

Building Your Family

by Zac Poonen

Building our family and the church requires a deep understanding of God's love and a personal walk with Him, which is built on humility and a willingness to confess and ask for forgiveness for conscious sin.

Duration: 1:15:28

Scripture: John 17:23

Topics: "Family Values", "Angelic Protection"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in faith and family life. It highlights the need to instill faith in God, teach respectfulness, and protect children from negative influences. The sermon also stresses the role of angels in protecting and serving believers, encouraging parents to teach their children about the presence of angels in their lives.

Transcript

Jesus said, I will build my church, and you know the next words, the gates of hell or the powers of spiritual darkness will not be able to overcome it, will not prevail against it. So when if you think of the gates of hell or Hades like a fortress, very often we don't understand what exactly is meant there. What picture do you get here when it says the gates of hell, you must read the Bible slowly, will not prevail against the church, Matthew 16, 18.

Do you get a picture there of hell attacking the church or the church attacking hell? The gates of hell, it's a fortress, will not be able to stand against the church. Very often people have got the picture the other way around. The church is sort of in a fortress and there's a song we sing, which I never sing, hold the fort for I am coming, says Jesus.

We're sort of in a beleaguered fortress of the devil attacking us on all sides. It's not like that. It's the church, which is like a triumphant army that goes forth against the forces of darkness in this world.

We must never forget that, that we are on the victory side. The victory has already been won. So in building the church, building the church is like building a three story building.

And the most important part of every building is the foundation. And then the first story, which is our individual life, then the second story is our family life. And the third story is the church, the local church.

So if you want to build the church, you have to build your family first, because that's the second story, you got to build the second story before you build the third one. The foundation for this is the fact that God loves us as He loved Jesus. That, to me, is the most wonderful truth I have discovered in the Bible.

John 17, 23. If you don't know it, I never knew it for many, many years. I knew God loved me.

John 3, 16 was very well known. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish. But I never heard a message that told me the extent to which God loves me.

We sing songs as children sing, wide, wide as the ocean, high as the heaven above, deep as the deepest seas are my Savior's love. All that was right. But I couldn't get a picture wide, wide as the ocean.

What does that mean? High as the heavens above. But when I read John 17, 23, I got a clear outline of my heavenly Father's love. And the main message of the Bible is that God loves us.

You must never forget that. Everything else is based on that. If you move out of that foundation, you're on shaky ground.

So John 17, 23, God opened my eyes to that, I think about 15, 16 years after I was converted. I was converted when I was 19 and a half. And I had an experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit when I was about 23 or so.

But then, as I left my job, I didn't have a spiritual father to guide me. I didn't have a mentor. I went into a period of preaching, but backsliding.

I was a backslidden preacher. Inwardly, externally, my testimony was very good. But inwardly, my thoughts and my words and all were defeated.

Then God opened my eyes to this wonderful truth. He filled me with the Holy Spirit again. That was a turning point in my life in 1975.

And then God showed me this amazing truth in John 17, 23, that God loved me, the Father loved me as much as He loved Jesus. It's when I got a revelation on that, that I wrote that song, which we sang earlier, what He did for Jesus, He will do for you. And as He cared for Jesus, He will care for you.

And as Jesus walked in victory, we can also walk in victory. This amazing truth that Jesus became my elder brother. He's the firstborn among many brethren, Romans 8, 29.

And so whatever the Father did for the eldest son, Jesus, He would do for me because there's no partiality with God. These are amazing truths that changed my life completely. And I said, Father, you know, I learned more and more to call God Father after that, Daddy.

In private prayer, very often I call Him Daddy. And I imagine myself like a two-year-old sitting on my heavenly Father's lap. I can ask Him for anything.

You know how two-year-olds can ask for anything. That's the relationship we must all have with our heavenly Father. Intimate.

Some of us, some of two-year-olds can ask for stupid things. And I also ask for things which God may never give me. That's okay.

But I feel quite free to ask. My relationship with my heavenly Dad is so intimate. It must be like that for all of you.

That's our inheritance. Jesus has purchased for us. So that's the foundation.

If you don't get this, I emphasize this, because if you don't get the foundation right, you're going to have problems in your personal life, family life, building the church. You cannot. So if you don't have this right, this right, this foundation right, you cannot build your family properly.

I'll tell you that. That's why I always emphasize this. And ever since God opened my eyes to see this for the last 40 years, I've preached this everywhere I've gone.

I don't know whether it's preached by many others. God loves you as much as He loved Jesus. And what He did for Jesus, He'll do for you if you fulfill the same conditions.

The Bible says in Philippians 2 verse 8 and 9, Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death. Therefore, therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place, not because He was the Son of God, but because He fulfilled the condition of humbling Himself. And the law is God.

If you humble yourself, God will exalt you. The more you humble yourself, the more God will exalt you. Jesus humbled Himself the most.

So He's exalted the highest. So I know who's going to sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus. James and John wanted to sit there.

And Jesus said, it's not mine to give you. But I know who will sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus. It will be the ones who in their earthly life humbled themselves the most, closest to Jesus.

Nobody can reach His level of humility. But the ones who managed to go down the most in their life, it may not be an apostle. It may be some poor widow somewhere.

But whoever it was who humbled themselves the most, God will exalt them. And they will sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus. So we all have equal opportunity.

Remember, no preacher or apostle or anyone has got an advantage over you in this matter. So once we are established on this, the next thing we need to do is to build our personal walk with God. If we walk in the light, 1 John 1 7, we have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

We must live in a continuous experience of cleansing. I'll tell you why. Because there is not a single day that we can live on earth without sinning.

Now that sounds a very strange statement from someone like me who is preaching victory over sin all the time. But when we speak about victory over sin, we are speaking about conscious sin. Victory over sin is like conquering the land of Canaan.

But I cannot kill the giants I do not see. Think of the land of Canaan as having 500 giants. I can't kill all of them together.

I kill them one by one, but I can only kill the ones I see. That is conscious sin. But just because I killed a few giants I've seen does not mean I imagine that all the giants are finished.

No, there are a whole lot of them I haven't seen yet, whose territory I should conquer. There are areas in my life that I need to conquer and bring back to God. So conscious sin.

Every day, we sin unconsciously. That's what I mean. We don't have to sin consciously.

