

(Church Leadership) 16. Questions and Answers

by Zac Poonen

A strong family life is essential for a successful ministry, and with faith and trust in God, nothing is impossible.

Duration: 1:13:18

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 19:26, Romans 14:22, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 6:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Personal Devotion", "Family Ministry"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in our personal devotion to God before engaging in ministry. He compares this foundation to the floors of a building, stating that without a solid foundation, our lives and ministries will collapse. The speaker also shares a personal anecdote about neglecting time with his family for ministry, highlighting the importance of balancing both. He encourages listeners to prioritize their personal devotion to God and to build their families on a foundation of prayer and weeping for their loved ones.

Transcript

We have found in past years that times of question and answers have been some of the most profitable times. So, because there can be doubts that are not covered in different messages. And much more important for the preacher, when you ask a question, shows that you are listening.

So, if nobody has a question, you don't know whether everybody is sleeping or whether they have all become so spiritual and so perfect. They have no questions at all. So, one of the marks of healthy children is they ask their father questions.

And if they don't ask questions, then that is an indication there is no proper development in the child. Okay, one question is how to balance one's family commitments with the demands in the ministry. This is very important.

It was not important in the Old Testament. One of the questions I asked in the first session was why has God raised up one more group of churches when there are already hundreds of denominations. And I said that is to emphasize something which is not being emphasized by the others.

See, I always said the church is like a hospital. Supposing you have a hospital, where you have medical department, surgery, orthopedics to deal with the bones, and ear, nose and throat, and all the different hearts, kidneys, so many things, all department, department. And maybe many departments on ENT and medicine and surgery.

But say eye department is missing completely. So, if you are in charge of that hospital, what department will you start if you have some money? Even a five year old can answer that question. So, when we see Christendom, where people are emphasizing so many things, which are good.

Even a five year old can answer, what should be the emphasis now? But if you don't have the wisdom of even a five year old, you can be brainwashed by the ENT department saying we only have hundred ENT departments, we need one more ENT department here. And if you don't have wisdom, you will be brainwashed. Now, this is what is happening in a lot of Christendom today.

That somebody who has got a great burden, let's say for ear, nose and throat, that's a great need in everybody's life. It's a genuine burden. We are not saying it's not important.

But when God looks from heaven and he sees a hundred of this department and a hundred of that department and one department completely missing, I know what God wants to do. When I left my job, I travelled this country to see what Christianity in India was like. I saw a lot of evangelism.

I saw a lot of social work. Especially by the Roman Catholics, you can't beat them in social work. Protestant social work is not even one percent of Roman Catholic social work.

It's a very good job. They are doing it. Mother Teresa did a fantastic job.

I don't do that because that's not my calling. I am not against ENT department. I am not against medical department or surgery or heart surgery or anything.

I am trying to see what is the department that is missing. And if I can do that, then I do it. So I believe that is the reason why God raised up our churches.

We may not be better than others. In fact, the newly started I department may not be half as good as that existing ENT department. But it's catering to a need which is completely not met by anybody else.

And that is what Jesus said, to make disciples and teach them to do every single thing I commanded you. So, tell me how many churches emphasize family life in India? You know who do it? The Roman Catholics. They have got seminars for it.

Which Pentecostal church teaches on family life? Which pastor talks about sex to young people in a meeting? Or about sex in married life, to married people's meetings? You don't teach? Then they get their information from the cinema. And who teaches about being free from the love of money? Or lusting with the eyes? Or numerous things that Jesus taught. It's completely missing.

I watch a lot of Christian television to find out what are people preaching in India today on television. I need to know it because then only I can find out which department is missing. And it's the same department that was missing 30 years ago.

So, family commitment is not an unspiritual thing. Moses, we don't know anything about his family life. We know he and his wife fought once.

And we don't know anything about the married life of Isaiah. And many of the others who were married, we don't know anything about their family life. But there was no word in the Old Testament saying if your family life is not right, you are not fit to be a prophet.

But as soon as you come to the New Testament, that word is there. You cannot be an elder if your family life is not right. If you can't bring up three children at home in the fear of God, how are you going to look after a church with 100 people? And you spend so many hours with these three children and still they don't grow up in the fear of God.

