

Build Close Relationships In Your Family

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of redeeming the time, making the most of our days, and understanding God's will in our lives. It highlights the need for repentance, building strong family relationships, teaching children obedience and truth, and daily self-examination and repentance to grow in Christlikeness. The speaker encourages husbands and wives to overcome anger, teach children respect and obedience, and focus on being a blessing to others, reflecting the blessing of Abraham. The message stresses the significance of daily repentance and seeking to be like Christ in purity and character.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:16, Ephesians 5:21, Ephesians 6:1, Ephesians 6:4, 1 John 3:3, Galatians 3:13, Hebrews 3:13, Proverbs 15:4, Galatians 3:14, Malachi 4:5

Topics: "Redeeming the Time", "Christlikeness in Family Relationships"

Description

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Transcript

Brothers and sisters, I want to turn today to a verse in Ephesians in chapter 5, which is a good verse for the time in which we are living where almost all of us have to be in our homes and not go out, and almost everyone not even going to the office and going to work, and we have plenty of time at Ephesians chapter 5, verse 16 says, make the most of your time or redeeming the time. See, the word redemption has got some connection with buying things out from a slave market. You know, in the olden days, they had slaves and people would go and purchase something, pay the money and buy it.

So to redeem the time, it's just like Jesus redeemed us from our sinful life. The days are evil, and we have to make full use of the time in the sense that I'm going to buy up the time, buy it up, and when you buy something, you're spending something to buy it. And when you spend money to buy something, you're sacrificing something else for which you could have spent that money.

And you denied yourself that other thing which you wanted to buy with the money in order to buy this thing which you wanted to buy, that's redemption. So to redeem the time, applying that to redeeming the time, it

would mean that time in the olden days that I spent in many other ways which didn't really bring me a lot of profit. Now I have to be wise because that's what it says here in the next verse.

Be wise, Ephesians 5, 17. Understand what the will of the Lord is. Verse 16, redeem the time, make the most of your time because the days are evil.

So in these days which are evil, don't be ignorant, don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is in relation to how you would spend your time. And don't think that the most profitable way to spend time is always by reading the Bible. That can become a very heavy burden because a lot of the Bible, if you just keep reading it all the time, it can be pretty heavy and people say it's boring.

Somebody asked me once whether I found parts of the Bible boring. I said, yes, but I still read it. I said, it's like I eat vegetables, some of it's not as tasty as some other foods I eat, but if it's good for my body, I eat it.

We give food to our children, which is not always tasty. We give medicines to our children, which may not be tasty at all, but take it. So it doesn't matter to me if some parts of the Bible are heavy and I can't understand, I still read it.

And I find later on through constant reading, I get some meaning out of it. I've got messages out of the genealogies, which a lot of people think are boring. So as time goes on, you'll discover a lot in it, but reading the Bible is not all that we have to do.

One reason why we published this book through the Bible is so that you could read that along with your Bible and realize essentially, like it says in the cover of that book, that there is a message in every book of the Bible. I remember someone wrote to me some time ago saying that he had never, he was a Christian for many years, but he'd never read the book of Leviticus because it was also boring, boring, boring until he saw the chapter on Leviticus in my book through the Bible. And then he discovered that he had missed something.

So the purpose of that book through the Bible is not for you to be away from the Bible and read my commentary, but the purpose of through the Bible is to take you to the Bible so that as you read it, you go into the scripture. So make full use of your time, what by studying the Bible with whatever help will help you to understand the scripture better. That's a very, very profitable thing to do if you have not studied the scripture intensely.

But there are many other things that we need to do to build the time. And I think one very important thing, which many people think is not important is spending time with our family, spending time with your children, very, very important. I don't mean, well, some of them have to do schoolwork at home, that's fine, do that.

But in addition to that, to just have fun with your children, to play something with them at home, even if it is some indoor game, it's good for parents to play with their children. You know, there's a great verse in the book of Zachariah, which says that in the final day, when the kingdom of God is established on the earth, the children, it says here, will be playing with each other. Now you say, is that a mistake? It says the children are praying or they're playing? They're playing.

They're playing games. That's how it's going to be in the kingdom of God. So we should not become so super spiritual that we always think religious activities are the only things that by which we can make our time profitable.

So to make the full use of our time, for example, building fellowship. I fear that many fathers have not built fellowship with their children, they're so busy in their work. And what happens is years later, the children become distant from them.

Parents must build fellowship with their children in these days. I want to encourage you to do that. Because it says here in the book of Malachi, please turn with me to Malachi.

That's the last verse in the Old Testament. And there's a reason why God put that verse. You know, the last word in the Old Testament is curse.

The Old Testament ends with the word curse. The New Testament begins with grace. But the reason why the Lord says I'm going to smite the earth with a curse is not because of idolatry or some adultery or some terrible sin that people committed.