We can overcome that. But we will, in the time when we have overcome all conscious sin, there will still be unconscious sin, which means areas of our life where we don't have light, where we are not behaving like Jesus. We're not talking like Him.

We're not behaving like Him. Not areas where we have light. If we have light that is conscious sin, we need to confess it, forsake it.

So we don't have to worry about the unconscious area. The blood of Jesus takes care of that. But the conscious area, we have to confess and ask for forgiveness.

I'll just show you that because it's very important for our family life. Turn with me to 1 John chapter 1. In 1 John chapter 1 and verse 9, he speaks of conscious sin. If we confess our sins, you can only confess what you know you have done.

Supposing you did something wrong. You hurt somebody, but you don't even know it. But you're not aware that something you do is sinful, dishonoring to the Lord.

You're not guilty. I went to a state in India once, where there were some fine believers, but they all used to smoke cigarettes. All of them.

Because the preachers who went there never told them that this is not a good testimony for a Christian to be smoking cigarettes because it destroys the lungs, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. So I wanted to tell them that, but I didn't want to offend them by calling them all sinners. So I said, see, I hear that a number of you smoke cigarettes.

I want to tell you the way a Christian should smoke cigarettes. So I said, see, I've seen many people sometimes when they're smoking cigarettes, they'll always offer me one. It's a habit of most smokers.

So I said, if you want Jesus with you all the time, offer him a cigarette when you're smoking one. And if he says thank you and takes it, go ahead and smoke. In other words, you must never do anything without Jesus.

If you're sitting watching a TV program, and if the Lord is sitting there, Lord, we want to watch this program. And he says, No, I don't want to watch it anymore. He gets up and walks away.

You should get up and walk away or change the channel. You must not do anything that you cannot do in fellowship with Jesus. The next day at the meeting, my translator came to me and said, Brother Zach, I've given up smoking.

I said, Why? I never told you to give it up. He said, No, I found I couldn't offer Jesus a cigarette. So that is a very, I felt the Lord gave me wisdom how to convey that message to them.

And I hope others were blessed by that too. I don't believe they were consciously sinning all that time. They were unconscious that this is a habit which is dishonoring to the Lord.

So like that in our life, there could be things which we are ignorant of, but which is dishonoring to the Lord. And as we discover them, we confess them and cleanse them. So 1 John 1.9 speaks about conscious sin.

1 John 1.8 speaks about unconscious sin. Now when John says we, he includes himself and he's 95 years old, having walked with God for 65 years, spiritual man. If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves.

The only person who can say I have no sin is the one who can say I become like Jesus 100%. Nobody can say that. Not even John at the age of 95.

So if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves. That's what I mean by saying till the end of our life, there will be some sin in us, but we should be discovering it more and more and more like conquering the land of Canaan more and more and more. Now this is different from committing sin, which is mentioned in verse 10.

If anybody says I've never sinned, that is conscious sin. He's just deceiving himself. But if we say we have no sin, he's a liar rather.

But if you say we have no sin, we're just fooling ourselves. But then it says here, this unconscious sin is taken care of in verse 7. If we walk in the light, have you read verse 7 properly? Let me explain it to you slowly. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with God.

Now how can you have fellowship with God if there's sin in your life? But the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Which sin? Not the sin you're consciously committing. If you're consciously committing sin, you don't have fellowship with God.

You're not walking in the light. You're walking in darkness. 1 John 1.7 is referring to unconscious sin that is cleansed by the blood of Jesus so that you can fellowship with God.

So if we walk in the light as God is in the light, it means Lord, I'm not aware of any sin in my life and I have wonderful fellowship with God. We can live like that every day. But I acknowledge there is still sin in me.

1 John 1.8, unconscious. The blood of Jesus takes care of that so that it doesn't hinder my fellowship with God. That's how we must live.

The first story is that always living with a clear conscience. Husband and wife. Always live with a clear conscience before God because that is the way to a happy married life.

You build your second story on the first story. So don't just attend marriage seminars where they tell you how to relate to each other. Start with God.

In the beginning, for example, why did God not make Adam and Eve together? He could have made two lumps of clay, breathed on them, say, here you are, husband and wife. Do you know why? When God made Adam all alone and he opened his eyes, the first person he saw was God, not Eve. There was no Eve.

And it was a message to Adam. Remember Adam, every day of your life, you must see me first. And you must see me always first in your life.

And then he puts Adam to sleep. Takes a rib out and makes Eve. And Adam is fast asleep.

And when Eve is created and she opens her eyes, who does she see first? Not Adam. She doesn't even know the existence of Adam. God.

And God is telling Eve, all your life, if you want a happy married life, see me first. I must be first in your life. Each of you, husband and wife, must be able to say to me, Whom am I in heaven but Thee, Lord? And there is nothing and no one I desire on earth besides Thee.

That, by the way, is Psalm 73 verse 25. It's a verse that the Lord gave me as soon as I was converted. When I was 19 and a half, I got my first Bible and I wrote in there.

This word the Lord spoke to me in Psalm 73 verse 25. Whom am I in heaven but Thee? There is no one on earth I desire besides Thee. And I've tried to keep that all through these years, 57 years now since I was born again.

That I desire no person and no thing, no earthly thing and no person besides the Lord. Everything else He gives me, wife, children, grandchildren, are a bonus or an extra. I don't have a claim on them.

I don't have a demand saying, I've got to have a wife, I've got to have a child, I've got to have children, I've got to have grandchildren. No. God, you are enough.

In addition, if you give me something more, I'm very thankful. If you have that type of attitude towards your marriage, it will make a world of difference in your relationship. God is all that you need.

Like someone said, when you have nothing left but God, you'll find that God is enough. It's true. When you have nothing left but God, you'll find that God is more than enough.

So when we get into that type of relationship, that's the first story. Then we can come to the second story of building a relationship. So ideally, if a husband and wife both have this attitude that I'm satisfied with the Lord, then they'll have a wonderful relationship with each other because in between them is God.

Between them is Jesus. That verse where two or three, forget the three now, where two are gathered together in my name, apply it to marriage. Matthew 18, 20.

There I am in the midst. Think of that verse as a marriage verse. Where two are gathered together, that means the Holy Spirit brought you together as husband and wife.