And with one hour on Sunday, you are going to bring up 100 people in a church? Impossible. Where do you read that? Not Old Testament. But since 95% of Christians, believers live according to Old Testament, they talk about tithes.

Tithes is not mentioned once in the New Testament. After the day of Pentecost. People talk about themselves as Levites.

Prosperity Gospel. It's all Old Testament. Healing.

Healing. Jesus and the apostles never preached one sermon on healing. Show me.

You won't find it. There is about one verse on healing in the entire New Testament episodes and a thousand verses on holiness. But today we have a thousand messages on healing and one message on holiness.

Have you seen that? Or have we lost the blacksmiths to sharpen the sword so we don't see these things missing? So, don't think that spending time with your family is like neglecting your ministry. It's like if you neglect your personal devotion with God, your ministry will be affected. See, think of this building.

This building has got four parts. Foundation. This first story.

Second story. Third story. Third story is ministry.

Now, if I have a goal to build a third story, how can I ever do it without building these three things first? A person who tries to build that without anything underneath, it's just building on air. It will collapse. So, look at all the people who have ruined their lives.

They have not had floors underneath. That's why they have ruined their lives. So, I want to protect all of you from ruining your life.

Paul said, I can preach to so many people and finally be rejected by God myself. Why did he say that? Because it's possible. But it never happened to him.

Because he had something underneath his ministry. So, the foundation is God's perfect love for us. If you don't have that foundation, you cannot build anything.

You must be absolutely convinced that God loves you. He loves you as you are. He loves you when you have failed.

He loves you when you have messed up your life. Because he loves you, he doesn't answer all your prayers. Which father here gives everything that his children ask to their children? God is a much better

father.

But which father is there who will not give what is good to their children? Every good gift comes from God. Everything evil is from the devil. But God may permit it to come sometime in our life to teach us a lesson.

Because we are getting proud or something like that. He may allow problems in your life because you are getting proud. He allowed sickness in Paul's life because he was in danger of becoming proud.

How is it Jesus never needed any sickness thorn in the flesh to humble him? He came in our flesh. He was tempted like us. But he was so radically faithful that there was no danger of pride in him.

But Paul needed it. But he said it is from the devil. Sickness is definitely from the devil.

I have never believed in my life that cancer or tuberculosis or any sickness is given by God. I have never believed it in my life. I have never believed it for my children.

I am not a Pentecostal but I have faith in God. It is my father. And I know that I will never give cancer to my children and how can my heavenly father give it to me? But God may allow it sometime.

That is another subject. But what I want to say is, ground floor is the father's love. He loves me perfectly.

Even when I can't understand certain things, he still loves me. This first story is my personal walk with God. Clear conscience.

Immediate confession of sin to God and man. Next, second story. My family life.

If you are not married, of course, you don't need that. But if you are not married, of course, you are in a relationship with the opposite sex. That is what that represents for you.

It is going to be absolutely pure. And with your family life, if you are a married person, the way you relate to your wife and the way you bring up your children. You don't have to have a spiritual wife to have a spiritual ministry.

Don't ever say, my wife is not spiritual. That's got nothing to do with your ministry. You don't have to have a glorious marriage to have a glorious ministry.

No. No. But you must have a glorious attitude towards your wife to have a glorious ministry.

Even if she is an unconverted servant of the devil. Or who is 100% against you in your ministry. God will give you more grace than.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say, if you follow Jesus, you will have a glorious marriage. But it does say that if you follow Jesus, your path will become brighter and brighter and brighter like the sunrise. Your personal life.

It's like the story I heard of, I knew an elder brother in another country who had a very evil wife. And she used to go to a Pentecostal church and consider herself a believer. But she used to come home and throw things at her husband He had to duck his head and avoid getting hit.

Then at the end he would say to her, But you are still the queen in my heart. He really deserved to be an elder brother. He didn't have a glorious marriage, but he was a glorious brother.

Some of you don't realize how lucky you are to have such a good wife. And God chose that wife for you before you ever came to the church. Some from non-Christian backgrounds or some dead denomination.

See how she has cooperated with you in your ministry. Thank God for her. So take time in your home.