It says it's because the hearts of fathers were distant from the children. Children were there and the fathers were there in the same home, but their hearts were far from each other. They were living next to each other, sitting on the same sofa, perhaps same couch, but their hearts were distant from each other.

I fear that it's true of many homes where the parents, their hearts are distant from their children. So redeeming the time, making the most of the time here is one very, very important area. Because it says in Malachi 4 and verse 5 and 6, I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

That's the day of judgment. It's speaking about the second coming of Christ in the last two verses of the Old Testament. And Elijah spoken of there is the body of Christ that prepares people for the coming of the Lord, just like John the Baptist was called Elijah to come, but the Jews did not accept him.

Jesus said, since you didn't accept him, that's not the final Elijah. There's going to be another Elijah before the final day. That's what Jesus said in Gospel of Matthew.

But that final Elijah is not going to be one person like John the Baptist. It's going to be one new man, the body Christ. The body of Christ is the Elijah that God is sending in the last days just before the coming of the Lord.

And just like John the Baptist came to prepare people for the coming of the Lord, saying the valleys must be lifted up and the mountains must be brought low and the crooked places must be made straight and the rough places must be made smooth. And then all flesh will see the glory of the Lord. That's what we also are called to do, to proclaim that all the depression and discouragement to the valleys must be lifted up and all the mountains of pride and rebellion must be brought down and all the crookedness in people's lives must be made straight and all the roughness must be made smooth.

We must learn humility and gentleness from Christ. But more than that, it's something that the first John the Baptist did not do. He had no emphasis on families.

There's not much, there's hardly any emphasis on fathers and children relationship in the old covenant. As a little bit on bringing up children in the fear of the Lord, but husband wife relationship, families were not important. But now before the coming of the Lord, it's very important that families come close to each other.

It's not just fathers with children. I think that includes mothers with children. I think it includes mothers with fathers.

Families must come and become more united because the church is built of families. The strength of the church is not just the strength of a bunch of individuals. It's the strength of the families that constitute that church.

You see, we can all sit in a church building and look very spiritual because everybody's singing well and everybody's clapping and maybe saying amen and all that. But I'd like to see how it is in the homes during the week. You know, once somebody came to me, I mentioned this before, how they asked me, Brother Zach, what's the difference between your church and other churches? I said, well, I will never say our churches, our CFC churches are better than other churches because it's not true.

Each CFC church is different. There may be some very common ones. It depends on the leadership.

But we do say we are proclaiming the truth. As far as we know, the whole truth of the new covenant in the CFC church, that is something in which we are different. And workers, none of the elders are not, none of them are paid, which is another area where we are different.

But more than that, I said, there's another thing, which is very important for everybody. And that is in other churches, Sunday is the important day. But for us in CFC, the important days are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evening after we go back from church service.

In other words, the way we live the whole week is the important thing for us and not how well we sing on Sunday morning or what a fantastic sermon was preached on Sunday morning. It's very easy for Christians to be taken up with that and to spend our time listening to a lot of messages on YouTube and say, oh, well, that was a wonderful message. That's a wonderful message.

It's like listening on Sunday morning. That was a great message we heard Sunday morning and a wonderful time of praise, et cetera. But how do you live during the week? So I said in CFC, the important thing is how we live during the week.

And I even said this, that if you live during the week and come to the church meeting on Sunday and sing in a out of tune and in a broken words, the Lord will be more delighted with that than with a bunch of hypocrites who don't live properly at home as husband and wife and parents and children and come to the church and sing beautifully like nightingales and angels. God doesn't even listen to that because God's listening to the heart. So the father's heart's being restored to the children and the children's heart being restored to the fathers is a very important preparation for the coming of Christ.

In fact, it is so important that the Lord said, if it is not done, I'll smite the earth with a curse. That's a very strong word to smite the earth with a curse because families are not coming together. Now, I hope the Lord will not have to say that about your family, that you're not spending time coming together as a family.

And here's a wonderful time when we're all locked up in our home because of this coronavirus, the spread scares of it spreading, redeem the time, make use of the opportunity to build up relationship between husband and wife first. See, God gives us children after we have some time after we're married, so that we build up our relationship as husband and wife first before we become father and mother. We are husband and wife first, never forget that.

And then father and mother. I've seen this happen in a lot of Indian homes, and perhaps it's true in other places in the world as well, that even if the husband and wife love each other, once children are born, both of them begin to love their children more than each other. And they say so many nice things to their children, but never any nice things to each other.

They stop expressing themselves to each other in affectionate terms. It's almost as if we're not supposed to call each other darling or honey or any such thing. That's all sort of worldly.

That's a lot of nonsense. We must never lose affection for one another. And the relationship between husband and wife must be primary.

And we must love our wives, husbands must love their wives more than they love their children forever, not just when they get married. And I want to say, I fear that is not true in many, even so many Christian homes. They love their children more than they love each other as husband and wife.

Well, that's a complete, that's complete opposite to the order God has ordained. We must love our children, but not more than our marriage partners. And that what happens as a result is once the children have got married and gone away from home, and there's nobody at home, this old couple are bored with each other.