Jesus says, I am in your midst. Now imagine you and your wife or you and your husband and Jesus is in the midst. Imagine that physically.

If Jesus were physically there in your home, between you, how would you talk to each other? How would you talk to each other when you're upset? We are. Sometimes things happen that upset us. How would you talk if Jesus were right there? Or when you're irritated or something goes wrong.

Things will always go wrong in everybody's house. In this world, nothing is perfect. Things can go wrong in our work.

Things can go wrong at home. You can misunderstand each other as husband and wife. You can fail each other.

There is no perfect husband or wife on this earth. Your husband has got lots of giants not yet killed. Your wife has got a lot of giant, cannonite giants not yet killed.

She hasn't got light on it. Don't demand that she kill giants she has not yet seen. Even Almighty God doesn't demand that.

It's like a child in 10th grade. Think of it as a husband or wife. One is in the 10th grade and the other is in the 3rd grade, spiritually.

Think of a school where a child is in 10th grade and another one is in 3rd grade. Does the 10th grade student look at his younger brother in the 3rd grade and say, Oh, you stupid fellow, you don't know calculus and different things in science and physics and chemistry. If he talks like that to the 3rd grade, he's the fool.

Not the 3rd grade one. No 10th grade student looks down on a 3rd grade student. He says, once I was in 3rd grade myself.

I gradually grew up over 7 years to come to 10th grade. I didn't get there overnight. All of us are like that.

You don't despise someone who is less educated than you. I hope not. You don't despise someone whose education or extent of his study is much less than yours.

In the same way, spiritually, we have to always recognize that all of us are not got the same light on Christ likeness. Some people may think that certain types of what they call white lies are permissible. And they don't think there's anything wrong in that.

I wouldn't judge them. Maybe they're in the 1st grade. God's maybe given me light on that and I've gone on to 5th or 6th grade.

I know more, but I don't glory in that. Now if husband and wife can look at each other like that. Hey, not looking down on the other person, but maybe this is an area where he has not got light or she's not got light.

God has happened to give me light. But maybe there's another area where she's got more light than you. You know, like different subjects.

One may have more light on one and another have more light on the other. If we allow for that, it's much easier to be merciful. Very often, your lack of mercy towards one another is because we think, if I know that's wrong, she should know it's wrong too.

Not necessarily. If I know this is right, he should know it too. Not necessarily.

He may not know it. I mean, some of you may have studied one subject. Imagine if a husband has studied in one subject and a wife has studied in another subject in college or university.

They will each know something in their field of specialty, which the other will not know. What's wrong in that? You don't despise the other person because they don't know what you know. If only we'd recognize

that in marriage too, that it's like that.

There are areas, not academically, but spiritually. Here is an area where my wife or my husband doesn't have light. Instead of thinking, of course they must know it's wrong because I know it's wrong.

This can help you tremendously if you recognize this not as a technique, but as something which is absolutely true. Because the Bible speaks about walking in the light. And light is increasing.

Let me show you a verse in Proverbs 4. Proverbs 4, it says in verse 18, The path of the righteous, this is the path of anyone who is born again. The darkness passes away when we are born again. That's like the sun rising.

So the picture here is of a born again Christian is like sunrise. The darkness is over. And it says from that point onwards, our goal is when Christ comes again, we'll be like Him.

That's called the noonday position of the sun right over our heads. But from sunrise to that midday position, the sun is gradually climbing in the sky. And the light is getting brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter, till noonday position when we become like Jesus completely.

None of us have reached that noonday position. We should not remain at sunrise position. That means we shouldn't be today in the same spiritual level we were when we were born again.

It should become brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter. That means more and more like Jesus and more and more victory over conscious sin. But the sun may be at different positions in the life of a husband and wife.

So different degrees of light. That's why we need to bear with one another and forgive one another. It's not a very great thing that you're doing when you forgive your partner.

Because he or she may have to forgive you in areas where you don't have light. I remember when I was, the early days when we were building the church, building the church means not the physical building, building the body of Christ in fellowship with one another. I was disturbed very often with a brother who was always not punctual for meetings.

Whenever we arranged to meet somewhere, he'd always be late. And of course, it bothered me because I was 11 years in the military and you learn to be on time when you're in the military. And they teach you that pretty strongly.

And so because of that training in mind, it disturbed me whenever anyone was not punctual for a meeting or for a service. So this disturbed me. And then I said, okay, I'm a Christian, I have to bear with that.

And I thought I was very spiritual because I was bearing with this weak brother who had a weakness of not being punctual. But as I thought like that, the Lord said to me, you know, it's not likely that he has any light on the fact that not being punctual is not a good Christ-like habit. So if he doesn't have light, then he's just got to be merciful.

And the Lord said, do you know that there are areas in your life where you don't have light, where he has got to bear with you. That is quite a revelation to me. He's got to bear with me.

Oh, really? Well, then I'm not doing a great thing by bearing with him. It's mutual. So whenever you think, I mean, I share that with you married people.

Whenever you think, oh, I've got to bear with my wife. I'm a spiritual person. She's bearing with my wife.

Remember, she's bearing with you too. And she's probably not telling you that up. I mean, So if you recognize that, that we are here to build one another up in the church, that's one of the things the Lord taught us in those early days.

That we are all imperfect people. God is trying to put us together to bear with one another. In the process, we become more spiritual.

So walking in the light is, as the light increases, each of us has got different degrees of light. And you only got to walk in the light you have. You cannot walk in the light of somebody else.

You cannot walk in the light your husband has or your wife has. And you cannot demand that your partner should walk in the light you have. Even Almighty God doesn't do that.

Almighty God does not hold you responsible for unconscious sin. But this is the evil of our Adamic nature. That we hold our partner responsible for what is unconscious sin on that person's part.

And think of the years in which you have done that. Don't you think you should repent tremendously before God? Really, you need to have some weeping tonight on your pillow. For all the years in which you, you know, judged your partner for things which Almighty God did not judge your partner for.

Almighty God said, that's unconscious. The blood of Jesus just takes care of it. But you did not bear with your partner like Almighty God did.

You took a higher position. And that's what caused the problem. You always thought the problem was with your partner.