Spend time with your wife. Go for a walk with her. Or spend time talking together when you are in bed at night.

Your best friend, earthly friend must be your wife. Even if she treats you like an enemy. And the second is your children.

That's also part of your family life. If I look at your children, I know what type of life you are living at home. It's not how well you preach.

I don't mean whether your children are smart or clever or come first in the class. I couldn't care less if they come last in the class. But I have seen children who are well behaved.

They may not be able to preach or anything. No, no, no. But they respect older people.

They are well behaved. And you know what the parents are like. And in addition, if they have an interest in God I am not talking about gifts.

Sometimes in the church we emphasize gifts too much. It's godliness. Even if they cannot preach one word that they have a hunger after God.

That's the most important thing. That shows that you are qualified to be an elder. Now one more thing I want to say.

Many children nowadays go through a difficult period between the ages of 13 to about 25. So don't get discouraged with that. Some children seem to go through a smoothly over that difficult period.

But some people go through a difficult passage. That's the time where you need to be their best friend. That's the time where they must know that you love them just as they are.

You don't love what they do but that you love them in spite of what they do. We must be friends with our children. We must put our arms around them and kneel down and pray with them when they are small and when they are big.

We must hug them and embrace them when they are small and when they are big. It's sad that in Indian homes we don't do it enough. You know the old generation of our fathers and mothers they probably never embraced you.

Maybe they embraced you till you were about 6 years old. After that they didn't do it at all. We don't have to do it like that with our children.

I want to embrace my children even if they are 50 years old. We must show them physically that we love them. Even the brothers in the church I am praying with them.

I often put my arms around a brother and pray with him. Don't do it to sisters. You know that.

But I think it's very important physical touch is something that makes a lot of difference. And we have to preserve our family life. And if we don't take time for our children we lose them.

See, I remember when my children were small I was traveling I was traveling even one month after I got married. And I have been traveling all these 37 years. So I was traveling even when my children were small.

But if any of my children were taking part in some school function some sport or some school function I would always work my program around it so that I would be there. I mean that's if you are traveling if you are always at home then it doesn't matter. Of course some people if your travel is such that you can't change it then of course it's different.

But you see, your children see that you have a desire to be there. How sad it is when I hear a 16 year old girl telling her mother Mummy I don't have time to talk to you because you had no time to talk to me when I was small. You were busy with your work you had your school homework and all to do when you came home.

You were the teacher. And if I came to you you would say no not now. Now you come to me and I say no I don't want to talk to you.

Don't let your children say that to you one day. Now when your children are small and when they grow up if they come to you with a broken toy put aside your Bible and fix it for them. You will become friends with your children.

You will build your second story and then you can build a third story. I am not preaching what I have not practiced. I don't believe I have been a perfect father and I look back I have made numerous mistakes as a father.

I had no older brother in the church to guide me here in India on how to be a good father. Many times I wished I had. You have but I didn't have one.

I had to learn from trial and error. But I used to weep many times before God because I made so many mistakes. I wept before God when I punished my children in anger.

I said Lord that's wrong. So I have spent a lot shed a lot of tears before God. I don't have the gift of some preachers to weep in public.

I don't want to. Jeremiah said I will weep in secret. There is no man of God who can serve the Lord who does not weep in secret.

That's how we build our families. That's how we weep for our families. We weep for our children.

And thus we build a third story and it will not collapse because it is founded on these floors underneath. So don't think it is a waste of time. There is one memory from my children's younger days that I can never forget.

One of my younger sons it was his birthday I don't remember whether he was 6 or 7 years old and it was his birthday and I said OK I will take you to a park today. So he was so excited. He came back from school and got all ready that he was going to take him to a park and he may get a little ice cream too.

And then just as we were about to go out one brother in the church came to see me and he had his problems. I don't know from when they started and what problems they were and how. But you know I am the good shepherd who has to take care of the flock.

I don't want to lose my reputation as a brother who is always available for the flock to come and disturb me. What I lacked at that time was wisdom. But I have learnt it now.

So I sat and talked and talked and talked and it was getting darker and darker and darker. Finally I don't know whether the problem was solved but he left. It was about 8 o'clock at night.