They cannot, sometimes they cannot even stand each other. And even if they sit at home, they're just waiting for the time that they want, they can go and visit one of their children and be with them. I've seen this in so many families, particularly in India.

Now, if they are non-Christian and heathen, I can understand that, but I've seen that in Christian homes. That is an absolute disgrace. They're not even Christian.

I say, I would not call such a married older couple Christian, not at all. They're behaving exactly like the heathen because that's how it is in all non-Christian homes. They love their children more than they love each other.

And when the children leave the home, they get bored with each other and want to go and be with their children. Ask yourself, you see, you're not going to suddenly develop love for each other when you're old, if you're not building it up during the time when you are together at home now with the children. And one of the best ways you can bless your children is if you show them that you as husband and wife love each other intensely, that you don't get upset with each other, that you're not angry with each other, that you express one to another in affectionate terms.

Don't be embarrassed by that. It's good for your children to see that, that you care for one another, you love one another. What's wrong with that? That's what the Bible says.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. See, it says the book of Song of Solomon is a very interesting book. It comes right in the middle of the Bible.

I mean, it's not the way God placed it. That's the way man has ordered the books of the Bible. But Song of Solomon is originally, I mean, now we look at it as a picture of Christ and his bride, which is a very good way to look at it.

Just like many things in the Old Testament are a picture of what is happening today. For example, Israelites redeemed from Egypt is a picture of our salvation from sin. But for the Israelites, it was a very real redemption from slavery.

It wasn't a picture of anything. And they're entering the land of Canaan is a picture of coming into a life of victory for us. But for the Israelites, it was not that.

It was, they didn't have to wander in the desert anymore. It was a real thing for them at that time, entering the land of Canaan where they could just flowing with milk and honey, where they could enjoy themselves. And like that with the tabernacle, there are many beautiful pictures in the tabernacle and we can study that and see how they relate to New Testament truths.

Correct. But in the Old Testament, that was a very sacred place where they worship God. That's where they met with God.

So like that, there's so many things in the Old Testament, which are types of something we see fulfilled in the New Testament. But there and then it was very real for them. And it was not a type of anything for them.

It is for us. So when the song of Solomon, when the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of this book, it was not supposed to originally picture a husband and a wife. It not originally supposed to picture Christ in the church.

It was originally picturing a loving husband wife relationship. And so I have always encouraged husbands and wives to read this and see how you should relate to one another. It is scripture.

It is scripture. There's nothing wrong in a wife saying right at the beginning, the very first sentence there in the book, the very first sentence in the book is kiss me with the kisses of your mouth. Your love is better than wine.

What's wrong in some saying that? You don't say to anybody else, but to your marriage partner, yes. I believe it's very, very important for husbands and wives. I'm not talking about this romantic, shallow, foolish love that's portrayed in movies and love stories and all that garbage.

Because they love one person one day and then they check that person and somebody else another time. That's not the type of nonsense I'm talking about. Empty words and all these empty songs that people sing, expressing their love and a lot of songs and why did you leave me and all that type of stuff.

But here, this is sacred. This is the Holy Spirit. Build relationship.

I want to encourage every one of you, husbands and wives, build your relationship with each other. And a very important part of that is your speech. God has given us the gift of speech.

That's one thing distinguishes us from the animals, not just conscience. Conscience is definitely one thing that distinguishes us from the animals, but we can communicate with each other. I know the animals communicate with making noises and things like that or movements of their bodies and things like that.

But for us, it is much more than that. We can speak a language. We can form words and say something from our heart to the other person's heart.

It distinguishes us from the animals. And so I want you to see this verse in the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs, it says here, chapter 15, Proverbs 15 and verse four.

You know the tree of life in the book of Genesis, which Adam could have gone to, but he didn't go to. He missed it. He went to the tree of knowledge of good and evil and sinned.

Now your tongue can be a tongue with which you talk about good and evil and so many wonderful, clever things in the world, or it can be a tree of life. It says in Proverbs 15 verse four, a soothing tongue is a tree of life. Imagine that thing which Adam missed out in the garden of Eden is right inside your mouth.

And you can use that tongue just to share knowledge of good and evil, or make it a tree of life to bless people in your home. So much of Bible study is just the knowledge of good and evil. There are two ways in which you can study the Bible.

One is like the tree of knowledge of good and evil, where you have so much Bible knowledge crammed in your head, memorized verses and all that is excellent. But if it is not bringing life, you have gone to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And I've seen that the vast majority of preachers I have met, and the vast majority of Christians I met, particularly in churches where they emphasize Bible study, it is entirely the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

They're not teaching anything wrong. They're saying this is good and that is evil. What's wrong in that? Don't we teach our children what is good and evil? But the Lord told Adam, if you live by that tree, you will die spiritually.

