

# God Loves us as a Father

by Zac Poonen

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**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37, James 4:6, Proverbs 22:6, Hebrews 11:24, Ecclesiastes 8:11, 1 John 1:9, Luke 23:43

**Topics:** "God's Love", "The Consequences of Sin"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Have you ever wondered how Jesus could speak to 5,000 people without any microphone or any such thing? He was a very strong man. We are all weaklings compared to him. Why is this devil called a deceiver? The very first thing that he did with man, as we read in the Bible, is he deceived him concerning the real nature of God.

We know the story how Adam went into the garden, and God had told him, don't eat from that one tree. Now, I believe it's all symbolic. I don't know exactly what the tree was.

But the point of that story is this. The devil came to Adam and essentially told him, God doesn't love you, because if he loved you, why would he deny you to take part in this lovely fruit from this tree? Because it is a very attractive tree. And what God was testing Adam in was, can you trust me that I'm a God of love, and that if I tell you not to do something, it is for your good, and if I tell you to do something, it is for your good.

That is faith. So we think of Adam's failure as a failure of obedience. God told him not to do something, and he did it.

But underneath that disobedience was a lack of faith. It means, I don't believe what the devil was trying to put a thought into Adam's mind. One, God doesn't really love you.

Otherwise, why should he withhold this lovely fruit from you? And that is the same temptation with which he comes to human beings today. When something we want badly we don't get, or some sickness we pray for and are not healed, and somebody we pray for doesn't get healed but dies, always at the back, the devil says, see, God doesn't love you. Have you heard that thought coming into your mind? God doesn't really love you.

If he loved you, he'd do something more for you. That was the thought that came into Adam's mind. The second thought that the devil put into Adam's mind was, let's turn to that passage.

It's in Genesis chapter 3. Some of you may not be familiar with it, so let me read it to you. Genesis chapter 3. God had already told Adam, in Genesis 2, 16 and 17, from any tree you can eat. But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, verse 17, Genesis 2, 17, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat, you will surely die.

That's all. And why did God not prevent Satan from entering the garden? That could have been very easy. And that's also important for us to understand.

See, if man is not tested, he's not proven whether he, supposing God had told him, go and eat whatever you like. It's like if you leave your child at home, say, do whatever you like. You never know whether he's going to be obedient or not.

But if you allow your child to do 101 things, but one thing you tell him not to do, then you can test his obedience. I mean, there were 1,000 trees in the garden. God said, don't eat one.

It's not such a difficult command. If God had told him, all these 999 trees you cannot eat, only this one you can eat. That would have been a difficult command.

But God told him, only one tree you cannot eat. All the others you can eat. There are thousands of them.

So it's not at all difficult, but it is a test of obedience. And the devil came and see what he told Eve. Verse 4, God knows, sorry, verse 5. Genesis 3, verse 5. God knows in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened.

You'll be like God, knowing good and evil. God doesn't want you to be like him. So he's withholding it from you because he doesn't love you.

And once that seed of suspicion and doubt about God is sown into Adam and Eve's mind, it begins to fertilize there, and you begin to think, yeah, perhaps God doesn't love me because it's such a lovely tree. It says here, verse 6, the woman saw it. The tree was good for food and a delight to the eyes and desirable in every way.

You see something desirable and good for the eyes and good for food and delight to the eyes. You say, why wouldn't God allow me to have this? Like many things that come in our life also, we pray to God and according to our understanding, we think, yeah, that's delightful. It's good.

I don't see any reason why it's not good. Why does God not give it to me? Why doesn't God answer my prayer? And immediately the devil puts a thought into your mind because God doesn't love you. The basis

of faith is to believe, even when I cannot understand anything, that there's some reason why God has forbidden it or there's some reason why God wants me to go through this trial.

And so, ultimately, faith is based on an absolute conviction that irrespective of what my senses tell me, I know God loves me. If you can have that, you will have a wonderful life and God will never let you down. But I'll tell you this, that is the area where the devil will always try to knock away your faith.

