holy Spirit telling you what to do. In other words, first of all, begin with the written Word of God. Whatever you have read in God's Word, obey it.

Is there anything that you know in scripture that you have not obeyed? Don't seek for the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit says obey the outer witness first. Are you aware of anything that you have read in scripture, which you're not even trying to obey? I'm not saying that you're perfect.

At least are you trying to obey? Lord, I want to obey it at any cost. I want to get my life straight in that area where you have spoken. And if the Lord says that you're really serious, for example, lusting with the eyes, it may take you many years to overcome it.

Anger may take you some long time to conquer, but the Lord sees you're really at it and you're on the right track. That's okay. You don't have to have achieved it in perfection.

Be anxious for nothing. Rejoice always. Are you seeking to obey it? You seek ones that you may not have reached there, but you're climbing that mountain.

All these are mountains. Don't lust after a woman. Don't get angry.

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Be anxious for nothing.

Love your enemies. It's all mountains to climb, and the Lord sees you are climbing, not sitting back and saying, well, not possible. But then you will never have the inner witness of the Spirit.

But if you see that you're climbing in all these areas, let us press on to perfection. Then the Lord will give you that inner witness of the Spirit when it comes to whom to marry, where to go. I've had such clear direction in my life and so many, many important things, so much that I've been wasting my life, even concerning where to go.

That's how all these different churches got planted. The Lord led me. That's all I can say.

I didn't plant them. The Lord planted them, but the Lord led me where to go. But it'll come if you're obeying the other things that you know in Scripture, or at least seeking to obey them.

Don't condemn yourself if you haven't attained. Paul said, I have not yet reached. I'm pressing on to perfection.

And many, many commands in Scripture are like mountains we are attempting to reach, but you must take it seriously. For example, I decided to take seriously, rejoice always. I must always have a spirit of joy in my life.

Never be gloomy and depressed in a bad mood. Now, it may take you some years to get there, but my question is, are you climbing the mountain? It took me many, many years to get there, but I decided to get there. Or let your speech always be with grace, Colossians 4, 6. It's a mountain.

Are you trying to get there? And in everything, give thanks. Pray without ceasing. There are many, many commands like this.

They're not suggestions. There are no suggestions in the New Testament. Commands, commands.

Love your enemies and forgive everyone, everyone completely. If you're struggling, say, Lord, help me. I want to forgive everyone.

Don't get offended with correction or anything. Lord, I want to get there. And if God sees you doing that, I guarantee you will know inwardly the witness of the Holy Spirit telling you what to do in many, many situations.

It's not something that can be defined or explained. If you follow these things, I tell you, you will hear the witness of the Spirit clearly. You know that verse in Isaiah 30, verse 18, your ears will hear a word behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it, and your eyes will see your teacher.

It's a new covenant prophecy, Isaiah 30, verse 15 onwards. Your eyes will see a teacher that is Jesus, and your ears will hear in the inner ear when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. What do you say to younger believers who are still training their spiritual ear to know the voice of God and still be protected from going astray or making a wrong decision? Yeah, see, we all begin as babies.

And I can't say I have not made mistakes. I've made numerous mistakes in my life as a young Christian. But I've learned from those mistakes.

By mistakes, I don't mean gross sins. You see, the commandments given in the first nine commandments, the 10th commandment is very difficult to keep. Paul also said that that's a new covenant only we can obey it.

But the first nine commandments, we can keep. Unbelievers keep it. There are so many unbelievers who can testify, I never killed anybody, and I never paid false witness in the court, etc.

So, but still, as Christians, when we are new Christians, there are many areas where we're careless in our speech, we frequently discouraged, and gloomy and bad moods and so many things. These are not supposed to be a spirit-filled Christian. But it is there, but we battle it and say, Lord, I don't want to remain like that.

You're constantly pressing on to perfection. We had that verse in our pulpit in Bangalore, let us press on to perfection. Challenging everybody who came there, are you pressing on to perfection? Are you seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 5.18 is be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.

So we must seek for that. And don't get discouraged. In the beginning, we are learning.