One wonders why? Because an academic knowledge, even of the most spiritual things, does not bring life. Tree of life is something different. It's through the Holy Spirit.

We are connected to God himself. And it's very interesting that God wants to use the tongue in this new covenant age. So why do I say that? I'm not talking about speaking in tongues, which is a gift God gives for us to communicate with him.

To me, the gift of tongues is a love language between me and my bridegroom. I use it only in private, just like the husband and wife express their love for each other in private mostly. So it's a love language between, but the tongue itself must be a tree of life all the time.

So we must use our tongue to bless people and bring life to people. The words we speak must bring life to people. Very, very important.

And if that is not true at this moment in your life, my dear brother, sister, please make it a goal to work on during this lockdown time when you're locked up in home, redeem the time and say, Lord, one of my big problems has been my tongue. See, let me show you another verse which says about the tongue in Proverbs chapter 21 and verse 19. It speaks about a wife who does not know how to control her tongue.

And it says for a husband, it's better for a husband to live in a desert than to live with a contentious and vexing woman. Are any of you wives contentious, always arguing about something, kicking up a quarrel about the smallest little thing that goes wrong, upset about something. You've learned zero patience in your life.

The Bible says it's better your husband lives in a desert than in your home. Why does it say about the wife so much? It's very important because it also says something good about the wife. See Proverbs chapter 14 and verse one.

The wise woman builds her house. Not the wise man. The wise woman builds her family.

Jesus spoke about the wise man in the sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7, because he obeyed all that Jesus commanded. That's also true. But here is speaking about the home.

That it is the wise woman who builds her home and the foolish one tears it down with their hands. And most of that tearing down with her hand is with her tongue. But how does it, why does it say a woman builds the house? Because the greatest power on earth is the power of submission to God.

The power of submission. The opposite of that, the greatest evil is the power of rebellion. Why do I say that? Because sin came through rebellion.

When the head of the angels rebelled against God and said, I will not accept your authority. Remember that when God has placed a man over you sisters and you refuse to accept his authority. Now you know who you're following.

The highest angel who became the devil, who said, I will not accept the order God has placed, that I should be under God. No. Rebellion brought sin into the universe.

And that's the greatest evil. Now let's come to the other. The greatest good that came was when Jesus submitted to his father.

His entire life was one of submission. And that's how he brought salvation. So submission is the opposite of rebellion.

It's the difference between Satan and Jesus Christ. And in a home, who is the one who can demonstrate this fantastic heavenly power of submission? It's primarily the wife. There are areas where a husband must also submit to his wife, you know, give her a space, don't go within her boundaries.

That's one way, form of submission. But the Bible says, wives be subject to your husbands as the church is to Christ. So it's the wife who has the opportunity to manifest the glory of submission.

It's true. There's a glory in submission and more than anyone in the home, it is the wife who has the honor and the privilege and the opportunity to manifest that. So she brings the spirit of Christ into the home by her submissive spirit to her husband day after day.

And what's happening? When the spirit of Christ comes into the home, it builds the home as a home where God can dwell. God can never dwell in a home where there's rebellion. You can put a verse on the wall saying Christ is the head of this house, but it's just a verse on the wall.

Christ is not there at all. He will not be there in a home where there's rebellion. That's why it says a woman builds the house because she's the one who has the opportunity to bring that spirit of submission into the home.

Very important. Let's make use of this time when we are at home to learn this, dear sisters. And see, you cannot teach something that you have not learned.

You can't be a teacher of chemistry in a school if you've never studied chemistry yourself. You can't teach mathematics in a school if you haven't learned it yourself. And you can't teach submission to your children if you haven't learned it yourself.

And when you see your children rebelling, ask yourself where did they learn it from? Where did they learn it from? I know they've got a bad nature within, but where did they learn to talk the way they talk in a rude way to each other? Ask yourself. Is it from the way the wife spoke to the husband? You know, we are very careful when people come from outside to visit our home. That's a form of hypocritical living where I have to live in a different way when somebody comes to my home, and then I can relax and be myself and live in rebellion and sin when nobody's in the home.

I mean, think of this practical situation. Supposing you, as husband and wife, are just having an argument and quarreling with each other, and suddenly you hear the bell ring, and somebody's at the door. Immediately, all argument stops.

All the yelling stops. You open the door, and there's a brother from the church or a sister from the church come to visit you, a family from church come to visit you, and they come and sit there, and all the half an hour they're there, it's so pleasant. Husband and wife talk to each other as if they're most wonderful friends on earth.

Why? Because two Christians are there, or don't have to be Christians, even two strangers. Even if the neighbors walked in, you'd be like that, and then half an hour later, they go away, and the fight starts again. Continue from where we left off.

Why? Because now only Jesus is there. Those human beings have gone, only Jesus is here now, and who cares for Jesus? Sad, sad. Who cares for Jesus? Who cares that he listens? It's not only him.

The angels listen and weep if they could. The demons listen and laugh and glee. Aha, great to see these children of God behaving like this.