Something or the other, you want and you don't get, God doesn't love you. Or something you don't want and something happens in your life which you didn't anticipate, God doesn't love you. What we learn from here is never believe that lie of the devil.

In the New Testament, we are told we walk by faith, not by sight. Because a lot of things we see are not real. For example, we think the sun is moving from the east to the west, but it's not moving.

And you study geography, you know it's not moving at all. But a little child who has not studied geography will think the sun is moving. So we can't even trust our eyes.

And I believe that God has allowed that every day to show us you can't trust your senses. I heard a story of two boys in the same family and the 12-year-old told his 6-year-old younger brother, See the sun has moved. It was in the east, now it is in the west.

And the 6-year-old, he didn't know anything about geography. But he told his 12-year-old older brother, No, you remember what daddy told us? That the sun does not move. It's the earth under our feet that's rotating.

The earth under our feet is rotating at 1000 miles an hour. So the older boy said, I believe what I see. I saw the sun move.

The younger boy said, I believe daddy. Who was right? You know. We cannot believe what we see.

You don't feel the earth moving under your feet right now at 1000 miles an hour. You feel you're in a vehicle that's moving at 1000 miles an hour. You know that's the speed of the earth's rotation on its own axis.

The circumference of the earth in the equator is 24,000 miles or 40,000 kilometers. And in 24 hours it covers, that period means it's moving at 1600 kilometers an hour. But it doesn't feel like that under our feet.

Teaching us that not only you can't believe your eyes, you can't believe your senses. You think nothing is moving, but the earth is moving at such a fantastic speed. It's faster than any airplane.

An airplane you travel at 600 miles an hour or 1000 kilometers maximum. But this is 1600 kilometers an hour the earth is moving. You don't feel it.

I believe God has kept these things like that to teach even the clever people. You cannot trust your senses. So don't think that I believe what I see.

You'll be thoroughly deceived. Or I believe what I feel. I don't feel the earth is moving so it's not moving.

Like that little boy said, you can trust what you see but I believe that. And you'll discover in the final day that those who have trusted God are the wisest people on the earth. For example, you know to believe that God is a God of love when we don't understand he was tested.

Can you believe God is a God of love? The devil says when such a lovely fruit he doesn't allow you to have it. So in the New Testament you read about a man called Paul, the greatest apostle. I want you to read something to you in 2nd Corinthians in chapter 12.

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 we read that he had a sickness in his body. He calls it a thorn in the flesh. We don't know what that sickness was.

I personally think it was some problem with his eyes. Maybe some type of pus that was always coming out of his eyes. Which God could have healed in a moment.

But it says here, verse 7, 2nd Corinthians 12, 7, the middle of that verse, there was given me a thorn in the flesh and he even calls it a messenger of Satan to torment me. So here is a problem he's having with his eyes dripping with some type of pus and it's such a nuisance. And he says in verse 8, I implored, implored means I pleaded with God but three times I said, Lord take this away from me.

God said no. Sometimes you may think God says no to your prayer because you're such a sinner or because you're so weak or you're so immature, you're just a kid. If you're a mature person, God will always answer your prayer.

Here is one of the most mature, or probably the most mature person who was living on earth at that day was the apostle Paul. And he had a serious problem with his eyes and God says no, I won't heal you. A lot of people think if God can do something, why can't he do it? Do you think it's difficult for God to heal that person? One word and he'll be healed.

Jesus did it all the time. Jesus healed blind people, leave alone someone who has a little problem with his eyes. And God says no.

Why did he say no? And he gives us the answer in verse 7. To keep me from exalting myself. Why is it a danger to exalt yourself? You know, Paul had such a tremendous... It says that he had an experience once of being taken up to heaven. It says 14 years ago in verse 2. I don't know how it happened, whether I was in the body or out of the body, but I was, verse 4, was caught up into paradise.