So I went and my son is in tears. And you know how 7 year old children are if you make them wait for 3-4 hours. I said okay I will go out now.

No I don't want to go now. I don't blame him. I have seen older people get frustrated.

7 year olds. So we didn't go. You know the best part of it.

I thought boy this my son will remember this all his life. I asked him about it the other day. He said dad I don't even remember that day.

Oh thank god. So it's not that I have not made mistakes. What was my mistake? I tried to build the 3rd floor without building the 2nd floor.

Ministry. Hate your father, mother, wife, children everything. I didn't understand it right.

But I have learnt a lesson. I have learnt it for myself and I have learnt it to share it with you. You can keep a 20 year old or 25 year old son waiting like that but not a 6 year old.

You have to tell that brother. Brother can I talk to you tomorrow. You know the world won't collapse by tomorrow.

So today I have to take my son. But you know sometimes there can be a little honour seeking also in this. Supposing I tell him I have to take my son out for a walk today.

And I can be afraid he will go out and say Brother Jack he doesn't want to help people in the ministry he wants to take his son for some outing. Today I don't care if they say that. In fact I hope they say that so they will do it themselves.

I have seen in 40 years how preachers have destroyed their ministry trying to be super spiritual and neglecting their home. I thank God that my children all love me and that they are following the Lord in spite of my mistakes. That's because I have wept a lot in repentance over the stupid things I did.

And I have asked their forgiveness too. Everything can be overcome if you humble yourself. Even the mistakes and blunders you made in the past God can rectify it.

He can straighten out your home even if you made mistakes for 20 years. If that's not the gospel then we have got nothing to preach to the world. If that's not the gospel then we have got nothing to preach to the world.

Even if you say that you have messed up your family life God can rectify it. He will not forsake the way you brought up your child. What if a family has done it all wrong for 20 years? What's the good news we can

give that person? Brother, there is no hope for you.

Because it says in Proverbs 22 that you train up a child the way he should go, he will never depart from it. But I come to the New Testament and I see Jesus said nothing is impossible with God. So quote that verse after quoting Proverbs 22.

Nothing is impossible with God. If you have faith. If you don't have faith, nothing will happen.

I believe many of us will see when we stand before the Lord that you got so discouraged because you made a mess in so many areas of your life and so it remained like that till the end of your life. And at the judgment seat of Christ you see another brother whose life was a bigger mess than yours. But he came to such a glorious end and you say, Lord, how did he do it? How mine life was better than his? The Lord will say, He trusted me.

He believed nothing is impossible for me. You didn't believe that. You said, Oh God, I made a mess, nothing can happen now.

You know, when we tell God some things are impossible even with you. Then it will be impossible. Nothing is impossible.

Whoever is over here whatever condition your family is in you can have a glorious family life. Just a few points. This is so important that I don't want to move on from here.

Who should take the lead in correcting children? Father or mother? See, this is like asking in God's original plan who should be earning the living in a home? Father or mother? You don't have to read the Bible for that. Go and ask any villager in India, he'll tell you. It's people who have studied the Bible so much and then gone away from the Bible who don't know the answer today.

But everybody knows. It's normal. God appointed the man to be the bread winner.

But what if the man is sick? Or paralyzed? What is the wife going to sit and do? She's got the ability to work and earn a living. She has to go out and earn a living. You don't need any education to understand that.

Otherwise the children will starve. Or what if the husband dies? And the woman has to work and support the family. So, the man, the Bible says, fathers discipline your children, bring them up in the fear of the Lord.

But what if the father doesn't do it? That's like a dead father or a sick father. Then the mother has to do it. But the best thing is that the father does it.

But it's like in an, you know many of your elders. You ask somebody to do some job in your church. He doesn't do it.

What are you going to do? You do it yourself. I remember once, years ago, in the early days of this building. I went to the back and the bathroom was dirty.

I cleaned it. I'm not here to say, well, somebody else is appointed here to do this. See, what the Lord spoke to me that day was supposing in your house, in my house, that my house is not this church building, but where I live.

Supposing every day, two or three brothers come. By the way, this doesn't happen, but supposing they come. He says, brother, we'd like to clean your toilets and sweep your floor and do everything for you.