Haven't you seen our children write the ABC? They're not able to write it properly, you know, how carefully you can write it today. But you took years to be able to write it carefully, even, or our children learn to add in their mind takes time. But you can add so many things in your mind today.

So everything comes with growth, spiritual life also there's a growth. And so we shouldn't be discouraged. I'm sure all of us, when we did math problems, you know, younger days, we made mistakes.

We didn't get every math problem correct from day one. It's the same way we grow spiritually. Don't be afraid if you have made a mistake, only thing be honest about it.

I'll tell you the person who does not grow, the person who is not honest about some mistake he made, tries to cover it up or find some excuse for it. It was because of this or because of that. You keep saying that 25 years later, you'll still be in the kindergarten.

I guarantee it. I've met people who make mistakes, who make mistakes and find some excuse for it. They will be in the kindergarten forever.

But a person who's honest and say, yeah, that was wrong. Honest humble himself. He'll go to the next grade and learn little by little.

Always be honest. In the day I defined walking in the light, walking in the light is in simple words, be honest. If you walk in the light, we have fellowship with God.

If you're honest, you can have fellowship with God. If you're not honest and you try to cover it up and give some other excuse, you cannot have fellowship with God. So that's so even a young Christian may not be discouraged if they make mistakes.

Just be honest. God doesn't ask us to be perfect. He says, press on to perfection, but he wants you to be honest, absolutely honest.

And I decided long ago, if I made a mistake, I would say, I'm sorry, I made a mistake. That was my mistake. Even today I'd say, sorry, that was my mistake.

It was not, I shouldn't have done it like that. I believe God loves honest people. It's the one thing he asks us to be honest, which is that even a prostitute can be honest.

A murderer can be honest. That's all the thief on the cross went to paradise because he was honest. That's all.

And there are people who have been Christians for years who haven't learned what the thief on the cross learned in the very first moment of his conversion. It's pride that prevents us from being honest. Remember that.

Humility and honesty are like twins. They always go together. The humble person will always be honest and the proud person will never be honest.

So that's it. So honesty and humility go together. Remember this, if you're dishonest somewhere, it is one of the clearest proofs that you're not humble.

If you try to cover up something, when you know what you did was wrong, you are a proud person and you'll never get grace until you learn to be honest, until you go and set right what you did wrong, where you gave people a wrong impression, go to them and say, I'm sorry for deceiving you. It requires humility to do that. If you make a mistake, go to anybody, even if it's someone much younger than you, you spoke rudely to somebody, go and apologize.

I decided to do that. I don't care who it is. I said, unbeliever, I'm ready to apologize to them.

Young person, I'm ready to apologize to a child or someone much younger than me, because I know I'll miss such a lot if I'm not honest. But when God shows me something that was wrong, be honest, be honest with your wife and say it was wrong what I said. I'll tell you, if you just follow this one simple advice I give you today, to always be ruthlessly honest, that's the word I use, ruthlessly honest.

You'll be amazed to see what progress comes in your life in the next one year. What an anointing can come upon you, because if you're honest, you have fellowship with God. If you love money, be honest about it.

God will deliver you from it. Be honest, but when you slipped up and lost it with your eyes, be honest and say, Lord, that was lust. It was dirty, the sexual lust.

You will get deliverance very quickly, rather than the other person who covers it up in some other excuse or doesn't admit it to God. So I believe that many, many, many Christians have not learned the simple truth of honesty. I want to encourage all of you to learn it.

However, late in life, learn it as soon as possible, so that you don't waste any more years of your life. A close relationship with your loved ones, unconverted relatives. Well, first of all, I'd say, don't be a preacher to them.

They'll get fed up. They won't want to listen to you anymore. Jesus was a friend of sinners.

Then he died for sinners. So I think we have, Jesus is called, he was called, the people call him the friend of sinners. So how was that? How did very sinful people come to, could come to Jesus? Because he was not all going there to correct them straight away.

They saw in him a love and an affection, a helpfulness. And I mean, he had the power to heal the sick. We don't have that power, but there are other things we can do to help them in practical ways and not just preach to them.