He had an experience of going right up into heaven while he was on this earth. And he didn't know how it was. Was his spirit taken out of his body and he went there? Or his whole body was taken there? He said, I can't explain it, but I went into heaven and I heard words in heaven.

Can you imagine the experience of going up to heaven and seeing things there? And hearing things. And listen to this. He said, a man, verse 4, is not permitted to speak those things at all.

That means, what I saw in heaven, God said, you must not tell anybody. Now, if you go to a Google search of visits to heaven. I tried it on once, Google search.

I think there are 400,000 people who say they went to heaven. All lies. And they all tell you.

There are books written. What I saw in heaven. Of course, when God took me there, one fellow has written, I spent 23 minutes in hell.

And all these stories. Long ago, there was a book, a very famous book, written by, the title of it is, The Boy Who Went to Heaven and Came Back. And it was published by one of the top publishers in America, Christian publishers, called Tyndale House.

Tyndale House is the one that published The Living Bible. Very well-known publisher. And they sold millions of copies.

Because everybody wants to know. This is a little boy. He can't be telling a lie.

And his father and he helped him to write. Because he had an accident somewhere. And he was in a coma for some days.

And he said, I went up to heaven. And he wrote all that he experienced in heaven. And so many people wanted to read.

I think it's about 5 or 6 years later, that boy said, he told news agency, the whole thing was a lie. My father told me to just write, so that you can make some money from this experience. The whole thing was a lie.

And he invented a story about what he saw. And so many people bought the book. And they really believed, this is what heaven is like.

And that Christian publisher was so embarrassed, that they had published this book, that they withdrew it from the market immediately. And all these 400,000 people who say they have gone to heaven and hell on the internet, it's a deception. Because J. Paul, I believe it, and the proof that he went to heaven was, he said, I'm not permitted to say anything about what I heard there.

He could have become very famous, to say what all I heard in heaven. But the Lord told him, you're not to speak one word of what you heard here. So, I believe God can take somebody to heaven even today.

But the proof of it will be, he'll never speak about what he saw there, or heard there. So anybody who speaks about what he saw, heard there, immediately I know it's a fake. Because it says a man is not permitted, verse 4, to speak about what he saw there.

This is just by the way. But he had such tremendous experiences to be taken up to heaven. He planted churches.

He even raised a person from the dead. You read in Acts chapter 20. And he healed sick people, and he wrote scripture.

And why wouldn't he? He was the most outstanding servant of God on earth. And when he asked God for a simple little thing, God said no. So that should comfort us, when some prayer of ours is not answered.

Which you think is very good for you. And the reason is, Paul says here, the reason why God did not heal him, was so that he doesn't get puffed up. You know when God uses somebody mightily, it's very easy for him to become very proud, and he doesn't remain an ordinary human being.

I've seen so many big preachers like that. You can't go near them. They've got bodyguards around them, who don't allow anybody to go and meet them.

Paul and Jesus never had any bodyguards around them. Those are real genuine people who knew God. So don't be fooled by all these things that we see today in so-called preachers.

Paul was in danger of becoming proud, and he knew it. And he says here, in the verse 7, last part, to keep me from exalting myself. God said, there's only one way I can humble you, Paul.

I have to give you a little sickness, so that you don't get puffed up. Because then people will say, ah, this fellow can heal others, but look at him, his eyes are always dripping, he's not healed. Why is this important? First of all, let me tell you why I believe it is his eyes.

You know, in Acts of the Apostles, it's very interesting when you compare Scripture with Scripture, you discover some amazing things. In Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16, we read that Paul was traveling to preach the Gospel, and we read that Paul, Acts 16, verse 6, Paul and Timothy, he got Timothy in verse 1, who joined him, and in Acts 16, verse 6, they passed through Phrygia. This is all in the area what today is known as Turkey.