Of course, I'll be very grateful. This Lord was telling me this. And supposing one day they don't come.

What do I do? I call them up and say, hey fellas. No. I'm supposed to do it every day.

One day these fellas help me. I must be thankful for them. The Lord told me something that day that changed my whole view.

The Lord said, the church building is your house. Don't forget that. There are many brothers who are cleaning, cleaning, cleaning, but one day if they don't do it, you do it yourself.

That's all. You do it yourself. And you don't complain.

Then I got delivered from all complaining. I thank God for those who help. Somebody doesn't want to help, we'll do whatever is not done.

The same thing applies in ministry. There are numerous meetings where I have come to where I wish somebody else would minister the word because it was getting so heavy upon me. But there's nobody there.

Lord says, you got to do it. Then I do it. You have to have that attitude towards your church.

This is not somebody else's house. This is my house exactly like my own house. I'm very thankful that other people come and do something here.

That is an elder brother. See, the others may be like children. So, let's have faith that God can do miracles in our home.

What is the minimum age at which we can lead our children to Christ to be born again? Well, I really don't know. I think children can be born again when they are three years old. Three years old.

We had a very godly European lady stand in this pulpit some years ago. She and her husband were missionaries who published all our books in Tamil and English and all in the beginning. This is 15 years ago.

She was 80 years old or 75 or something. And I think she came five years later. When she spoke here, she was about 80.

And she said here, She said, when I was five years old in Europe, I was in a meeting and I heard a missionary from China speak. God wants people in China to preach the gospel. And she said, I was only five years old.

And I said, Lord Jesus, I am willing to go. And as I grew up, I always kept this in mind when the Lord spoke to me when I was five years old. She felt that God was saying, will you go for me? And then when she grew up to go, there was a world war and she could not go to China.

Then she finally was able to go to China only when she was 38 years old or something. But she went. And when she stood here, she said, I still remember 75 years ago when God spoke to me to go to China.

Can God speak to a five-year-old to be a missionary? If a five-year-old said that, I would say, I am not so sure. If a five-year-old told me that, that God spoke to her, but when the person grows up to be 80 and says it, I say, yes, that must be true, because look at her life. So, it is never too young.

From the time they are born and understand, we must teach them to put the name of Jesus in their lips. I am not interested in getting my children to say praise the Lord and Hallelujah to everybody they meet. It's okay, if you want to do that, that's fine.

That's good. I am more interested in teaching them to be respectful to older people. And to have a contact with Jesus.

See, if they have a problem, okay, let's tell Jesus about it. And I tell you, those children have a lot more faith than the older people. So, but even though they may accept Christ, I have very often seen that it's almost like children need a second conversion when they are in their teenage years.

It's not a really conversion, but let's call it some type of experience. The difference is this. When they were children, they did that because you told them to do it.

But when they grow up, they question. And then they do it because they are convinced themselves. And that's very important.

That's why we must, when they become 16, 17 years old, they may have been born again, genuinely, when they were three. But we must encourage them to have their personal convictions. So, supposing your child accepted Jesus when he was three years old and always saying, Jesus loves me, this I know.

Very good child in Sunday school. And 17 years old, he says, Daddy, how do you know there is a God? You say, my boy, don't ever ask such questions. Are you going to say that? He has a genuine doubt and you shut him up.

Help him. Say, ya, my son, I will tell you what I will say. I also had some doubts whether there is a God in heaven or not.

But I thought about it. And I explained to him. It's not shocking.

Otherwise, you know, we encourage our children to have blind faith. Don't question anything. Daddy said it.

And brother Zack also said it. That's it. Encourage them to question.

So that they have personal conviction. Otherwise, watching that unconverted student ask them in college, How do you know there is a God? He says, there is one fellow called brother Zack. What type of answer he is going to give? We must encourage our children to have their own faith when they come grown up.

And don't be surprised if they ask such questions. I used to love to argue with my children when they grew up. All types of subjects like Christmas and Easter and all these things.

Anything. Because I want them to have their own faith. This is not some story that daddy got cooked up and convinced people about.

