

Building a Godly Family Life

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, focusing on family life as a key aspect of spiritual growth and protection against the schemes of the devil. It highlights the role of husbands as protectors and leaders in the home, urging them to stand against temptation and guide their families in righteousness. The sermon also stresses the significance of wives as helpers and the need for mutual submission and humility in marriage. It concludes with a call to follow the example of Jesus in taking responsibility, accepting blame, and living in obedience to God.

Scripture: Proverbs 14:1, Genesis 2:18, Ephesians 5:18, Ephesians 6:13, Genesis 3:6

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Family Leadership"

Description

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Transcript

Let's remind ourselves when Jesus said where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst. So we need to recognize the presence of Jesus here. So in the presence of Jesus, is it right to jump and shout and clap hands and make a lot of noise like this? What would he think? Well, I'll tell you.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 21. It says here that Jesus came into the temple, Matthew 21 and verse 14 onwards, 14 to 16. He came into the temple and he healed the sick.

And the chief priests were not excited with all that Jesus did in healing. They saw the children shouting. I'm sure they were clapping their hands too and probably, you know how children are, they'll jump and shout and raise their hands and saying, Hosanna to the son of David.

The Pharisees and scribes are angry. In every church, there are people like Jesus and there are people like the Pharisees who are indignant. How dare you in the church make such a lot of noise.

Don't you know this is a holy temple? And they told Jesus to rebuke the children. You hear what they're saying, making a noise in the temple. And Jesus said, have you never heard or read what the Psalms

say? That Psalm 8 verse 2, out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have prepared praise for yourself.

So if you want to know what Jesus thought about what we saw right now, you have it right there. Out of the mouth of infants and babes, you have prepared praise for yourself. I'm 83, but I want to be like a little child.

I clap with them. I sing with them. And if I were a little more alert, I would jump around and dance with them too.

I would say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, be like a little child. They're the closest to God's kingdom. And it's not just externally, in our mind.

The trouble with all of us, with many of us anyway, is we are far too clever, we are far too educated. And that sort of puffs us up and thinks that we have a certain idea of what spirituality is, and it is the idea of the Pharisees, who did not understand the excitement Jesus had when he saw little children praising him. He said, the kingdom of God is like little children.

And he also said to his disciples in Matthew chapter 18 and verse 1, he asked them a question. Who is the greatest in God's kingdom? Is it Paul? Is it Elijah? Is it Moses? No. He called a little child and sat him before them and said, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Listen to the words of Jesus coming down through 2,000 years. Unless you are converted, get rid of all those high thoughts of yourself and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. If you don't believe it today, when Christ comes, you will discover that those who have become like little children enter the kingdom of heaven.

And the wise and the clever and mighty are put out. Whoever then humbles himself as this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Do you want to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Not for honor, but just because, I'll tell you why I want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, because my Lord has done so much for me.

I don't want some seat up there, not interested in that. But the Lord has done so much for me that I want to do so much for him. And the Lord says, if you want to do that, be like a little child.

And when you see a little child, receive that child in my name. Smile at the little children who are not your children. And let them look at you and see that the church is the best place to be in.

I try to smile at all these children standing up here. I don't want them to know the church is the best place for them to be. There's no better place.

And that's what we've always taught in all of our churches. And we want all of our children to find a place in God's kingdom. Because we live in a world where so many children, they look so sweet when they're small and by the time they're teenagers, they're out in the world and they have no respect for their parents.

So we were thinking on Friday when we had the last meeting for everyone about building the church. And I said how the church is a three-story building. The foundation is the perfect love of our Heavenly Father for us.

And as the Holy Spirit shows us that God is a loving Father and we need to be established in that. And there must never be a time when we doubt that. When we have messed up our life, when we have sinned terribly, when we've gone completely astray, God doesn't change.

He's a loving Father. Not a grandfather. There's a lot of difference.

I remember the difference that happened to me when I changed from father to grandfather. I was very strict with my children. And used the rod where necessary in love.

But I've never done it on my grandchildren. Never once. I remember when after our first grandson was born and I went back to Bangalore, some of the brothers there who knew how strict I was with my children, said, Zach, what are you going to do when your son picks up your grandson and is going to spank him? I said, I think I'll go for a walk.

Because I can't see it. I would do it myself, but I couldn't see it. And I said I'd come back and then I'd see my little grandson crying and wanting to sit on my lap and I'd keep him on my lap and I'd tell him, you know, what your daddy did for you is good for you.

I haven't changed my mind. I still believe it. I wouldn't do it myself.

Because I'm not a father, I'm a grandfather. And that's what I told my brothers and sisters back in Bangalore. I said, that proves to you God is not a grandfather.

He won't let you go. He'll spank you. Grandfathers don't spank.

God is not a grandfather. When you go astray, he'll use the rod on you. That's a sign that he's a father.

And if God is disciplining you by financial difficulties or sickness or any such thing, thank him. That he's a father who's interested in making you holy. And don't ever complain against him.

I follow that principle whenever some calamity has hit me or I'm down in bed with some sickness and I say, Lord, why is that? It's not your perfect will, it's your permissive will. Why have you put me in bed now with this sickness? And the Lord points out something in the previous week where I got a little puffed up. I said, Lord, I'm sorry.

Please forgive me. Thank you for that spanking. Thank you for disciplining me because it proves to me you're still my father.

You haven't forsaken me, you haven't just let me go into the world into the hands of the devil. You see me go one degree off track when he gives me a spanking. That's why I said to the Lord, Lord, don't wait till I've gone 45 degrees and 90 degrees off track.

Please know when I've gone one degree away from that straight line, give me a spanking. I want to follow you wholeheartedly. I'm not perfect.

I'm like a little child, even now. And I say, Lord, I'll never say that I don't need your discipline. I thank you you're not a grandfather.

Have a relationship with God your father like that. It'll change your life. And if you have grumbled against the way God's dealt with you, well, you say, okay, I won't trouble you anymore.

Live as you like. Everything that happens, even when my children were sick, I'd say, Lord, I'm going to seek you. There's nothing that happens to me or my family or my children, which God is not in control over.