Dear brothers and sisters, there are spirit beings watching us all the time in our home, but more than that, Christ himself. There's a grief in God's heart, in the heart of Jesus Christ, when he sees the condition of many, many homes which take his name, which give a lot of opportunity to the devil to blaspheme. When David sinned with Bathsheba, the prophet came to him, you read in 2 Samuel chapter 12, and said, by this action, you have given a cause to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

The enemies of the Lord, blaspheme. Here is supposed to be a man who was called a man after God's own heart. Initially, he was chosen by God because he was a man after God's own heart, and now he's living in such sin.

And what shall we say today? When Christians who've seen the life of Jesus in the gospels, understood the cross of Calvary, come to the Lord and got their sins forgiven, forgiven and redeemed from a wretched, miserable life like we all have been, and many of us received the Holy Spirit, and then we do things that bring dishonor to the Lord? Let me urge you, my brothers and sisters, I'm not trying to condemn anybody. There's no condemnation in the church. There's no condemnation when we are in Christ, but there is challenge.

The Holy Spirit seeks to challenge us and convict us and say, he's not saying, why are you like this? No. What he's saying through this message is, my dear son, my daughter, the whole Lord is saying, my son,

my daughter, I love you. I want to forgive you all your failures in the past.

I'm inviting you today to come up higher. Don't live in that low place anymore. Here you have a few days now locked up in the house.

Make full use of this time. Spend time with the Lord. Repent.

And if you don't have a quiet corner in your home to be alone, I'll tell you the best place to be alone when you're asleep at night and in between when you wake up or before you go to bed when everything in the house is quiet, everybody's in their beds. And that's one time I find early in the morning or in bed before going to sleep, precious times alone with the Lord. Or if you wake up in the middle of the night, alone with the Lord, because in this crowded city life, we don't find wildernesses to go to like Jesus could find.

But that is a wilderness. Everything is quiet around and you can talk to them. You don't have to open your mouth.

Thank God the Lord can hear our thoughts. And the devil can't hear any of them. You talk to the Lord in your thoughts, in your mind, and he hears every word and you can hear the Lord speak to you.

And there's a communication going on between the Lord and you while you're in bed. And the devil doesn't hear a word of it. Nobody hears a word of it.

And you can rejoice. And I tell you, I've discovered that, you know, it says about Jesus that he prayed with loud crying and tears. And that's how he did not sin.

And I've discovered that I can pray with loud crying and tears in my heart without making any sound with my mouth. With my mouth closed, I can pray with loud crying and tears in my heart. And I can be heard just like Jesus was heard.

We need to do that. We need to say, Lord, I'm really sorry for the way I've lived. I'm really sorry that my home is not glorifying you.

I'm really sorry that I've not built fellowship with my wife. I've not built fellowship with my husband. I believe many husbands have failed to speak encouraging words to their wives, to build fellowship with their wives.

It's very, very important. The Bible says in Hebrews 3.13, and I never get tired of emphasizing this, Hebrews 3 and verse 13 says, encourage one another every day as long as it is called today. Because one of these days, today we'll finish.

There'll no more be today. We would have entered into eternity. So it's saying here, before you enter into eternity, that's a paraphrase of that.

While you're still in terms of time, not eternity, encourage one another. Because it is in this period that you can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is a very deceitful thing.

It hardens you without you knowing it. I mean, if it was with our knowledge, then we could be alert to it. But sin has got such a power to harden us deceitfully.

That means I think I'm okay. I think I'm spiritual. I think everything's okay and everything's not okay.

We have to encourage one another daily. It says daily, daily, day after day, one day after day. Who is the one you see 365 days of the year? It's not the brothers and sisters in the church.

It's your marriage partner, your husband, your wife. That's the one you need to encourage every day. And it's not just with words.

We can encourage one another with actions and we encourage one another by not murmuring or grumbling or complaining, by forgiving one another for mistakes. Husbands and wives will make mistakes till the Lord comes. I tell you that.

So we have to be merciful with one another. Years ago, when we had our first meeting hall and we had to decide what verse should we put up behind the pulpit. And I thought, what is the greatest danger for people preaching holiness like we are? It's the danger of Phariseeism.

The danger of looking down on other people who don't preach victory over sin. Great danger in all CFC churches. Lord, we thank you that we're not like other churches that don't preach victory over sin.

Lord, we thank you we preach the new covenant and not like other churches. That's the great danger of being a Pharisee. And then we are very merciless to other people.

So I said, this is the verse we must put behind the pulpit. Be merciful to one another, just as God has been merciful to you. And that's the verse we have behind our pulpit for 40 years.

Be merciful to one another as God has been merciful to you. And I wish I could put that up in every home. As husbands and wives, have that in front of you always.

Be merciful to one another, just as God has been merciful to you. Merciful, forgive. Did he make a mistake? Forgive.