Because when they are in a difficult situation their daddy may not be there to help them. They must have a living contact with God. So, we must encourage them to have questions.

And then they come to a real connection with God. Can we allow our children to play I mean, this is more in the cities. Computer games involving violence and aggressive shooting all the planes that are coming down from the sky.

I allowed my children to do it. They didn't grow up to harm others. But, I would never allow Nowadays, it's demonic some of these computer games.

I would never allow children to play with such things. When my children were small it was innocent things like shooting planes in the sky. But now, this is a demon and it's against another demon and oh boy, it's evil.

You have to be very careful with the type of games that have become most popular nowadays. Books, Harry Potter one of the most popular children's books absolutely evil. My brother came from America once and brought a very interesting game from there some 20-30 years ago for my children.

No, a game. It was a board game very popular in America. I mean, it must have cost him some money to buy it and bring it.

It was called Dungeons and Dragons. There's always somebody acts like a demon in that game. I looked at it and I said see, please give it to somebody else.

I don't want it for my children. I mean, he took all the trouble to bring it if he gets offended, he gets offended but I have to protect my children. I was very careful about the type of games I allowed my children to play.

Okay, what about their reading comics on Mahabharata and Ramayana and scary tales? I think it's good for parents to know what their children are reading. See, a lot of stories. I mean, we know they are not true.

I remember when my children were small almost all the fairy tales had some fairy with wings and some dwarf and Snow White and seven dwarfs and all these type of stories. They are not true. It's a story.

Tell them, listen, it's not all true but it's a nice story. Like Cinderella with a glass slipper and all that type. These are all interesting stories.

If you keep children away from all this they will be able to read nothing except Hebrews. No, I didn't do that. They turned out alright even though they read about Cinderella and all these other things.

See, we can become fanatics in this. We are not in heaven yet. We are still here.

So, it's good that our children read things but we tell them when they are small. It's not true. It's just a story.

When the children go to school they have to learn about some Hindu stories from India or how Mohammed started Islam. Let them read it. I'll read it myself.

I want to know how Mohammed started Islam. I don't believe in it. I want to read about how Buddha started Buddhism.

So, I don't mind my children reading it and I say, it's ok. So many stories there are about old Greek mythology and all. It's ok.

So long as we make it clear these are stories. Ok, another question is about how important is family prayer. This is a matter of how much time you have and what your routine is.

And I've discovered also it depends on which part of India you live in. I found it is easier to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning in Chennai than in Bangalore in the cold winter. It's not so easy to do that in Bangalore.

So, children may be sleepy or it's so cold early in the morning and to pull them all out of bed when they are sleepy like this since they go through family prayer at 5.30 I say, come on, come on sing, let's sing to glory to God and all that type of stuff. I never felt I should do that. I wanted them to love Jesus.

I never wanted them to feel Christianity was a burden. But, something like watching a football game. I've always wanted in my home and in CFC to make Christianity interesting.

I never wanted to have one boring Bible study in CFC I never wanted to have one boring Bible study at home. There is no word in scripture whether you should have family prayer or not. If you can do it well, well without dragging your children, unwilling children, do it.

But, if your children I mean, if you are just forcing them to go through a legalistic ritual just to ease your conscience I've been in numerous homes where this was forced upon people and it didn't work. I've seen other homes where it's really worked. So, I've seen that the reason was not the family prayer the reason was the attitude the parents had towards the children.

So, I would say it's up to you. Very often we would have time of prayer or reading something in scripture at dinner time when everybody was sitting around the table. Or, and everyday whenever they went to school we would pray a half minute prayer at least before they are going to school.

Just to recognize God. The question is don't you think we should put some discipline into our children and make them get up so that they can pray. I agree with that.

You know one of the things we must recognize is we are all different and there is no standard way of doing it. It's like disciplining children Discipline is mentioned in the scripture but what are the forms of discipline we should do is not mentioned. You can discipline them with a rod you can discipline them by not allowing them to play games or keeping them at home when the others are going out Many ways and each person can do it differently.

But the goal is our children must follow the Lord. The same thing with reading the bible and prayer. I would say whichever way you feel if your goal is right we don't have to all do it the same way.