And it's a tremendous testimony to the devil. When there are problems, when I have financial difficulties, and my wife and I have gone through that, because when I quit my job in the Navy, I took up all my savings and gave it to the Lord's work. And I said, Lord, I'm going to start serving you with zero in my bank account.

That's how I started. And the Lord's taken care of me 60 years, and he never lets us down. I can tell you, I can testify to you.

I believe at the end of our lives, every one of us must have one testimony. I tried my best to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first. Not perfectly, but I tried my best to do it perfectly and today at the end of my life, whether you live to a hundred, you must be able to see I can testify that God took care of me.

Just like he said, seek God's kingdom first. All that is needed will be added to you without your running after it. Look at the rat race there is in the world where people are running after this, running after that.

I've never done that. I didn't become the richest man in the world, but God provided all my needs. That's the important thing.

And it's a tremendous testimony. You can testify at the end of your life. I did not go after money.

I did not go after honor. I sought God's kingdom first. I put Him first in every area of my life.

And I can testify today that God's provided all my needs. He's taken care of me. He's taken care of my children.

And whatever circumstance, some difficult circumstance came, He turned it for good. Yeah. God doesn't say that He'll protect us from all trials.

No. He didn't do early Christians. I used to get my children to read the biographies of these early Christians.

How they were and the stories about them. How they were persecuted and killed. And sometimes a young mother would have the child taken away because she's a Christian.

And she'd be willing to do that. The father was an unconverted person. He'd take away the child and the mother would be sent to prison.

There are wonderful stories of martyrs which you must read. And we must teach our children how the early Christians suffered for their faith and never gave up. I know it encouraged me tremendously and I wanted all my children to know that Christianity was not always comfortable for the early people.

They couldn't come like this to church on Sunday and sing. They were running for their lives. They had to hide in caves.

Yeah. So it's good for our children to know those stories. I hope you're telling them that from early childhood.

What it means to be a true Christian. And that'll stop us from grumbling and complaining when some little thing goes wrong. Or we have a little shortage of money.

I believe we are if you don't do that you raise a brood of children who are pampered and spoiled with any little problem comes they bang the table and they complain and they say all these things are not available on my breakfast table. Well I say go to some poor countries in the world there's hardly anything on that breakfast table. They're thankful for just a little bit of rice that they can have.

We need to teach our children this. Otherwise I tell you the world's getting worse and worse and you'll lose your children. And don't wait till they've gone away from the Lord at the age of 18 and then say oh God please bring them back.

You've got to start when they're one. One year old. So the foundation is God's perfect love as a father and on that foundation we build the first story or the first floor as you call it here which is our personal walk with God with a clear conscience.

As soon as we slip up we ask God to forgive us. If we've hurt somebody we ask immediate forgiveness. We have to build that first floor the first story strong.

The way to build it is by keeping our conscience clear. When Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God he said it at a time when there were no Bibles around. I've said this before for 1400 years after Christ nobody had a printed Bible.

Printing was not discovered. So what it did mean man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God Jesus wasn't referring to a Bible there. Nobody had a Bible.

Very few people had access to these scrolls of parchment which were only available in the synagogues of what was written in the Old Testament. Nobody could afford to buy one. Far too expensive.

Then what did that mean? I meditated on that for a long time and I discovered how does God speak to every man through his conscience? Primarily when it says man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God not that proceeded 2000 years ago proceeds, present tense present continuous that proceeding continuously from God where is that? It's in your conscience. Every man, you don't need a Bible you can be illiterate the conscience tells you it's the voice of God man shall not live by food alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth in your conscience telling you that was wrong what you signed there in your office was a lie. Take it back.

Cancel that document. You get a little more money but you ruin your soul and bring up your children in fear of God. Punish that child for what it did wrong.

Don't let him speak rudely to his mother. Little, little things. God speaks to you.

What do you do about it? Listen to his voice. God speaks to you and says that was a dirty thought. It's a wrong attitude you have towards that person.

That person did wrong to you but you have to forgive him. Like I forgave you. The Lord says you've done a lot of wrong to me haven't you? And I forgive all of that.

Well if people do wrong to you, forgive them. That's the voice of God. You will not live by your breakfast alone but by the voice of God in your conscience.

That is the first floor of the church. And if you don't build that you can never build the church. I'll tell you that.

I want to tell you in Jesus name that every single person sitting here, God wants to use you to build the church somewhere. You don't have to be very gifted but start here. Otherwise you can't build it.

The church is the third floor. The third story. You can't build that before you build the first one.

So everyone who's eager to build the church listen to this. Start with listening to the voice of conscience. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God and God is speaking all the time to everybody.

The slightest deviation from the straight and narrow path God will speak to you. But there's another thing I want to warn you if you don't listen I say forget it. That's not serious.

You keep saying when God says something it's wrong you say no that's not serious. You're arguing with God it's not serious? Okay. What'll happen? I'll tell you what'll happen.

Little by little you'll become deaf to the voice of God. Maybe God wanted to use you as a prophet but he won't use you. Prophets have to hear God's voice.

And he'll test you whether you listen to his voice. And if you keep listening to his voice he can make you his mouthpiece that you speak for him to many people. God can do amazing things but it always starts with listening to conscience.

And then the second floor after that is still not the church. We've got to wait for that. The second floor is our family life.

How you live with your wife. How you live with your husband. How you bring up your children.

That is the second floor once you've established the first floor. We don't forget about the first floor. That continues to remain.

We don't demolish the first floor when we go on to the family. No, it remains forever. Always listening to the voice of our conscience.

Then we go to the second floor which is our family life where we work with the help of the Holy Spirit to bring up our family in the way God has intended. You know, in the Old Testament there was no emphasis on the family. There's no verses in the Old Testament that are telling us how to behave with your wife or how the wife should behave to her husband.

There are a few odd verses in the Book of Proverbs other than that there's nothing. In God's law given to Moses there was nothing about family life. There was no, you know, today we have to show our family life to people if we are to build a church.