See, if we do something good and speak encouraging words, we are building a foundation on which we can preach the gospel. So that is the best thing we can do to our unconverted relatives. You know, if any of my unconverted relatives would ask me for anything, I'd do it straight away.

I'd say as far as possible, I'd do it because I want to win that guy to Christ. So if there's any way I can do it, I would do it for him. So I'm not saying if he asks you for a big loan, give it to him.

We followed a principle in Bangalore in this matter of loan, because the Bible says people should not owe anybody anything. And I've had people complain to me, brother so-and-so borrowed money from me and didn't return it. I said, that was your mistake lending him that much money.

So we made a rule in the church in Bangalore. How much do you lend a person? As much as you can give him as a gift, because one day he doesn't return it. Now, there are situations if somebody very close to you, you may even be willing to sign as someone who can guarantee that payment for a house or anything that's different.

But I'm talking about people who are not that close to you, you would not be like to commit yourself financially. And so unconverted relatives, if there's any practical way we can do good to them, bless them, encourage them. And if they are close to you, invite them over home and be friendly to them.

And don't just preach to them always. We pray that God will give you an opening sometime. And in small, give the gospel in small doses, not all together.

And one of the best ways is to give a little testimony about some events, some situation where you just say this thing happened and God helped me and answered my prayer. You just say it in five minutes and leave it and change the subject and don't go on preaching from there. And take away another opportunity to put some more in.

Because if he sees that you're constantly preaching, they will stop listening. I'm telling you from my experience, I did it the wrong way first. And I learned to change.

But we must also pray if you have a particularly those who are very close to us, parents, I say two directions, vertical parents, children. That's our number one responsibility. Children, then parents.

Second responsibility is brothers and sisters, horizontal. And then go to cousins and all that. But we have an immediate responsibility to pray for our children and our parents, and then our brothers and sisters, so they'll be converted.

And then outside that circle to those relatives. And you must pray for them, pray Lord. Not that you had to pray every day, but whenever you have a burden, mention them and pray, Lord, please give me an opportunity to be a witness there.

And you'll be amazed to see how sometimes God unexpectedly gives you an opportunity. And beyond that, if they see your life, the uprightness of your life, that will convince them. But honesty with God.

We must not be honest with every human being. Let me tell you that I'm glad I want to clarify that. I was only talking about honesty with God.

That is all I was talking about when I spoke about honesty. If you're honest, we have fellowship with him. And that is that if you had a dirty thought, don't say something else.

If you're angry somewhere, tell God I was angry. I was wrong on my part. But if you're angry with the person, you must confess to him also, I'm sorry, I was angry with you.

The way I spoke to you was rude. I'm sorry, please forgive me. But that type of honest confession of our sin to people, if I've hurt them, but I must never confess a sin to that person, which I have not done against him.

If I've done it against God, I confess only to God. You don't confess to a person what you did not sin against him. So you confess to your wife since you're committed against her, not what your thoughts you had, which is before God, those words that you spoke to her.

So honesty does not mean I have to reveal everything about my inner life to anyone. No. Remember, your first relationship is to Christ and not to your wife.

I told my wife before I got married her, I said, you'll always be second in my life. You'll never be first. And I want to be second in your life too.

Christ must always be between us. And I say that even today to her. You will always be second in my life, Christ will be first.

And I want to be second in your life. Married life would be glorious if we place each other second and Christ is first. Christ is always between us.

In other words, I'm not going to displease the Lord in order to please you. Sorry. And I don't want you to go against your conscience in order to please me.

We'll have a wonderful marriage. And your own relationship with Christ will develop and my relationship with Christ will develop. So there are things which it's not wise to tell your wife, because she cannot bear it.

And also, there may be things that we have to keep confidential. I mean, I remember when I was in the military, there were things that in the intelligence department, you're not supposed to tell anybody. As just an example of you're not supposed to tell our things, confidential things in the office, maybe you're not supposed to tell your wife.

Honesty does not mean to walk in the light with your wife is anything that concerns her and your relationship. There we must be honest. But there are so many other things we deal with.

As men, it doesn't concern. You must be honest in the areas that concerns you. It's like with children also, you know, that children can only bear so much information.