I hope you realize now it was with you. That would be a great day when you get that revelation. You know, like they sing in that spiritual, It's not my brother, it's not my sister, it's me Lord standing in the need of prayer.

It's me standing in the need of prayer. It's me who is the one who is in need here. So that relationship, the most wonderful thing you can, You know, the best thing that you can do for your children is to love your partner.

That's the greatest thing you can do for your children. To love your husband, to love your wife. Because that creates an atmosphere in a home where you bear with one another.

And both of you recognize you're not perfect. And you're guarded in your words. Because Jesus is there in the middle.

After sometime it will become your nature. In the beginning, we control our, you know, the words come up and we stop it. Before it comes out of our tongue.

Because Jesus is there. But you keep doing that. And I want to tell you the good news.

One day it will become your nature. You will not even think of speaking like that. You won't have to hold it back.

It won't even come up. Think of what a wonderful day that will be. When that which you had to restrain and restrain and restrain, those angry words.

That you had to keep a control of from coming out of your mouth. Now they don't even come up in your heart. Because you've been faithful before the Lord.

You've been merciful to others. You know the Bible says in James chapter 2. That God shows tremendous mercy to those who are merciful to others. I believe that's one of the most important things that husbands and wives need to recognize.

James chapter 2 verse 13. My dear brothers and sisters. If you have been merciless in the way you have judged your partner.

Or spoken to your partner. I want to tell you the bad news. Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy.

It's a scary verse. The scary verses are not all in the Old Testament by the way. There are scary verses in the New Testament too.

It says it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. You know where that is? Hebrews chapter 12. It's not in the Old Testament.

It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. And here's another one. Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy.

You know when we started building our first meeting hall in 1981 in Bangalore. We used to meet in my house for six years. And then we started meeting and we got a hall.

And we were thinking what is the verse that we should put behind the pulpit for everyone to read. We thought of one verse. There are many verses we could think of.

We put a number of ones later. But the first one we put off was we thought of, I thought of it and I said, What is the greatest danger that people pursuing holiness face? We were pursuing holiness for six years. We were talking about victory over sin, the new covenant, pursuing, pursuing holiness.

And I was thinking, I mean judging myself, I said, What is the greatest thing I found I had to battle in my life when pursuing holiness? It was an unmerciful attitude towards other people, towards other churches who didn't have the light we have, or other people who were not serious about victory over sin. An unmerciful attitude, just like the Pharisee and the publican, Lord, I thank you that I'm not like these other denominational churches that don't preach victory. I thank you that in our church we preach victory.

I thank you that I've got light and sin shall not have dominion over me, unlike all these other born-again Christians. I saw that attitude in my heart and I had to judge myself severely, and cleanse myself from that attitude in the early years. And I saw from my own life, an unmerciful attitude towards others is one of the biggest problems of churches and individuals preaching holiness.

Churches that are worldly have no problem being merciful to others because they do a whole lot of rotten things themselves. It doesn't matter if other people do rotten things as well. So we decided, we put this verse there, Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you.

And that's the verse we've had and we still have in our church. We made it out on a big plaque for everyone to see. Be merciful to others as God has been merciful to you.

And I wish I could have that verse in every home. Be merciful to each other as God has been merciful to you. Think of the areas of our life where we had no light.

And the stupid things we have done. And how God has been so immensely merciful to us. Remember that every time you think of being hard on your partner.

I'm not teaching psychology, I'm teaching scripture. Forgive one another as God has forgiven you. I remember a young couple whom I didn't even know, they just knew my name and knew me by having heard me or read my book or something.

Just got married and came to my house one day. I'd never met them before. They knocked at the door and said, Brother Zach, we just got married yesterday or something and we are rushing to catch a train.

So we don't have time to stop. But they were at the door, they didn't even come in. Can you give us a quick word of exhortation for a newly married couple? We've got only two minutes.

I said, OK. I said, sure, two minutes is more than enough. Listen carefully.

Be quick to ask forgiveness from each other and be quick to forgive. OK, go catch your train now. You'll be alright for the rest of your life, you'll be OK.

Be quick to ask forgiveness from each other. Don't think that's easy. It's not easy.

All of you know that. You look so holy here but you know how difficult it has been for you to go and ask forgiveness when you have spoken a wrong word or done something which you know was wrong. Particularly when you have hurt your partner with an angry word.

Sometimes unconsciously. You come back home from the pressure of work and your boss has been yelling at you the whole day and you're pretty exhausted and you come home and some small thing which wouldn't disturb you in normal circumstances and you erupt. OK, you didn't come home planning I'm going to get angry with my wife today when I get home.

No, no, no. It just happened. It was inadvertent as they say.

Not unconscious but inadvertent. You didn't really want to do it and you feel bad immediately because you're a believer. You feel bad immediately.

You know people have asked me what's the difference between a believer falling into sin and an unbeliever falling into sin. I say that depends what's your reaction after you fall into sin. Then I'll tell you whether you're a believer or unbeliever.

If you're a believer you'll feel bad. Now what should you be doing immediately? Ask forgiveness from God and from your wife. It's easy to ask forgiveness from God, right? But to ask your wife? No, strictly speaking

you should be more scared to go to a holy God than to an unholy wife to ask forgiveness.

I mean, humanly speaking that's more logical. But to go to God and ask forgiveness is so easy. And I wonder whether we are really sorry when we go to God and ask forgiveness.

The proof of it will be if you can go to your wife and say Darling, I'm sorry. I don't want to blame my boss for yelling at me on the pressure work. It's my rotten old flesh.

I didn't get grace at this moment from God. I want to humble myself. I want to tell you this.

Some of you who are struggling with anger please follow this prescription and tell me if you have not overcome it completely by next year's conference. Okay? The prescription is this. As soon as you are aware that you lost your temper with your wife or husband ask God for forgiveness immediately and go immediately and ask forgiveness from your partner.

I tell you your life will be completely different in your home in a few months. We are supposed to do that. Jesus said, if you hurt somebody there are many ways in which we can hurt people.

But the context in which Jesus said whenever you read scripture read it in its context. And I think this particularly refers to husband and wife. Matthew chapter 5. If you don't know the passage, please look at it.

Matthew chapter 5 verse 22 to 24 I say to you everyone who is angry with instead of brother say wife, husband. If you are angry with your wife you are angry with your husband you are guilty. Now remember, you haven't said a word yet.