You know, in the Old Testament the prophets used to say come and hear what the Lord has said. Moses has come down from the mountain. Don't look at Moses' family life please.

He was fighting with his wife. We read about that in Exodus 4. His children were not circumcised. They were all disobedient.

But please don't look at my family life. I'll tell you, thus said the Lord. Samuel, he had two children who grew up to take bribes and they were the judges in Israel.

Samuel said, please don't look at my children. No, no, no. But I'm giving you the word of the Lord.

The word of the Lord came through prophets whose children were wayward. David, the man after God's own heart. His children were thoroughly wayward.

One killed another. So if Moses and Samuel and David were living today, I would not appoint them as elders in a CFC church. I'd say, Brother Moses, you're not fit to be an elder in a CFC church.

You can go and be a leader of Israel in the Old Covenant. Samuel, you can prophesy to Israelites in the Old Covenant but you cannot be an elder in a CFC church. I will not appoint you.

Great prophet Samuel. I would say that to David, the man after God's own heart. Yeah, you can go and be a king in Israel but you can't be an elder in a CFC church because an elder in a CFC church must have his family right.

Because it says in 1 Timothy 3 if he doesn't know how to bring up 3-4 children at home, how is he going to look after 30-40 people in a church? He's unfit. That's the trouble today that a lot of people are pastors and leaders whose children are wayward. They have two children and they're both wayward.

And they try to bring up what they call a mega church. What's the use? It's a deception. The Bible says such people are totally unfit to lead any church.

And we've been very strict on that in all of our CFC churches in the last half a century. CFC has been going for almost half a century. And I myself having responsibility have removed some elders from their position because their children were wayward.

They were elders and then their children became wayward. I said, Brother, please step down. And they had to step down.

So, we've tried to keep the standards of God in every area in the church. It's not easy. You'll become unpopular.

And I'm sure I'm certainly unpopular with many people. That's fine. I'm not looking for popularity.

I have one goal in life that one day Jesus will say to me Well done, good and faithful servant. The final day. When he examines every detail of my work and to see that I never sought to please any human being and I couldn't care less for anything that I never went around looking for gifts or offerings from anybody in the world.

I want him to say, Lord, I want to live I try to live like you. And I spoke the truth. And if a person like Peter closest co-worker went astray, Jesus said, Get behind me, Satan.

Rebuked him straight. He wasn't bothered whether Peter would get offended and leave him. If you get offended with correction, brother, you're not fit to be in the church.

Go out in the world and join some other group. In the church elders are like spiritual fathers. And a father who does not discipline his children is a good-for-nothing, useless father who's bringing up his children for the devil.

What would you think of a father who's raising his child, Oh, I want to raise you up to be a child of the devil and live for the devil all your days. You don't say it like that. But when you don't discipline your children, when you don't correct them, when they speak rudely, when they misbehave or when they steal something from somebody else or they go fighting with somebody else and you don't discipline them, you are saying, maybe silently, Oh, Satan, I want to bring up this child for you.

I hope he'll grow up and live for you, Satan. That's exactly what you're doing. Don't do it.

If you've done it in the past and your children have become wayward, repent now. You and your wife get down before God on your knees. I've told this to older people whose children are wayward.

I say, listen, I can give you a little prescription. Even if your children have gone astray, will you and your wife promise to settle all matters between both of you and ask forgiveness from each other for every wretched thing you said and did to each other and forgive one another freely and say that I will not hold that against you. I'm not going to bring it up, ever, whatever you did in the past.

Start like that and then spend five minutes. Is that too much? Five minutes a day, kneeling down before God with your conscience clear and pray for your children. And I'll tell you God will do a miracle for your children even if they are wayward now.

But the best thing is to start when they are one year old. When they are one year old, all of you who got little babies, those sweet little babies, start disciplining them from age one. Teach them to listen to you.

I had sometimes to sit with a two or three year old child and say, you are not going to tell me a lie. Tell me what did you do this? Or I don't remember exactly the circumstance, but I felt he was telling me a lie. All children tell lies.

The Bible says that. It says in Psalm 58 that children tell lies from the day they are born. So I asked him, are you telling me a lie? And he would go round and round and round and I think I spent a long time with him and finally he said, yes dad, I'm sorry.

He didn't tell me immediately. My children are not better or worse than anybody else. They are children of Adam.

They needed to be born again. I remember some, you know, we were preaching victory in the church and one of the brothers came to me and said, do your children fight at home? I said, sure. They are children of Adam.

They are not born again yet. Things will change when they are born again. Otherwise they behave exactly like the children of Adam and I have to discipline them.

And I'll keep disciplining them until they are converted. And even after they are converted, if they go slightly astray, I'll rebuke them and correct them. I'll never give up my responsibility as a father even when I am 83 because I am answerable to God for my children.

Take that seriously, dear brothers and sisters. Many of you have done well in your profession. You go to an office and you are very faithful to do your work.

It's a shame if you are not more faithful than that to bring up your children for God. You earned your money. You know that if you are unfaithful in office, you lose your job or you won't get your salary.

Some cut will happen and your boss will rebuke you. Are you more worried about that than God rebuking you for the way you brought up your children? I love you, my brothers. I am not rebuking you because I hate you.

If I hated you, I'd say, oh, live as you like. Let your children go to the devil. No, I love you and I want your children to live for God.

That's why I am saying this so clearly and straight because we are living in a world where people are not taking the discipline of their children seriously. If you have a newborn baby, you are lucky that you are hearing these truths right now so that you can bring up your children right from day one. In the Old Testament, you will never find a passage of scripture anywhere in the Old Testament teaching us how wives and husbands should behave.

Few instructions on fathers and children in the Book of Proverbs. Otherwise, there is no instruction on family life in the Old Testament because it didn't matter how your family was so long as you were before God like the great prophets. But in the New Testament, there is so much teaching.

What's written in Ephesians 5 is repeated in Colossians 3. Now, why is something repeated in Colossians 3 which is written almost word for word from Ephesians 5? Please turn to Ephesians 5. There it is written. Why does God repeat something in the Bible? Ephesians 5 it says about wives, husbands, fathers, children from Ephesians 5, 22 onwards all the way to chapter 6, verse 4. How husbands and wives must behave, how children and parents must be. And you don't find a section like that in the Old Testament.