That area was called Asia Minor in those days. They passed through Phrygia, and through Galatia, and when they came to Galatia, they wanted to go on to speak in Asia Minor, but the Holy Spirit stopped them. Now when we read in verse 7, the Holy Spirit stopped them, we wonder, how did the Holy Spirit stop them? Is it by some vision, or some voice from heaven that said, Paul, don't go from here.

Stay in Galatia. No. It's not written here how he stayed in Galatia.

It's just written the Holy Spirit stopped him. But if you go to the letter to the Galatians, in after Corinthians, you come to Galatians, there he tells them, in Galatians 4, this is what we learn when you compare Scripture with Scripture, verse 13, Galatians 4, 13, this is the same place where he was stopped. You know that it was because of a bodily illness, Galatians 4, 13, that I preached the Gospel to you the first time.

So how did he get stopped? Not by some vision from heaven or a voice from heaven. He suddenly fell sick, and he couldn't go because of his sickness, some terrible infection that came in his body, and he couldn't move. Sometimes, you know, you make a plan to travel somewhere, and then you get some sickness that knocks you down in bed, and you can't make your travel.

But you never think of that as the Holy Spirit stopping you. Paul did. Acts 16, it says the Holy Spirit stopped him.

Here he says, it was through a bodily illness that I got stopped. It's a wonderful thing to live in the will of God, where God even stops you sometimes from going somewhere by a bodily illness. Yeah.

So, he says, the reason I preached, I had no, what I'm saying is, Paul was telling the Galatians, I had no plan to stop in your place. Galatia was an area, like a district. And he said, I had no plan to stay there because I was moving on from there to another place.

But when I came there, because I got sick, and I was in bed, I had to stay there. And therefore, I preached in Galatia. And so, number of churches were formed in Galatia.

That's what God, that means God from heaven saw there were some needy, hungry people in Galatia who needed to hear the gospel. And God stopped them. And there are many ways God can stop us.

And then he tells us, my bodily condition, verse 4, was a trial to you. And you did not despise or loathe me. Now, do you despise a person who is bedridden with fever? No.

Do you despise a person who fell down and had an accident and broke his bone or something? No. When do you loathe? Loathe is a very, you know, word where you feel repulsed by somebody's appearance. You know, somebody's leprosy or that type.

Some physical appearance is loathsome. That's a strong word in English. You did not loathe me.

And the literal meaning of that word is, you did not spit at me. That means it is so despising. That means there was something about Paul's physical appearance at that time which people felt like, I don't feel like looking at him.

And that was his eyes were, you know, if you see a person standing up in front, his eyes are always dripping with pus. It's a bit of a loathsome experience. And why do I say that? Because he says in verse 15, the middle of that verse, I bear you witness that when you saw me, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

That's how we know his sickness was an eye problem. So when you compare scripture with scripture, what we see was that Paul was going through Galatia to some other place and Paul stopped him with a serious eye infection that he had to be there and he said, okay, I'm here, I might as well take the opportunity to preach and with all that eye infection he preached and some people were saved. See how God's plan was to use this man's sickness to stop him somewhere in order to bring some people to Christ and a number of churches were formed in Galatia.

Then Paul realized why God stopped him and that's why he says through a bodily illness, I had no plan to be there, verse 13, through a bodily illness only I got stuck there and I started preaching the gospel. Wonderful thing to learn that when God doesn't, breaks up our plans by not allowing us to go somewhere or the other, he has a wonderful plan to do his work. See, ever since 1975, I had a great desire that we must plant churches which are according to God's standards.

We're not these low level standards where your preachers run after money and where you don't preach holiness and where Christians have such a bad testimony because, you know, I spent 8 years traveling all over India from 1966 to 1974 and I was fed up with what I saw. I said, Lord, the problem in India is not that we are only 2% Christians, but the 2% is such poor quality. Such poor quality, I said, thank God it's not 50%.