Are angry, you are angry means it's only in your heart. Anger always comes out of the heart. It always starts in the heart.

If there is no anger in your heart no angry word can come out of your mouth. It's impossible. It's anger in the heart that produces angry words.

So if you are angry with your wife or husband you are already guilty. Even though you haven't said a word. How many of you believe that? That you are already guilty before the court.

You must read the scripture slowly. And then that anger boils up and bubbles over with the words. It says raka here.

You may be using different words to get angry with your wife or husband. Whatever it is. Put the words you use over there.

You say that. Then you are guilty before the supreme court because it has gone to stage 2. Where the words have come out of your mouth now. And then you know how anger takes place.

It starts in your heart and then you say something. And then you go away and you feel you haven't said enough and you come back and you say some more. That's what he is talking about stage 3 here.

You come back and say some more. Then you are guilty to go to hell. How many believe that? That anger is the first of 3 steps to hell? If you really believed it you would do everything to get out of it.

If your doctor told you with your cancer you are just 3 steps from the grave you need some radical chemotherapy then you can be healed but you got to start today. Treatment. Would you go? It's like somebody asked a doctor once.

Doctor have I got one foot in the grave? He said no you got both feet in the grave. You are going to go there pretty soon. Supposing a doctor told you that and says but you can be healed if you start treatment today.

Would you go for treatment? I am sure you would. How many of you would get cancer and the doctor promises you not only a cure but promises you to treat you freely. No expense.

Would you go? Of course we would. Who wants to live with cancer? Why do you hate cancer? More than you hate anger. When Jesus said anger can take you to hell cancer can never take you to hell.

I know people who got cancer the cancer took them to heaven. Because they were unconverted and they got cancer and they repented and they got saved. I know personally know people like that.

But anger can take you to hell and yet we fear cancer more than we fear anger. There is something seriously wrong with us. I mean an unbeliever saying that I fear cancer more than anger I can understand.

But a believer fearing cancer more than anger Take it seriously my brothers and sisters because what destroys many homes is anger. Since we have this internet ministry that reaches thousands of people every continent in the world we get lots of emails in our church office. They all come to me and I see them because in email you can be completely anonymous.

Nobody knows which country you are mailing from. Gmail.com could be from any part of the world. And because of that anonymity people are very honest.

And most of the emails I get are of people many on the verge of divorce many many married and unmarried men slaves to pornography and anger. Getting so bad where sometimes they hit one another on the verge of divorce. These are all believers.

It's believers who are watching my program not unbelievers. I'm just amazed at the state of affairs among born again Christians. I never knew it was so bad.

So many people who look so holy in the church. Some of them are preachers. They don't know whom to confess to.

Sometimes they write please don't tell anybody about this. Even though I don't even know who the person is. So you see they are ashamed of it.

They don't know how to get victory over it. But I'm amazed at the extent of this problem. We want to build churches where we, not that we are perfect but where we take sin seriously.

And it's very important in our homes. My dear brothers and sisters say Lord I'm going to battle anger like I battle cancer. I'm going to battle it with all my heart.

If cancer can be cured, haven't you heard of people who got healed from cancer? I have. Chemotherapy cured them completely. Why can't God heal us from anger? It's a very serious sin.

And I believe it's one of the things we have to be really careful about. The second sin that Jesus spoke which can lead people to hell in the Sermon on the Mount is sexual sin. There's a lot of sexual sin even in marriage.

I don't mean adultery or unfaithfulness physical unfaithfulness. I mean in the thought life. Jesus says here in the next thing Matthew 5, 27.

You shall not commit adultery but I say to you you look on a woman to lust. God has created women to be attractive and because of the sexual desire in man it's a temptation to look at a pretty woman and to lust even if you're married because the sex drive is still there. And that's why we have to be very very careful.

You see in all these cases Jesus is telling us to hit at the root. In the Old Testament it's only when the tree bore fruit and the adultery came out they were punished. But Jesus did not come with a pair of scissors to cut off the fruit.

No. He came with an axe like John the Baptist said the axe is laid to the root of the tree. So Jesus has come to lay the axe to the root of the tree.

To hit it right at the bottom. And it's right at the bottom it starts with the look and the thoughts. So if you don't control that you're going to be in serious problems.

You're going to have an impure thought life which is going to corrupt your relationship with God and also spoil your relationship with your wife even if she doesn't know what's going on in your mind. And he says this is so serious that if your right eye verse 29 causes you to stumble pull it tear it out throw it away because it's better for you to lose one of your body parts and go to heaven than to have your whole body thrown into hell. So here's the second thing that Jesus said can take people to hell.

Lustful patterns of thinking. First is anger. Second is lustful patterns of thinking.

And I just want to tell you something. In the entire Sermon on the Mount he speaks about many other things. Telling the truth, loving our enemies and practicing righteousness before God not before men.

But in no other sin mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount does Jesus mention hell except these two. People often ask me, Brother Zak, why do you speak so much against anger and against sexual lust? I say because in the Sermon on the Mount those are the only two sins that Jesus spoke about that he said could take people to hell. He didn't say if you practice your righteousness for men to see you'll go to hell or if you pray in a way that you want others to notice you'll go to hell.

He never said. That's a sin. But he never said you'll go to hell.

Or if you hate your enemies you'll go to hell. He never said that. It's a sin to hate your enemies.

The only two sins in the Sermon on the Mount which he said bring in the danger of hell is anger and sexual lust. Anger can be there in husband and wife. Sexual lust I think mostly in men.

But you have to be careful. Don't think that I'm married now and I won't have a problem. Particularly if you have a job that makes you travel be extremely cautious.

Be radical. What does it mean to pluck out your eyes? You don't have to actually pluck it out. But it means at that moment imagine that you're blind.

That's how I read that. At that moment imagine that you're blind. Because just plucking out your right eye doesn't solve the problem.

You know that you can lust with your left eye also. You don't need two eyes to lust. You know that.

So obviously he's not talking about just plucking out one eye. What he means is imagine you're blind. You're blind.

In other words, turn your eyes away. So much. You've got to be careful with billboards nowadays.

You've got to be careful with television. Particularly the commercials. Even if you watch only clean things.