Did she make a mistake? Forgive. Overlook it. Don't remind the person of the mistakes they did in the past.

Ask God to prevent you. You can't remove the memory of it, but you can certainly ask God to control your tongue and your mind that you don't repeat that. To remind your husband and wife, you must never in your life, remind your husband or wife, your partner about what they did in the past.

Build up your relationship in these days. Cleanse yourself from these bad habits. Build up your relationship at any cost.

Care for one another. Encourage one another. Help one another in different things that you can do to help one another in your home.

Husbands, for example, who've never been at home can help their wives now. Wives can also help their husbands in many ways. God will show you how it is different in each home, but God will show you how to do it.

The other thing is what I said in Malachi about fathers and children, and that means parents and children. Once the spirit of submission is manifested, not only by the wife to the husband, but the husband also in deferring, if you understand the meaning of that word, deferring to his wife in different areas. Like the Bible says, see in Ephesians chapter five, the first verse is not wives be subject to your husbands.

See, we can jump into Ephesians 5.22 before we go to verse 21. Verse 21 is husbands be subject to your wives. Have you read that? And wives be subject to your husbands.

Yeah, it's what Ephesians 5.21 says, be subject to one another. So it's not a one way thing. I have to defer to my wife and my wife has to defer to me.

This is how we bear with one another. Bear each other's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. What that person does to me can be a burden to me.

Well, the Bible says in Galatians, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. That's a great verse that we must always bear in mind in Galatians chapter six and verse two, bear one another's burdens. The way that person behaves or the way that person talks can be a burden to me.

It can be, you know, troubling for me with tone of voice or anything. I have to bear it. That's how I fulfill the law of Christ because Christ bore my burdens.

I was a real nuisance to Christ. I'll tell you that. Sure.

But he bore with me for so many years and he was so patient and he's still changing me after 60 years. So I say Christ could bear my burdens for so long. I can bear with the burdens of my wife and the wife must bear the burdens of the husband.

So from there, we go on to children. The importance of teaching our children submission, very, very important. Why do we want our children to obey their parents? We've often taught in our church, there's another area where we emphasize, which is not sufficiently emphasized in other churches, that our family is more important than the church.

If my family is not being built properly and I try to build the church, I'm a hypocrite. We've often used this example of a three-story building. For those of you who haven't heard it, let me repeat it.

The foundation is God loves me as he loved Jesus, John 17, 23. That is, you cannot build on any other foundation. God's intense love for me.

That's unchangeable rock foundation that can never shake in time or in eternity. On that, I built what in India we call the ground floor. The first floor, the first story is my personal walk with God.

If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, fellowship with God in the light. On top of that, we build our family life. And on top of that, we build our ministry and the church.

So you can't build the third story before you finish the second one, which is your family. There are numerous cases in history of millions of people, preachers and pastors who destroyed the church because they didn't care for their family life, destroyed themselves and everything. So family comes before ministry and the church.

And so in family, children are a very important part of that. In the Old Testament, it was not true. You don't read anything about Moses' children.

Moses had a bad relationship with his wife. As you read in Exodus 4, they had a fight there. And Moses didn't have the authority in his home to even circumcise his son because his wife was a Gentile who didn't believe in circumcision.

You read that in Exodus 4. And God wanted to kill Moses, you read there, even though he had called him earlier at the burning bush. Because of one simple thing, he did not say, Moses, you can't obey me in your house. How in the world are you going to get 600,000 Israelites to obey me? So they had to set that right before Moses went further to get children to obey him.

And it says in 1 Timothy 3, verse 5, if a man does not know how to manage his own family, how in the world is he going to take care of the church of God? So the qualification for the leader in verse 4 is one who has kept his children under control with all dignity. Or in Titus, it says in Titus 1, 6, an elder should be one who's a husband or one wife, not a divorcee, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. And the reason is that the home is a training ground for leadership in the church.

So the way you bring up your children is very, very important. So we have to teach our children, it says in Ephesians 6, children obey your parents, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment that promise that it may go well with you.

So I asked parents, do you want it to go well with your children? Every parent will say yes. Okay. Now what should you do? Many things.

Okay. You feed them, you float them, you educate them, you provide them a place to live and you do so many things to take care of them. But what about the most important? What's number one? What's right on top? It's not food and clothing and education.

That's all important. I agree. But number one is they must be taught to obey their parents.

And we are living in a generation of children who have not been taught that. All the rebellion you see in society is because they learned rebellion at home. They would speak rudely to their parents and the parents ignored it.

Or they wouldn't obey their parents and the parents ignored it. They ignored the word of God. It's a serious thing.

Just when God says, you make your children obey you and you say, no, I don't care, Lord. They'll be all right. They will not be all right.

They'll not be a trouble in your home. They'll be a nuisance to society when they leave your home and go out there. We have to make our children to grow up to be a blessing in the world.

You know what God told Abraham? The blessing of Abraham. Genesis 12, first three verses. Abraham, I will bless you.