And the same Apostle Paul writes to the Colossians and does the same thing in Colossians 3, 18 onwards up to 21. It's a little briefer but it's the same thing. Wives, husbands, children, fathers.

And well, of course, he was writing to a different church so I can understand. But I say, Lord, why have you included that repetition in the Bible? It's already written very clearly in Ephesians 5 because people tend to ignore it. God gives grace to the humble.

That's written in James chapter 4. But you turn the page, you go to 1 Peter 5, it's repeated again. And I say, Lord, why do you have to repeat it? He says, people ignore some of these things. They miss it the first time, I want to catch it the second time.

Rejoice in the Lord always, Philippians chapter 4 and it says here verse 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. And he says, again, I say to you, rejoice. Do you have to repeat it? Yes, because they don't take it seriously that I must rejoice in the Lord at all times.

So what I want you to notice here is where you see Ephesians especially is very systematically written. The first three chapters, there are no exhortations. Ephesians is divided very neatly.

First three chapters, all that God has done for you. The next three chapters, what you must do for God. Very neat division.

I don't think there's any book in the New Testament that's divided so neatly. Yeah, you look at Ephesians 1-3, get established in that. This is what God has done for me and what God wants to continually do for me to strengthen me with the Holy Spirit and give me revelation and so many wonderful things.

He's chosen me before the foundation of the world. He wants to give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation. When I was dead in sin, he lifted me up and placed me with Christ in the heavenly places.

All these wonderful things. And then he says, now with all these things that God has done, chapter 4, therefore therefore, chapter 4 verse 1, because of all that God has done, chapters 1-3. Take some time to study Ephesians like that.

Chapters 1-3, because of all that God has done for me, therefore this is the way I must live now. And one of those things is family life. I want you to see where this family life section has come.

There's a lot of talk today about being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. I'm not against it. I experienced it.

My wife and I have experienced it. We teach it in our church. Many in our church have experienced it.

But that's not the main thing of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Here it says Ephesians 5 verse 18 Be filled with the Spirit speaking in Psalms and in spiritual songs in the spirit of thankfulness, always giving thanks unto the Lord. That's what we do on Sunday morning when we come together.

That's what these children did. And when we are filled with the Spirit, we'll be filled with the spirit of thankfulness. That's number one.

And the second thing that happens when we are filled with the Spirit is, verse 21 We'll be subject to one another. We will not boss over other people and try to tell them you've got to do this or you've got to do that, even if you're an elder. Even if you're an apostle.

You will not boss over people. You'll be subject to one another. I'll give you a very up-to-date example.

Just two or three days ago I had to write to some of the elders in one of our churches in India. I'm in touch with them constantly. I thank God that I have provision today that Paul never had.

WhatsApp, email, and all types of facilities to contact them, speak to them even with Zoom and video on the phones, etc. So, I don't have any excuse today like Paul had. Things went wrong in Corinth and he'd write a letter it'd take three months to reach there, get three months of reply to come.

That's why so many things went wrong. But today, no, it takes less than a minute to contact somebody when something goes wrong and we can fix it because I can tell somebody else to go there and fix it immediately. So, it's wonderful the provision we have today to be able to build a church.

And here we read when they were I made a suggestion to them, to these elders. I said, I think you should do this. And these are folks who are 20, 30, 40 years younger than me.

And they got together and prayed and talked about it and they said, Brother Zak, we don't think we should do that. I think we should do it like this. I replied within two minutes to that WhatsApp message.

I said, brothers, do it like you said it. I agree with you 100%. And I said, this is the wonderful thing of being in a part of an eldership.

That we talk about things together and where the majority feel this way and if it doesn't matter if I'm in the minority, do it that way. That's how we build unity in the church. Nobody is a boss.

Nobody is a king. Only Jesus is Lord. I praise God that we've built CFC churches around the world like this in so many countries in the last 50 years.

We serve one another. In my younger days, I got on my knees and scrubbed the floors of four widows' houses. I lifted the furniture of people when they were shifting house.

Well, we're just brothers to help one another. There is no such thing as someone who is above the others in terms of position or hierarchy. No, we are brothers in Christ but God gives us different responsibilities.

It's like which part of the body is more important than the other. You see, when you listen to me speaking, you see the tongue is so important. But think of how does the tongue get the ability to speak? If it doesn't get food and strength, it won't be able to speak.

It'll be dumb. And to get food and ability, there's a whole process in getting the tongue to be strong. First of all, the stomach has to cry out and say, hey, I'm a bit hungry.

And then the mind has to think, where shall I go for food? And the eyes have to see the direction and the feet have to take me over there wherever the food is. And then my hand has to go in and take the food. I'm talking about how the tongue gets strength.

And then you have to put it in the mouth and the teeth have to cooperate in chewing it up. And the throat has to cooperate in swallowing it. And then it's got to go down into the stomach.

And I'm not a medical person, I don't know what all happens there. But a whole lot of acids and all are thrown into it. It breaks down and it slowly is converted into blood and flesh and bones and strength comes back to the tongue.

And the tongue can speak. And the tongue can't say, hey, I'm doing it all myself. I say, brother tongue, you didn't do anything yourself.

You did it with the help of numerous parts of the body. That is the body of Christ. And that's the type of body we want to build in every place.

That's what Jesus wants. This is not an Old Testament system where one prophet comes down to the mountain and speaks and everybody listens. That's not the church.

But unfortunately, a lot of churches today are like that. And in the midst of this, the Lord wants to build New Testament churches. Where we don't have any kings or any one pastor rule.

No such thing. The word pastor is a gift. Not an office.

There's a lot of difference between an office and a gift. A gift is what he gives to people. Teacher, apostle, prophet, pastor, shepherd.

But nobody goes around calling him shepherd so-and-so or teacher so-and-so. Why do they call themselves pastor so-and-so? Jesus said, you're all brothers. Don't take titles like rabbi.