So we have to be wise in what we tell our children, like even sexual matters, you don't tell that to a three year old or a four year old. There's a certain age at which you can. So we must be wise in those things that what age can I introduce certain subjects to my children and be honest with them.

So everywhere wisdom is, I always use this illustration. You drive a car, let love be the gas in your tank, but let wisdom steer the car must be in the driver's seat always. So our love must be guided by wisdom.

Not otherwise we can do a lot of foolish things in love. You love your wife, but let your love for your wife be guided by wisdom. Wisdom determines what you say and what don't say.

So you can love your wife fervently, but wisdom must determine what you say and what you don't say. And like that, the same with our relationship with one another. Wisdom must love our brothers and sisters, but must be wise in what we say and what we don't say.

The question is, James 5:16 says, confess your sins to one another. This is a good example. Every verse must be read in its context.

A text taken out of context will, you'll misunderstand it. So never take a verse by itself. What is the context? Somebody is sick, verse 15, and he is, verse 14, and he has called you to come and pray.

And why did he call you? Because he's so sick that he could not come to the church meeting. So he calls you to come to his home. That's why he calls for the elders of the church to come to his home.

This is not a man who came to the meeting. He's sick at home. He calls for the elders, James 5:14, and they come and pray for him.

And the prayer of faith will heal the sick. And if he has committed sins, verse 15, it'll be forgiven, but he must confess those sins. This is who? The sick person, because sometimes sickness is due to sin.

Jesus sometimes told a person, don't sin again, lest some worse thing come upon you. You know, the paralyzed man whom he healed, the pool of Bethesda. He was paralyzed because of some sin.

The Lord said, don't sin again, otherwise something worse will happen to you. So it's in that context, it says, confess your sin. So the person who's sick prays and says, Lord, I'm sorry.

I want to acknowledge this sin. Is it only the elders are there? Guy, even his wife is not there. It's just the elders praying for him.

And he acknowledges the sin. And there are some situations where he may have to confess it in public, but only the elders, not in a church. It's in the context of healing where he feels my sickness is not gone because of some sin unsettled in my life.

So I never encourage people to confess their sins to other people because our sins are against God. If I've sinned against you, I hurt you, then I must confess to you, but I will not confess to you a sin I committed against God alone. So the rule is sin must be confessed in the circle in which it was committed.

Most of our sins, only God is there. Our life, only God is in that circle. I only confess to him.

But if another person was also involved in that sin, then he's in that circle, I must confess to him also. This is an example of how people take a verse without seeing the context, and then they get a wrong understanding. The question is, what do we have to do to prevent bitterness coming up in our hearts against people? Our bitterness usually comes against people with whom we are closely connected, an employer in our place of work, or a relative who took advantage of us.

It can even come against a husband or wife, bitterness. Now, bitterness means you have an unforgiving attitude towards that person. Now, the Bible says, forgive us our sins, Lord, as we forgive others.

And the Bible also says, imitate God in Ephesians 5.1, in the way we forgive others. So I have to look at how Jesus has forgiven me. And that is my example to forgive other people.

I've done so much wrong against the Lord, and he forgave me. Say, Lord, help me to forgive others just as you have forgiven me. Forgive us our sins as we forgive others.

And we forgive others in the way we God has forgiven us. So the thing that can help you to overcome bitterness is think of how much you have sinned against God, and he forgave you freely. And the Lord says, now, treat others the way I've treated you.

It's one of the commandments. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. And also, I would say, do unto others as God has done unto you.

So that's the best way I find when you think someone has done a terrible thing against you. Meditate on how serious your sin was against God, and God forgave you. So then, it's a very dangerous thing to have bitterness, because bitterness will destroy you.

It's like swallowing poison. You keep that poison in your mouth, and chew it and chew it, and chew it, it will kill you. Bitterness is exactly like, I've seen people, I believe, finally, they lose their salvation and go to hell.

Born-again people who became bitter against somebody and then kept it at that, and they lost their salvation. So always forgive others as soon as possible. In fact, I've been stressing it so much, especially

in the last one year.

Forgive others, forgive others, forgive others. And the way to remember is, the way to do it is, think of how much God forgave you.

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