And you will be a blessing to others. All families will be blessed through you. Now, if you turn to Galatians in chapter three, you're told very clearly there that the blessing of Abraham is for us.

Galatians 3, 14. So that the blessing of Abraham might come to us through the Holy Spirit, through the promise of the Spirit. So the reason God fills me with the Spirit is that I get this twofold blessing of Abraham.

What's that? I will bless you. He fills me with the Holy Spirit and power so that his blessing comes upon my life and my life gets filled with love, joy, peace, long suffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness, self-control, the fruit of the Spirit. And then it doesn't stop there.

The second part of the blessing, you will be a blessing to others and all the families will be blessed through you. In other words, God's will is that every family I come across, every family you come across should be blessed through you. That is the promise of Abraham for you.

Now, whether you claim it or not is another thing. Somebody can send you a check for a million dollars or a million rupees and you keep it in your drawer in your table at home. You live in poverty.

You should go and cash it in the bank, put it into your account. Here is something like more than a million dollars or rupees. The blessing of Abraham that I can be a blessing to every single family that comes into my house or that I visit or meet or that I encounter in any way.

Any person you speak to on the phone in your church, you should be a blessing to them. The world is full of people who gossip on the phone, who speak evil to one another, who hurt one another. Why not in the midst of all this darkness, some of us be a light, the blessing of Abraham.

You know, that is why Jesus became a curse on the cross. There's only one verse in the Bible where it says Jesus became a curse. He took our sins on the cross, we know that.

He became sin, we read in 2 Corinthians 5, last verse. But here's the verse in Galatians 3, 13, which says Christ became a curse. You know what it is to be a curse? Not for somebody to curse you, but to become a curse.

Why? I don't fully understand what Jesus went through on the cross. I often pray, Lord, help me to see a little more. God showed me a little bit of what it was for him to be forsaken by the father on the cross, to become a curse.

I want to understand that more. Lord, you became a curse for me. What for? The Lord says, so that you might be a blessing in your life to every family that you come across.

We must bring up our children to be a blessing to others. And it all depends on how you bring them up. If you ignore the little things they do wrong in your home, say, oh, that's okay, darling.

It's not okay. Darling, that's not okay. You shouldn't behave like that to your brother or sister.

That's not the way to behave because when you go into society, you'll behave like that with others. So I have to correct you here because I love you. I want you to be a blessing to all the other children in the church and all the other children in your school.

And that's why I correct you because I love you. If I didn't love you, I would just let you do what you like and you'd be a nuisance wherever you go on this earth and you'd be a pain to society. There are many, many children of believers who are like that.

Ask yourself, why did Christ become a curse? Dear brothers and sisters, use this time at home when you're with your family to put some values into your children. As I said, begin with father and mother, but then you teach your children obedience and teach your children to speak the truth. There were mainly two things that I emphasized with my own children when they grew up.

One was total obedience and respectfulness to parents. And second, always speak the truth. If anyone speaks disrespectfully to father or mother, you must tell that child, go and apologize to your daddy or mommy.

I don't care if you're doing the most important way of homework or anything, stop it. Close that book, go and apologize and then come back. It doesn't matter if your homework is not done, you have to learn to respect your dad and mom.

You must never, never speak disrespectfully to your parents or rudely. I'm shocked to see the way some children speak to their parents and the parents don't even correct them. Oh, that's my sweet darling.

Well, wait till you see what your sweet darling behaves like a few years later in society. Oh, perhaps the way he's behaving right now in school and you don't know. Dear brothers and sisters, now is the time to set these things right when you have them at home.

Do you want it to go well with your children? Here's the promise. Teach them to obey their parents. Then Ephesians 6, 3, then it will go well with them.

Number one, do you want your children to live long on the earth? That's also here, Ephesians 6, 3, that they may live long on the earth. Look at the number of Christian parents who are not taking that seriously. I don't care if people think I'm a very strict parent.

I'm not one bit bothered whether people think I'm a strict preacher or a strict parent or strict in any area. I want to obey God's word. I'm not bothered.

The opinion of men is fit for the trash can. I don't care what they think of my attitude and disciplining my children or any such thing. Let them think what they like.

I want to live before God's face. I want my children to grow up. I want them to go well with them.

I want them to live long on the earth and to be a blessing wherever they go. I hope you want that too. That is the second story on which we build the church.

It's no use coming together and say, oh, we are the body of Christ and all that. We know these wonderful truths. We know about victory over sin and your husband and wife are always fighting with each other and children are all not behaving properly and getting a bad testimony with others in the school and in the church the way they behave.

I understand little children don't have wisdom, but as they grow up, we must correct them. The way we correct them is also important. It says in Ephesians 6.4, fathers don't provoke your children to anger.

Why does it mention that? Because it's very easy for fathers to get so upset. They're angry with themselves and they provoke their children to anger. You can't blame your children for getting angry.