He said to us never to take titles. Read that in Matthew 23. He said, you're all brothers.

We don't care for the teaching of Jesus. We think we know better than him. So coming back to this.

It says, I want you to notice that the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5.18. That's what I wanted to point out to you. Ephesians 5.18 is the one place, the only place for your information in all the episodes where there's a clear command be filled. In the original language it is the continuous tense.

Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the correct translation of that. Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit and then what will happen? I'll tell you.

First of all, you start to have a spirit of thankfulness all the time. You won't be complaining. Verse 20, you'll be always giving thanks.

If always 24 hours filled with thanksgiving, there's no place for complaining. That's the number one thing that happens when you're filled with the Spirit. And tongues is just one small aspect of it.

And then, not only that, verse 21, you'll be subject to one another. As I just said, to one another. To each, one to the other.

And then here comes the important thing. You'll have a wonderful family life. There'll be order in the family.

This is the result of being filled with the Spirit. It's not doing miracles and speaking in tongues. No.

You will give thanks in everything, verse 20. You'll be subject to one another, verse 21. And the Holy Spirit expands on that.

I'll tell you what I mean. Subject to one another is not primarily in the church. In the home.

Wives will be subject to their husbands. This is the result of being filled with the Spirit. It's following on from Ephesians 5, 18.

And husbands will deny themselves, verse 25, to love their wives. How did Christ love the church? You see, only the wife has got to be subject to the husband. Look what the husband has to do.

Which do you think is more difficult? Tell me. To be subject to the husband, as it says here in verse 20, wives think we have a tough job. We've got to just keep listening.

Hang on, hang on. Just listen. Wives be subject to your husbands.

Okay? You've got to do what your husband says. Great. He tells you to do this, I tell you to do that.

But what has the husband got to do? Not just love his wife, but love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Boy, isn't that some form of subjection? That you give yourself up completely, deny yourself and surrender all your, so many things in order to love your wife. It's mutual subjection.

That's why it begins with the first word about husband-wife relationship is not in verse 22, wives be subject. The first verse in verse 21, be subject to one another. Husbands and wives, be subject to one

another.

And then there are responsibilities God has given. Be subject to one another. Wives, be subject to your husbands as the church is to Christ.

Husbands, deny yourself like Christ denied himself and died on the cross as the divine husband. That's our example. And he washed the church with water, with his word, cleansed her.

This is an example for husbands. Husbands, how should you love your wife? Just like Jesus loved the church, gave himself up for her and cleansed the church with the washing of water. Jesus didn't just complain about the church.

You're like this, you're like this, you're like this, you're like this. No! He took water and cleansed the church. So a husband who just tells his wife, you're behaving like this, you're talking like this, he's not following Christ at all.

He's not denying himself. He's just asserting himself like some type of dictator. A lot of husbands are like that.

They haven't read these scriptures. They're not filled with the spirit. If you're a spirit-filled wife, you'll be like this.

If you're a spirit-filled husband, you'll be like this. But I tell you, I've seen a lot of so-called spirit-filled husbands and wives who speak in tongues and they behave like the devil in their homes. Their tongues is fake.

In fact, 98% of the tongues I've heard in my life are fake. I'm not fooled by it. I can make out where something is genuine.

I'd like to see a husband and wife who never speak in tongues but who behave like Jesus Christ towards each other. That is a spirit-filled life. Any day.

Don't seek for tongues. If God wants to give it to you, He'll give it to you. He gave it to me when I never sought it.

He gave it to my wife when she never sought it. We sought to live as a good husband and wife according to God's pattern. We believe that being filled with the spirit leads to family life.

How I behave as a husband, how she behaves as a wife and not only that, further down, filled with the spirit, a father must bring up his children in the instruction and discipline. Teach them God's Word. Don't leave it to your wife's brothers to teach the children God's Word.

It doesn't say mothers teach your children God's Word. No! In fact, there's not a single word here for mothers, by the way. It's fathers.

If you as a father are not taking the responsibility to teach your children the Word of God, I want to say you're a total failure as a father. You leave it all. Mommy will do that.

Go ask mommy. Fathers, if you're spirit-filled, first of all, learn to control your anger with your children before you teach them. I'm following Scripture.

Let me read it together. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. And fathers, don't provoke your children to anger.

That's the very first commandment in chapter 6 verse 4. How shall we bring up a godly family? I'm talking about the second floor. We want to build a church. Many of you have come here to learn how to build a church in your hometown.

Well, here it is. Don't try to build a third floor before you build the second one. Don't provoke your children to anger.

Don't get angry with them. Don't get upset with them. Correct them.

And if you get angry with them, apologize. There's no shame in a father apologizing to his child. Not at all.

That child will remember it all his life. Imagine, my daddy came and said sorry to me. That'll teach him when he grows up to say sorry to his wife, to say sorry to his children.

You'd have brought up your children well. Are you doing it, fathers? I use strong words because I'm so, so disappointed. And if I'm grieved, I'm sure Jesus in heaven is so much more grieved at the way his name is being dishonored by people who claim to be Christians.

The way they live at home as husband and wife. So different. As I said in the Old Testament, it was always, come in here.

Moses has come down from the mountain. The prophet has come from the mountain. He's heard God.

He's going to tell you, thus said the Lord. That's Old Testament. In the New Testament, let me show you a verse in John's Gospel.

The Old Testament was, come in here, come in here, come in here, what the Lord has said. In John's Gospel, we read that John chapter 1, John's Gospel chapter 1, we read that the disciples of John the Baptist were once standing and talking to him. And while they were talking to him, John chapter 1 verse 29.

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming. Here John is standing and talking to two disciples. And he saw Jesus coming down the road.

And he said to these folks, Hey, that's the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Follow him. And it says here, lovely words.

John chapter, this is the man about whom I spoke. And again, the next day, verse 35, John was standing with two of his disciples. And again he repeated it in verse 36.

There! I told you yesterday, that's the Lamb of God. And this time, listen to this, verse 37, the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. You know, that word has struck me for many years.