Think of all the commercials that come even in sports programs. You've got to be very very careful. We live in an extremely evil world.

The entire media is under the control of the prince of the world. The devil. We've got to be very very careful with our children.

Now I want to go on to that next. In bringing up our children in this evil world. Be extremely careful in what you expose to them in the media world.

And especially as nowadays, as soon as a child gets into teenage, they have cell phones. Well, they probably need that in school to contact their parents. But you know this, that on the cell phones now they can see so many other things.

It's a world of inequity in that small little thing. You have to be extremely careful. Use every program possible to block access to certain things.

Don't let them have access to the television anytime without your control. Or even to a computer. You give them, your teenage boy a room to lock himself up in with a computer, you don't know what he'll be watching in there.

You've got to be extremely careful in this day and age. Tell them the seriousness of sin. And take all sin seriously yourself.

See, sexual sin is just one of many sins. If you take a big circle and all of sin is there, sexual sin is one segment. Anger is another segment.

They're pretty large segments. But sin has got many, many other things. Love of money is a sin.

Jealousy is a sin. Bitterness is a sin. Complaining and murmuring are sins.

Maybe smaller segments. But think of sin as a big circle with many, many segments, some big segments, some small segments. And deal with the segments you can handle.

That's why I told you earlier, deal with getting offended. Deal with seeking for respect. That'll help you in your battle against anger and sexual sin as well.

Because you're eliminating certain sections of this circle that gives you power. Because sin is one unit. You can't just deal with one thing by itself.

If you're strong in one area, it'll help you in another area. If you've overcome some of these weaker giants, that'll help you in your battle against the stronger Canaanite giants. Let me give you an example of that.

You know the one city in the Old Testament that's known for perverse sex. Sodom. From which you get the word sodomy for homosexuality.

Okay. How did Sodom descend into such perverse sex? I believe perverse sex is the result of being careless in ordinary sex. And then gradually you go down, down, down, down.

We read in Ezekiel in chapter 16 about the sin of Sodom. And you would think that when the Bible speaks about the guilt of Sodom, the Lord would primarily speak about the guilt of homosexual sin. But that's not what He mentions here.

That's interesting. He mentions the things that led up to sodomy or homosexual sin. What is it? Ezekiel 16 verse 49.

Ezekiel 16 verse 49. This was the guilt of your sister Sodom. And you would think as soon as He says that, He says men with men.

No, no, no. That came much later. It started with arrogance.

Arrogance is pride. Looking down on others, behaving in a rude, arrogant way to other people. Do you know the sexual sin begins here? You would think there's no connection.

There is. Secondly, an unbridled appetite for food. No control over one's appetite.

Gluttony. Food becomes one's God. Well, you have to eat this, and you have to eat that, and you have to eat this.

If you ever complain about food in your home, you can be pretty sure food has become your God. If you complain, why is it like this? Now, there's nothing wrong in suggesting, this is what I like, or why don't you add some of this or some of that. That's okay.

But complaining is another spirit. After all the hard work that your wife's put in to cook something, to go and complain about it. Abundance of food.

Is there a connection between abundance of food and perverse sex? Sexual sin? Yes. Third, careless ease, laziness. There's a proverb in the world which says, the idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Laziness. Careless ease. Plenty of time doing nothing.

Keep yourself occupied. Don't have so much time with nothing to do. You know, a lot of people browse the internet, because they've got nothing else to do.

And such a lot of time is wasted. And that's the reason why they don't know the Bibles, which could have helped them a lot more. All that information on the internet, look it up when it's necessary.

But otherwise, a lot of things that you see are just, and particularly media reports. Don't believe them. Media reporters are all paid by people to brainwash their particular constituency to believe something.

Whether it's the liberals or the conservatives or anything, all media journalists are like that. They are trained to write in such a convincing way that you believe it. And it's not true.

So, don't waste your time. Careless ease is another reason why a lot of people fall into sexual sin. And an unwillingness to help the poor and the needy.

You know, a stingy attitude towards money. You have plenty of money and you want to hold it all into yourself. You don't want to give to the Lord.

And you don't want to help. Of course, I say that you must be very careful in helping the poor. Because the Bible says, there's a great warning.

I don't know whether those of you who have plenty of money realize this. It's one of the things I've learned in India. Because we have lots of poor people in India.

And a lot of them turn up in the church. It's a sort of reputation. You go to church and you'll have all the beggars standing outside the church at the end of the service to collect money.

And people coming asking for this, that and the other. And I think of this verse that Jesus said in Luke 22 and verse 25. Among the Gentiles, those who have authority over others are called benefactors.

Do you know what a benefactor is? Luke 22 and verse 25. A benefactor is one very rich man who graciously helps some poor people and they are they look up to him for the dole that he keeps giving out to them. That's a benefactor.

And he gets a certain satisfaction being a benefactor and these poor people looking up to him. And he said, It must not be like that with you. Verse 26.

I remember that very clearly. You must never be a benefactor. That's why in our church we made it a rule that if you want to give money to a poor brother, put it in an envelope and write for the poor.

And give it to the elders. No, put it in the offering box, the elders will take it. And they will give it to the ones they feel are most deserving in the church.

Otherwise you know, there's a saying that the baby that cries the most gets the milk. So here's some poor person who keeps crying to everybody. He gets money from everybody.

And some deserving people get nothing. So that's the great danger of being a benefactor. So we have to be very careful there.

We must help the poor, but don't be benefactors. But that is one of the things which it says about Sodom. They didn't care.

They had a stingy attitude towards their possessions. If you have a miserly attitude towards your possessions, do you think that can lead you to sexual sin according to Ezekiel 16, 49? Yes. So, falling into sexual sin begins with certain other things.

So these are two areas where we have to be very very careful in our marriage. And coming to bringing up children. It's very very important in the new covenant to bring up our children in godly ways.

And I'll tell you why. Because in 1 Timothy 3 it says that when you look, Paul tells Timothy, when you look for an elder to appoint somebody as an elder in your church, look for somebody who's got a proper marriage, husband of one wife. We would never appoint a divorcee as an elder in any of our churches.

Of course, in 40 years that we've run as a church, we've never had a single case of divorce till today. And we don't believe we'll have one. Because we preach against those things very strongly.