We heard a suggestion here and that's presumably the way that brother did it and that's right. I told you the way I did it. And I have always said in CFC don't do everything the way I did it.

I may permit my children to do certain things which you should not. Our goal is the same that our children must follow Jesus. They must not be legalists they must not be pharisees they must not be spiritually

proud and they must not be worldly.

So if you can discipline your children to get up every morning that is the best. But don't condemn yourself if you can't do it. We found it more comfortable to do it at 7 o'clock in the evening when we ate dinner.

Read a little portion of scripture and pray. Only because I felt children would be less sleepy at that time and pay attention to what we are saying. But you know it's like some people have the habit of getting their children early in the morning get up and have a cold water bath at 5.30 it's good.

We could never do it in Bangalore. There are many factors which are different in different places. The only thing we must insist that everybody must do is what's written in the scripture we must do, everybody must do.

And the word of the lord to be there is nothing in the new testament it just says bring them up in the instruction and discipline of the lord. See I have found that when I add to that as a suggestion fine if I make it a law I become a pharisee. The pharisees became pharisees by adding to what Moses said.

So through the years I have been very careful to stop where scripture stops bring up your children in the discipline of the lord instruction of the lord. But beyond that and also have family prayer every morning I have never said that. Is it a good habit? Excellent.

But I don't feel free to teach it because a lot of people take what I say very seriously and then they feel condemned if they don't do it. I believe it's a very good habit but I would never I would only preach what I can clearly find in scripture. To tell you honestly I have seen so much phariseeism in Christendom that I was more scared of my children becoming pharisees than committing any other sin.

And I am a full time worker I have seen the children of full time workers in India. Worldly or pharisees one of the two. And I said I don't want either.

I have to choose one I will choose worldliness. Many people don't agree with me but I felt there is more hope for my children being saved from worldliness than from phariseeism. There is more hope if they are drunkards and gamblers to be saved than if they are religious pharisees sitting in the church.

So I am not saying therefore we encourage them to gamble or drink. I am talking about my personal fear after seeing the amount of phariseeism even in our churches. And I said Lord I never want that myself I never want a smell of it in my children.

And when my children mingle with other people I never want one of them to give the impression I am a spiritual man. I want them to give the impression that I have tried to give all my life I am an ordinary brother. So that was my goal and I saw the tremendous dangers around me.

And there are many things which I felt were good I weighed it and I said well I have to be careful that I don't make pharisees out of it. And that's why many times I said in CFC please don't bring up your children doing the things which I did for my children. Because the medicine I give them may not be the medicine your children need.

I remember one brother came and told me he says brother Zack my son always says to me like this but brother Zack allows his children to do this I told him please give an answer to your son like this Say but I am not brother Zack Simple See we don't give the same medicines to our children because the disease

may be different But what is written in scripture is common for all Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord Train up a child in the way he should go when he is old he will not depart from it Discipline your children while there is hope But I have seen as I said so many very very good homes where the children have become first class pharisees They never become spiritual in their entire life And god cannot anoint them and bring others into freedom through them Of course some people can react against that and go back to the other extreme and become worldly See I have always wanted children to long for god's word like they long for chocolates If I can do that I have succeeded And I say it is not by making them get up at 5.30 and making them eat chocolates I said they must have a love and each of us has to do it differently So if you can do it by regular family prayer I believe that is very good See what the lord told the Israelites was Talk to your children about this When you get up in the morning when you go to bed at night when you walk on the road when you sit in the house or what like we would say 24 hours a day talk about god's word That I believe Many times during the day when we were sitting together or going out we would talk about god's word The principles of god's word I would encourage them to study the stories in scripture I would get them bible story books Ask them questions They would ask me questions And I think they know the scriptures pretty well all of them Even though we didn't have family prayer regularly And I think they understood the principles of scripture because we spoke about it many times during the day But if you feel that the best way to do it is to have a time of family prayer I have got no objection it is excellent So you must do it your way Even though my oldest son is 36 now I still have no regret about the way I did it I don't say it is the perfect way but I don't find any way written in the bible I did the best I knew how There are situations like Paul said I don't have a commandment from the lord but I am giving my opinion Don't condemn yourself So we can talk more about that

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