John 1, 37. Lord, at the end of my life, if those words can be written about me, they heard Zach speak and they followed Jesus. They didn't follow Zach, no.

They heard Zach speak and they followed Jesus. Look at that verse. John 1, 37.

If that can be said about you fathers and mothers, your children heard you speak and they followed Jesus. Your children heard the way you fathers and mothers speak to each other. They heard how daddy speaks to mommy.

They heard how mommy speaks to daddy. And they decided we want to follow this Jesus whom our dad and mom are following. Make that your ambition.

And then it says, they came to Jesus and Jesus turned around. John 1, 38. What are you seeking? Rabbi, where are you staying? And listen to this expression.

Very different from the Old Covenant. Not come and hear, but come and see. The Old Testament was come and hear what the prophet has come down to speak.

Don't look at the prophet's life or family life or the way he's brought up his children. It's all wayward. Forget it.

But come and hear the word of the Lord. In the New Testament, it's not that. Come and see.

Where? Come to my home. And it says here, where are you staying? He's talking about their home life. Jesus said, come in.

And they came and saw in his home where he was staying. They stayed with him one day. So this is what the New Testament prophet says.

Come and see. Come in my home. See how I live.

You want to check my account books? See if I've cheated anybody. See if I've borrowed money that I've not returned. Come and see any area of my life.

I'm not ashamed of anything. I'm ashamed of a lot of things I did in the past. I'm converted days.

My back's lit in days, but those days are gone. Be filled with the Spirit so that you can say, come and see. Many preachers today are like Old Testament people.

They get up in the pulpit and say, hear what the word of the Lord is. They say, brother, can I come to your house and see how you speak to your wife, how you live with your wife, whether you're faithful to your wife. Can I come and see how you deal with your secretary, whether you're fooling around with her.

And can I come and see how you behave at other times and how your children are growing up. I'd like to see all your children, how they are. And your grown up children, the ones who have left home, where are they today? Are they in the same church you are preaching in? Brother, don't look at all that.

Hear the word of the Lord. Brother, you're living in the Old Covenant. You're living in D.C. Not A.D. You're living in D.C. You're living as if Jesus has never come to earth.

That's the tragedy of Christendom today. Because they've ignored this second floor. And that's what we've concentrated from the beginning in all CFC churches.

We have had conferences in Bangalore almost from the very first year we started. Where we invited people from different places. We provide them free accommodation, free food with the limited resources we had.

It was very simple food. Just a little bit of rice and some curry. That was it.

Same menu for lunch and same menu for dinner. Whatever's left over in lunch we have for dinner. That's it.

We don't waste anything. There was not anything special. We couldn't afford it.

But we could preach the word of God. And we could say, come and see. Come and see how we are bringing up our children.

Come and see how we are living at home with our wives. Some of them would come and live in our homes and see. We praise the Lord.

And it says here in Ephesians 5 further, the next thing I want to say is I told you that be filled with spirit. Follows on into wives, husbands, fathers, children. Okay.

Now let us see what follows after this section on the home. What comes after section on the home? I told you this is the only place in the entire New Testament where there is a command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5.18 and immediately after that I am repeating this again and again because I need to emphasize.

Be filled with the spirit leads on to how you live in your home. Not how you preach in the pulpit. But how you live in your home.

Then, now we go to what happens after this home section. What is the Holy Spirit saying? Okay. Fathers, children in those days they had servants and masters at home also.

In many homes in India we have servants. And so those passages are very relevant for people in India. How do you treat a servant? You know, we say, is it right to employ a servant? Well, I'll tell you in India if you don't employ those poor maidservants, they'll starve.

We don't want them to starve. There's so much of poverty in India that you're actually doing a person a favor when you allow them to come and work in your home. Otherwise, they'll have to go and work in some other place where they won't be paid properly and people take advantage of them, exploit them, abuse them in so many ways, sexually exploit them, etc.

It'll be a mercy to them if they can come and work in your house in a Christian home. So, we do that. We had a young girl who helped us.

Her father brought her to our house and said, please look after her because she's sick. And he's a doctor. Can you take care of her? And, okay.

He said, we'll do that. And she served us for some years. Non-Christian, Hindu home.

While in our home, she accepted the Lord. Later on, took baptism. She married a brother in our church.

And, that brother is an elder in one CFC church. And his wife is the girl who worked as a maid in our home. We treated her like a daughter.

That's a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what we believe in. So, that section of Ephesians 6, it says about masters, remember that when you look at your servants, Ephesians 6, 9, your master is

their master.

There is no partiality with God. Pray it worse for those who have people working under them. Okay.

The section after that is about overcoming the devil. It's the only passage in the entire New Testament, which, I mean, there's a little bit in Colossians, but to put on the whole armor of God, the detailed armor is mentioned only here. Now, isn't that very interesting? You know, put on the armor of God, it says, with the loins girded with truth, verse 14, and the breastplate of righteousness, and the feet shod with the gospel of peace, verse 15, Ephesians 6, and the shield of faith, etc., the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and then resist the devil, and stand against him with all prayer, and having stand firm against the schemes of the devil, Ephesians 6, 11, and once you stood against him, and overcome him, verse 13, having resisted him, having done everything, this is the part I want you to see, Ephesians 6, 13, having done everything, resisting him with the full armor of God, stand.

Finally, you shouldn't be down on the floor, defeated by the devil. No! The devil's on the floor, defeated, and you're standing firm, just like David standing before Goliath, taking out his sword to chop off Goliath's head. Perfect picture of overcoming Satan.

With one stone, the power of God went in that. Having done everything, verse 13, to stand firm. And so this whole now, it's like a sandwich.

The center of the sandwich is family life. What is on one side? Be filled with the Spirit. What's on the other side? Stand against Satan.

Isn't that interesting? The whole teaching of the New Testament on family life is protected on one side by the fullness of the Spirit, and warning you on the other side, stand against the devil. Saying the devil is going to attack your home. That's why this section is put right between being filled with the Spirit and standing firm against the devil.