You yourself are getting angry. You've got to ask the Lord to help you to overcome your anger first, your anger towards your husband or your anger towards your wife. If you haven't overcome that, can you teach your children two plus two is four? If you don't know that two plus two is four, if you think two plus two is five, how in the world can you teach your children that two plus two is four? Simple.

If you haven't overcome anger yourself, how in the world are you going to tell your children to overcome their anger? They will be angry at you. You've got to say, okay, be merciful to mommy, daddy. I'm still learning it.

I'll teach you that after a little while. That's why it's so important, dear brothers and sisters, for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers to overcome anger in their own heart first. God gives you one or two years after you're married before your child can understand these things.

By the time a child is two or three years old, he begins to understand how daddy and mommy are behaving with each other. I understand from that that God gives us about three or four years after we're married to overcome these things. It's possible to overcome, not re-overcome in the heart, at least overcome externally and gradually in the heart as well, but very, very important.

Fathers, don't provoke your children to anger. That's the negative side. The positive side, teach them the instruction of the Lord and the discipline of the Lord.

That means teach them the Bible. Teach them the stories in the Bible and the principles in these stories. Have Bible quizzes, but don't stop there.

Knowledge of the Bible is good, but it's also good to ask them, what do you learn from that for yourself after you tell them a story? Instruction of the Lord and the discipline of the Lord. God wants our children to grow up obedient to parents. These are the things I believe that we need to concentrate on in this time when we are at home, and it's important for every husband and wife.

I believe there's a great need, like when the Lord spoke to the churches in Revelation, He said to them frequently, repent, repent, repent. What is the last word of the Lord to His church? There are many people in Christendom who say, no, the last word of the church is going to all the world and preach the gospel. No, 60 years after He said that, He told the church, repent.

It was in AD 30 or AD 29 that Jesus said to His disciples, go into all the world and preach the gospel. Everywhere and make disciples, great. But 60 or more years later, He tells the church in Revelation 23, repent, repent, turn from your sin.

Sin is now in the church. 60 years earlier, He told them to go and tell the world to repent, like Peter did on the day of Pentecost, repent to the people in the world. But now, 60 years later, it's the church that needs to repent.

And I believe that if you're really wholehearted, you will live a life of daily repentance. I mean that seriously, and I'll tell you why. 1 John 3.3 says that everyone who has the hope of becoming like Christ one day, for many people, the hope is Christ will come one day.

I also have that hope, but I have a double hope. 1 John 3.2 says, my first hope is I will be like Him. And see 1 John 3.2, see the order.

When He appears, I will see Him. No, that's second. What is first? I will be like Him, 1 John 3.2. So my first hope is I'll be like Him and I will see Him.

And this is my hope. I want to be like Him. And everyone, that includes you, me, and the newest believer who was born again today, who has this hope, which hope? One day I'll be like Jesus, who's got a passion to be like Jesus.

You know what He'll do? He'll purify Himself until He reaches Christ's standard of purity. That's what we have preached in CFC for 45 years. How do I do that? By judging myself and repenting every single day.

God is my witness that for many years now, I have repented every single day. Because I always say, Lord, show me. Let me walk in the light as you're in the light.

In your light, I see light. I don't look inward. No, that's depression.

I look up like Isaiah to see the glory of God. And when he saw the glory of God, he said, oh, I see my own sin. That's the way to see your own sin.

Look up and see the glory of God and Jesus Christ, and you'll see your own sin. Because sin is to come short of the glory of God, Romans 3.23. And I see when I see His glory, I see where I've come short. If I don't see His glory, I won't be able to see it.

Looking inward is the teaching of psychology. I don't believe in that. The Bible is so different from psychology in so many areas.

I look up at Jesus. Those who don't have Jesus have to spend their time looking at themselves. But I look at Jesus and I see His glory and I see myself and I repent.

That's why I say I repent every day. I'm constantly eager to see something in me that I can cleanse myself from every single day. That's the way I want to spend not only this time in a lockdown or inside the house, but all my life, every single day.

But for those of you who have not developed these habits of building fellowship in your home, cleansing yourself in your home life, let me encourage you to use this time when you're all at home, when you hardly see anybody else. Build up relationships. Encourage one another.

Be romantic in the expression of your love to one another, husband and wife. Fathers and mothers, have some humor with your children. Have fun, joke and laugh with them and play games together with them.

Have fun with your children. Very, very important. Build a relationship.

Fathers must take the initiative to build relationship with the children. And thus I tell you, you will be doing one of the most important things to build your local church. Without your preaching in the church, you'll build the local church by building your home.

God bless you. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to examine ourselves.

I want to invite all of you, whatever God has spoken to you during this time, with my feeble words. Please, I see my tremendous limitation to be able to speak on a subject like this. It's not easy.

But I pray that in spite of my limitations, the Holy Spirit has spoken to your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of these things until the Word becomes flesh in you, becomes life in you. Heavenly Father, do that for all of us.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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