But, if someone comes in who's divorced and if God's being merciful to them, we'll be merciful and we'll accept the person and forgive them and receive them. But, he'll never be an elder. Completely out of the question.

Even if he was divorced when he was an unbeliever and he was converted later, must be the husband of one wife. I'm not talking about people who lived in sin. A lot of people live in sin, but when they got married, they got committed one wife, one marriage.

And, they must be those who has one, verse four, who has managed his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. In other words, Paul told Timothy, don't select a man who is an elder who's got wayward, wild children. I don't mean little four year olds and ten year olds and all.

I don't mean that type of thing. But, one who's rebellious. Maybe a rebellious teenager.

Yeah, be merciful to them. Pray for them. But, please don't appoint such a person as an elder because he hasn't brought up his children properly.

And, if he can't bring up three children at home properly, how is he going to look after a church with a hundred people? So, there we see, why does he put that as a condition? One who can, keeping his children under control with all dignity. And, in Titus, the standard is made even higher. Where it says in Titus chapter 1 verse 5, when you appoint elders, it must be the husband of one wife and, verse 6, children who are believers.

Not accused of dissipation or rebellion. That means not children who are drunkards and rebellious. So, here is an important condition for eldership in the new covenant church.

So, that means family life is very important. I told you, the third story is the church. The second story is the family life.

Here is one proof of that. Now, in the old covenant, this was not a requirement. You know, Moses for example, the only instance of his family life we read in, is in Exodus chapter 4 where he is fighting and quarreling with his wife and it's because he had not circumcised his grown up child and he was disobedient.

Moses had two children as far as we know. There was not a very good family life. But, Moses could still be the leader.

Samuel, he had two sons and you read in one Samuel chapter 8, his two sons were so wicked, they took bribes. And, this is the same Samuel who when he was a young boy, had told Eli, you haven't brought up your children properly and God is going to punish you. Now, he grew up and his own children were wayward and he appointed them as judges.

Imagine! Can you believe that Samuel would do that? And the people had to come to say, Hey Samuel, your children are not walking in your ways. You better remove them from judges. It's a sad thing.

He was a wonderful prophet, but he messed up in his family life. Do you know that if Samuel and Moses were alive today, I would not appoint them as elders. Can you imagine? That we won't appoint Samuel and Moses as elders in our church.

There may be great men in the Old Testament. Family life was not important in the Old Testament. It's very, very important in the New Testament.

I just highlighted that fact to show to you how important God looks at family life. And it's an area where the devil will seek to attack and that's why we need to be together. Ephesians chapter 6, in the families in Israel, in the days when Paul and Jesus were living, there were three groups of people in every home.

Husband and wife, parents and children, and masters and servants. Almost every fairly well-to-do home had slaves. So there were husband and wife, which was one relationship, parents and children, and masters and slaves.

It's all in the same home. And it's very common in India too. Not slaves, but servants who work in homes.

It's very, very common because if you don't employ them, they're unemployed. They'll starve to death. So it's an act of mercy to employ poor people in your home.

So in Ephesians 6, it takes these three groups together and talks about the Christian home. Husbands and wives, Ephesians 5, verse 22 to 33. Parents and children, Ephesians 6, verse 1 to 4. And slaves and masters, Ephesians 6, verse 5 to 9. This is the complete home unit.

And immediately after that, it says, after this home unit, how you should live together, be strong, verse 10, put on the full armor of God, stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Is that a coincidence? That the only place in the New Testament where the battle against Satan is mentioned is mentioned immediately after the home. That teaches us that the home is the target of Satan's attack.

That's why this section comes immediately after home relationships. Husbands and wives, be strong in the Lord and stand against the devil. Parents and children, be strong, stand against the devil.

Servants and masters. So we have to protect our children against the attacks of Satan in this world. And that's why it's very very important to bring them up in a godly environment.

In the home, it's good that they see the spirit of forgiveness and asking forgiveness in the home. That's a great thing for children to see. And that even when things go wrong, we don't act as if the world has collapsed because some mistake was made in the home, something was broken accidentally or somebody forgot to do something or say something.

Husband and wife don't get upset with each other because they forgot something. No, it's not serious. The world doesn't collapse because we forgot something.

And children see that and whenever there's a problem or a trial that arises in the home, they see their parents saying, let's pray about it, let's ask God about it. Let's ask the Lord to help us. It says about Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1 that he says, I am mindful, 2 Timothy 1.5 that the faith, which was first in your grandmother and then in your mother, has come to you.

Not the knowledge of the Bible. Knowledge of the Bible, we can communicate very easily. He doesn't say your parents taught you the Bible, which is very good.

Those days there was no Bible to teach them in any case. Today we have a Bible so we can definitely get them to read the scriptures at the earliest opportunity. Get your children to read the scriptures.

Get them a comic strip Bible like the Action Bible or something and help them read it. But more than that, don't be satisfied that you just teach your children the Bible. Faith.

What did Timothy's mother communicate to him that made him such a godly person at a young age that Paul could select him to be in his team? Faith. Faith means he must have seen, you know, Timothy's father was a godless Greek businessman. You read in Acts 16, he was not interested in bringing up Timothy.

He was interested in making money. But his mother inspired faith in Timothy. That means Timothy must have seen whenever they face problems in their home, his mom would have said, Hey Timothy, let's pray.

Let's ask the Lord to solve this problem. Or when Timothy was sick, he saw his mother laying hands on him and praying that Jesus would heal him. He grew up for 18-19 years seeing this type of thing at home.

What did he get in his heart? Not as much Bible knowledge as some of us have, but faith. I have a Father in Heaven who will take care of my needs. My dear parents, I hope you will be able to put that into your children before they leave your home.

That they have a Father in Heaven who can solve every problem. I've often said this. Look at the number of people who came to Jesus in the Gospels with their problems.

All types of problems. Food problem, sickness problem, drowning problem in the sea. There was never a single case where somebody came to Jesus with a problem and Jesus scratches his head and says, Boy, that's a tough one.

I don't know how to handle that one. Not even one. That's what we've got to tell our children.

Teaching us one thing. God can solve every problem. Not perhaps the way you think it should be solved.

But He can solve every problem. That's the faith that we must impart to our children. Even if you can't give them a great big education and all that.