When you read the Bible slowly, you discover these things. And you say, hey, my biggest problem is my home is not from the internet or the video games my children are playing. Yeah, that's serious.

You've got to be very careful. But behind it all is the devil. Ephesians 6. And that's the one I've got to be careful about.

I've got to stand firm against his schemes. He's got a whole lot of schemes to grab my children, to come between me and my wife, to come between you and your husband. That's his aim.

But you must overcome. Where? In your home first. Don't think of casting out demons and all somewhere else.

That can wait. You start with your home. The demons that seek to invade your home, that seek to grab a hold of your children and ruin them.

Very, very, very important. Don't even think of building the church before you work on your home. And you look around at Christendom today and see all the great preachers and pastors and all that and look at the condition of many of their homes.

You don't know. I often wonder, why do most of these preachers always travel alone? Why don't their wives travel with them? Even after the children are grown up and left home, the man is still traveling alone.

My wife never traveled with me when we had children at home.

I traveled for 20 years alone. So many places in India because my wife was a faithful mother and wife sitting at home looking after the children, bringing them up. But when the last of our children left home for college, after that she started traveling with me ever since.

And you say, is that scriptural? Well, it says in 1 Corinthians 9 that the 1 Corinthians 9 5, Paul says, I don't have a wife, but I could have a wife if I want. And don't we have a right to take along with us when we travel? 1 Corinthians 9 5. Don't we have the right to take along with us a believing wife like all the apostles do? Like all the brothers of the Lord, and even Peter. Aha.

So, you see, these early apostles, they took their wives with them when they traveled. I try to follow every letter of Scripture. I don't believe there's a single word here which is uninspired.

I'll tell you honestly, I wonder why all so many preachers wander around without their wives. No wonder so many of them fall into sin. The devil is after Christian homes.

That's why that section on Satan is immediately after the Christian home. So, please remember this sandwich. On one side be filled with the Spirit, family life, and then the attacks of Satan.

And so you as a head of the home have to seek to live a spiritual life, lead your wife to a spiritual life, and lead your children slowly to a spiritual life by your example. And all the time stand against the schemes of the devil. And he's got various ways of coming in.

Let me show you something in Proverbs. What function does a woman have in the home? Let me show you a verse in Proverbs 14 and verse 1. Have you read this? It's pretty humbling for husbands. It's not the man who builds the home.

A wise woman builds her home. Proverbs 14 and verse 1. How's that? Isn't it the man who's supposed to build the home? Proverbs is one of the closest books to the New Testament in the Old Testament. Most of the Old Testament books are Old Testament.

But Proverbs has got so many, you know, like God gives His grace to the humble. It was originally in Proverbs. Okay.

The wise woman builds her house. I'll tell you why. The greatest thing that Jesus manifested on earth was total submission to the Father.

And we are taught to submit to Him like He submitted to the Father. And in a home, children growing up, where are they going to see that spirit of submission? In the wife. Submitting to her husband, she builds her home by that spirit.

And where a wife will not submit to her husband, she destroys her home. The wise woman builds her house. The foolish tears it down with her own hands, telling her husband, I've also got a right.

Don't just try to boss me. Who do you think you are? Aha. She's tearing down her own home.

With her hands. It's God who made man and woman. And He who has said, wife, submit to your husbands.

Turn back to Genesis in chapter 1. When God wanted to manifest His image in humanity, He could not do it with a man. When He said, let us make man in our image, Genesis 1. That was His thought. Let us, Genesis 1.20 says, make man in our image and let them have authority.

Isn't that bad English? Let us, that's okay, there's a trinity there, so us is okay. Three persons and God. Make man in our image and it should be, let him rule.

No, no, no. Let them rule. How's that? It's not bad English.

I'll tell you. Because when He thought of making man, He thought of making His help meet as well. It was one flesh with Him.

Woman. Be careful. Every word of Scripture is inspired.

Let us make man and let them. You say, Lord, who are the them? Yeah, I'll show you the other part of man. It's the woman.

Let them rule. And if you don't accept your wife as your partner, you're not going to be ruling. So when God made woman, He said, this is what He said in Genesis 2 verse 18.

It is not good for man to be alone. I want to say to all husbands, it's not good for you. You can say you're married, but if you don't have fellowship with your wife at home, you're alone.

Do you have fellowship with your wife or do you just give orders in your house? Do you have fellowship? Two fellows in one ship working together. That's true Christianity. Let us make man and let them rule.

Let them rule over the devil in their home. Let them guide their children. I will make him a helper suitable for him.

Suitable for him. And that means that Adam needed a helper. This great mighty man of God who could give names to all the animals.

Have you tried giving, I mean, to try and remember the names of 30 animals itself is tough. But imagine giving names. It says he named all the animals in verse 20, all the cattle and the birds and by the time he came to the thousandth one, he still had to remember what was all the names I've given.

I can't repeat it again. He had a fantastic mind to remember all that, but it all went away when he sinned. And this is the man who could give names to all the animals.

Such a brilliant man. God says he needs a helper. None of us are so brilliant to name all the animals.

By the time we come to number 30, we'll forget. One of the first 30. You need a helper.

Your wife is supposed to be your helper. It's almost as though God was saying Adam will never make it unless he gets a wife. He needs a helper.

He needs a support. I want to tell you husbands, you won't make it if you don't have your wife. If God's called you to married life, you won't make it.

A major part of what I am in my ministry is because of Annie, my wife. God gave me a helper exactly suited for me. I don't doubt it, and 54 years of our happy married life has proved it.

That she's a helper suitable for me. I didn't rush into marriage. I didn't seek for money or anything.

For me, she was the most beautiful woman in the world when I saw her, and she still is. But it was not that. It was the spiritual beauty that directed me then and even now.

God wants, look at your wife as a helper. God's saying, you can't make it, my son, without her help. Do you husbands look at your wives like that? You hear God saying to you, you can't make it, my son.

You're very clever, very capable, very gifted, but you just can't make it without her. That's not to get the wives all puffed up and to go home and say, did you hear what Brother Zach said? You'll never be a helper if you go with that attitude. The greatest characteristic of Jesus Christ is humility.

And you'll never be a helper to your wife, to your husband, rather, if you don't have the humility of Christ who submitted to Joseph and Mary, imperfect earthly parents. The Father told him, submit. Is your husband imperfect, dear sister? Think of Jesus living 30 years in submission to an imperfect Joseph and Mary.

It says in Luke chapter 2, he submitted to them. It's an example for all wives who have imperfect husbands. And then, as long as they were together, the devil could not overcome them.

The devil knew that. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve didn't. Eve didn't.

And so the devil waited for a time when he could talk to Eve alone. They were walking happily together and they came. The tree of life is here.

The tree of knowledge is good and evil is on the other side. They knew God had said, don't go there. And I have a feeling, as Eve said, let's have a look.

We're not going to eat it or anything. Let's just have a look. It looks pretty very nice and all that.

You know, if that tree of knowledge had been covered with thorns and brambles and smelly and ugly, and then God said, don't go near there, they said, oh, we don't want to go there in any case. It's all smelly and ugly. But you know the tree of knowledge of good and evil is beautiful.

Do you know that temptation is beautiful? All men know sexual temptation is very attractive. The tree of knowledge of good and evil, the forbidden tree, was attractive. Money, gold is attractive.

You say, why has God made temptation so attractive? So that God can prove to the devil, I have people on earth who love me more than the most attractive things in the world. Can God say that to the devil about you? Sexual temptation is so attractive, Satan, I know that. God says, but look at that look at that son of mine.

Surrounded with sexual temptation, he says no to all of it. He looks at me, I'm more attractive than all of that. Can God say that about you men? I wish he could.

It's not a question of how well you sing on Sunday morning. It's not a question of how well you can preach. Can the devil point to you? There's a man who's faithful to his wife.

There's a man who battled temptation as a young man. Who proved to the devil God is more attractive than sex. Those are the type of young men God wants.

Those are the type of young men who have wonderful marriages. And if you have messed up your life, go and weep before God in repentance. Don't just take it lightly.

Oh Lord, I'm sorry I forgave my sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses me of sin. Praise God.

You'll fall again and again. I tell you, even after you get married, you'll fall. Because you've taken that sexual temptation so lightly which you fell into.

Temptation is very, very attractive. And God's made it like that so that he can prove to the devil he's got a people on earth who will still love him and reject attractive temptation. Money, sex, whatever it is.

Be a man like that. Be a woman like that. But the devil managed to get Eve alone.

Not alone. Her husband was right with her. When I first read that years ago, I thought Adam was wandering around somewhere, other part of the garden, and Eve sort of wandered.

No! I read one word. It says here and when the woman, Genesis 3.6, here it is. Amazing how I missed it for so many years till one day I saw it.

Genesis 3.6. You probably missed it too. The woman saw the tree was good for food and the delight to the eyes and took and ate it and immediately gave it to her husband who was where? Right there beside her. That's what it says.

I said, well, how did I miss that? He wasn't wandering anywhere else. They were holding hands and walking as a very happy, loving husband and wife, standing next to the tree holding hands. And the devil is keeping on this conversation with Eve and there's where Adam bungled up first.

He should have said, darling, let's get away from here. This is dangerous. He didn't say anything.

Like many dumb husbands today, they sat and watched till the devil fools his wife completely. Don't be like that. Husbands, don't be like that.

When you see your wife talking to the devil or going towards something forbidden that God has forbidden. Never mind what the world says. The world says it's okay, it's not serious.

God has forbidden it. And you see your wife going attracted towards it, don't keep your mouth shut like Adam. Open your mouth even if she gets offended.

Save her from the devil. It's better she gets offended than she gets deceived by Satan. I don't know in what way that applies to you.

And you folks are going to get married, you young men. Remember that when you get married. You are called to be the head of your wife to protect her from the devil.

And he didn't do that. He failed completely. Even though God made him the head and gave woman as a helper.

So that's where they failed and the devil came right in and messed up and when he gave it, when she gave it to him, why did he take it? And then later on, once you slip up, you keep on slipping. My thing is like that. Once you get on to this thing of temptation and yield to it, it's like these slippery slides you have in children's parks.

Once you're on it, it's very difficult to control yourself. You just go way down to the bottom. And that's what happened here.

When the Lord God came seeking, it's a great testimony to the love of God. Adam sinned. He should have been running after to say, Oh God, come back to him.

But the Lord came down. Just a picture of Jesus coming down seeking man. The Lord God came into the garden, verse 8, and said, Where are you? This is a picture of Jesus coming to earth and saying, Where are you? I've come to save you.

And it says, Adam hid himself and said, I was afraid. Sin always brings fear, the wrong type of fear. Afraid to meet God.

And sin makes you hide yourself, verse 10. And then sin makes you blame others. Did you eat from the tree I commanded you? You know, sometimes we have these question papers, some examinations.

Yes or no. Very easy answers. Pick yes or no.

Yes or no. Did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat? Pick yes or no. He puts another note underneath.

It's not yes or no. My wife gave it to me. Accusation began there.

What do you mean your wife gave it to you? Did she grab your mouth and open it and shove the fruit into it? No. You opened your mouth and you enjoyed it. And now you blame your wife trying to get away, escape from the situation.

Typical of human beings. Immediately trying to find some fault. This is why I did it.

I fell into that sin, but it was because of this. Because of this. As long as you're there like that, my brother, sister, you're following Adam, you'll go to hell.

Look at Jesus taking the blame for the sins of others on the cross. The exact opposite of Adam. Whose sin was he taking on the cross? Did he shout out saying, Lord, remember father, this is not my sin.

He never said a word. He went to hell for three hours on the cross and it was as if my sin was his. He never made any excuse.

Follow Jesus. Take the blame. Don't blame others.

So, if you build that second... There are lots of other things I can talk on this. You build that second floor strong. Concentrate on that.

Bring up your children in the fear of God. Then God can use you to build the church. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, please help us to be gripped by the truths that were written so clearly in your word. Be filled with the Holy Spirit to build homes for your glory. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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