By all means, give them a big education because that's part of our prayer. Lord, give us this day our daily bread. Which means don't let me become a parasite on society to depend on them for daily bread.

You take care of me. That means give me a good job. Help me to educate my children so that they can get a good job and support themselves when they grow up and they don't depend on handouts from others and don't wait for people to give them gifts to survive on the earth.

No, that's not good. Give us this day our daily bread and help me to bring up my children in such a way that they'll be able to earn their daily bread too. So all that's included.

Educating our children is all included in that prayer. But more than all that, we must impart to them faith because there are a lot of problems that money can never solve. No matter how much money you give to

your children, no matter how much education you give to your children, there are problems they'll face that will never be solved.

Teach your children to be respectful to older people, beginning with respectful to parents. I have seen in the United States and Western countries a growing disrespectful attitude among young people towards older people, even among so-called believers' children. It's sad.

It's, you know, I come from a country where 80% are Hindus. And in the villages, they're taught to respect their parents whenever they go away from their parents. I mean, they go to an extreme.

They touch their father's feet and then leave. But they're taught to respect their parents, non-Christians. But here I find so many people who claim to be believers and their parents have never taught their children to speak respectfully to older people.

They talk to older people as if they're the equals. I'd be thoroughly ashamed if my son ever spoke to an older, a little boy ever spoke to an older person as if he was his equal. So, the things like this, you know, we've got to teach our children respectfulness and to teach them to believe that God can solve every single problem of theirs.

And I believe God is on our side in this matter. God wants to bring up a generation and another generation that will live for Him and be witnesses for Him. And so that's why we must train our children to be witnesses for Christ.

Encourage them as they get opportunity to witness to others. Maybe it's far easier for a little child to tell someone about Jesus in his class than when they grow older. But tell them we have to warn them about staying clear of certain types of friendships.

You've got to watch their friendships very closely. I remember my wife used to check. I was very often traveling.

My wife really brought up my children. And, but whenever my children came home from school she would always be there. There was never a day when our children came back from school when my wife was not there.

She never left home even once. Never traveled with me till our last son went to college. Children were very important for her.

She gave up her profession as a doctor to be with her children. And I believe that's the reason why God's blessed our children and they've grown up to love the Lord and marry God-fearing wives. Because there was this influence of their mother who was always finding out what happened in school today.

Sometimes they may have learned some bad words in school. To converse with your children and find out what happened. There are a lot of bad habits they pick up in school.

Did somebody show you any pictures in school today? Some of your friends? Did they show you some books? You know there's pornographic books being shown to 7-8 year old children nowadays. You've got to be very careful. Your children may be very innocent and they are all the more prone to be deceived by these others.

We have a tremendous responsibility to protect them, preserve them. Be very careful. Teach them at a very young age to not let people who are not known, you know people of the opposite sex touch them or try and be too friendly with them.

You need to be very very careful and that responsibility is primarily the mother's because she's the one who sees them most of the time at home. So dear parents, please take this responsibility carefully and here's the good news. God is on your side to help you.

I'll close with this. In Revelation chapter 12 I believe this is a picture of Satan pulling down a whole lot of angels to be demons along with him when he was cast out of heaven. Revelation 12 it says, I saw a sign of a great dragon.

Verse 3. A great red dragon. That's the devil. And with his tail he swept away a third of the stars of heaven.

This is referring to the angels are called stars in the book of Job. And so here's the devil pulling down one third of the angels from heaven who joined with him in his rebellion against God. So there we discover that it's not only Lucifer, that's whatever he was known as, the head of the angels who rebelled against God, but he gathered one third of heaven's angels which are billions and they joined in this rebellion and in a moment they were all cast out and the head of them Lucifer became Satan and all the others became the demons that are roaming around the world and in the second heavens today.

So what I see from there is a simple arithmetic. If one third became demons how many are angels? Two thirds. So for every demon there is on earth, how many angels are there? Two.

So when people try to scare you about demons don't forget that for every demon there are two angels. And what are these angels supposed to do? That's written in Hebrews chapter 1. All the angels all these good angels who did not join Satan's rebellion it says in Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 13 and 14 he's speaking about the angels to the angels he never said, like he said to Jesus, sit at my right hand but the angels, verse 14 Hebrews 1.14 are ministering spirits they are servants sent out by God where? To the earth to render service for those who inherit salvation, that's for you and me. I don't know how many demons there are, but I know that for every demon, there are two angels there to serve me.

To serve you. I believe that. Some of them have protected us from accidents on the road.

I believe that. I used to ride a scooter in India for 42 years and boy I have a lot of angels to thank when I get to heaven. Soon as I get one after the other, when I see the video of my life, see those invisible angels who protected me here and there and everywhere not only in driving on the roads but in many other places they are there you may not see them but they are there don't say that was lucky, that was an angel don't say that was your smartness or your cleverness, it wasn't it was an angel who pushed that other car just out of the way in time or something like that.

There are angels there to serve us and it says in Matthew's Gospel, this is the part I wanted to show you in this connection, in Matthew's Gospel it says in Matthew 18 and verse 10 don't despise these little children this is a verse you must teach your children for I say to you their angels, that means those children of yours have got some special angels to look after them continually behold the face of my father who is in heaven, they are always there you must tell your children there are angels there, you don't see them but they are there when you are tempted to do something wrong those angels see you when you are sitting in

a computer and you are tempted to go to a wrong site there are angels weeping if they could weep when they see you a child of God you think there is nobody in the room, oh you really there are people in that room watching you the angels and while the demons are watching you and laughing and saying to God, God is that one of your children sitting there in front of that computer the angels are there weeping teach your children about angels very very important so they know that they have someone on their side God to protect them, God is there to help you to be good parents too let's pray, Heavenly Father you know what a difficult world it is in which we have to live and bring up our children and raise our families a much more difficult world than the one I had 30-40 years ago please give them more grace parents of today help them Lord we know you will because you are on our side against the devil you defeated Satan on the cross and Satan is never going to triumph he is not going to have any one of our children like Moses told Pharaoh we will not leave this place without our children, we are going to take every one of our children out of Egypt and we are going to say the same thing we are not going to leave any of our children in the world every one of them we are going to take out thank you Father in Jesus name, Amen

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