That would have been a very bad name for the Lord. So, I realized that the need is not to increase the number. What's the use of increasing the number of rotten apples? What we need is some good apples, some good quality, even if it is 0.01%. So, that is the burden I had.

I said, Lord, we want to, we can't, I am not here to increase the number of Christians in India, quantity wise, but I want to try and increase the quality of a few Christians, at least in Bangalore. That's how we started. So, I, like that, God opened different, different doors and I would go here, there and once, let me tell you a story.

Two of our brothers from Kerala went for a job in Bahrain. So, since I was going to the Gulf, to Dubai, we had a little fellowship there and also to Doha, where we had a little fellowship. So, I thought I have a couple of days before that, in between there, Bahrain and Doha, I can go to, in between Dubai and Doha, I

can go to Bahrain for two days and then go to Doha.

So, when I went to Bahrain for two days, I didn't know anybody there, except these two brothers from our church who were there for a short time, working. I just wanted to encourage them, that's all. And from there, I asked the brothers in Doha to get me a visa and they said, the next four or five days are all some Hajj holidays, everything is closed, you can't get any visa for the next one week.

So, I got stuck in Bahrain. I could not go. I planned only to be there two days and to go on, I don't know, one day perhaps, and go on to Doha.

And I got stuck in Bahrain with no plan. And here I was stuck in Bahrain and I said, okay, I am here now five, six days, I might as well have some meetings. And so, I said, anybody who is interested, please call them, we will have meetings in a brother's house.

And we had meetings for all those four or five days and so many people, God brought so many people from different churches and they got gripped. And right there, in those five days, a church was born. A new covenant church.

And that is flourishing today. It has grown since then in Bahrain. I want to tell you, that's how the church was started.

It was almost like an accident. But in God's plan, there is no accidents. But I was reminded of this, how I wanted to go somewhere and God stopped me somewhere, Paul wanted to go somewhere and he was stopped somewhere, because God had a plan to build something.

So, but this thing was still bothering him, his eyes. And God said, I am not going to heal you, because you will get puffed up. You are doing so many wonderful things.

Why does God want to protect people from pride? Very important question. You know, if you are a very clever person and you accomplish something, or you have had tremendous spiritual experiences, the great danger always is pride. And the Bible says, in James, in chapter 4, it's a very important verse for us to know.

James 4, verse 6. It's a law of God that we need to understand. God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Now, we've been thinking earlier on today, how grace or yesterday we thought of that, grace is the power by which we get power to overcome sin.

Grace is not a doctrine. It's a power. The Holy Spirit is called the spirit of grace.

He gives us power. But that power is not given by God to everybody. And there is a reason why people don't receive grace.

Because here it says, James 4, verse 6, God gives grace only to the humble. I remember when we started our church, we built our building in 1981 in Bangalore. We put a verse on the wall.

One of the verses was, God gives his grace only to the humble. Because we were preaching about grace in the church, about how grace can help you to overcome sin. And people wonder, why am I not getting it? That verse was always there.

He gives it only to the humble. That means God sees something in your life you're too proud about. You look down.

Pride means you look down on somebody else who doesn't have what you have. Maybe you're smarter than them, cleverer than them, more intelligent than them. Maybe your children are better than them.

There are 101 things that can make us proud. Maybe you're prettier or more handsome or something. And then you don't get grace.

Because it's a law of God that he gives grace only to the humble. And what does he do with the proud? Verse 6, he resists and opposes the proud. He doesn't oppose people who are sinners.

We think that God opposes all the sinners and he'll give grace to the holy people. No, there's nobody holy. Everybody's a sinner.

But among the sinners, there are some who are proud and some who are humble. So the proud people, God resists even more and they fall more into sin. And the humble among them, he gives grace and lifts them up.

Very important to understand this. And then, if you turn a couple of pages, you come to 1 Peter chapter 5, just 2-3 pages, you go to 1 Peter chapter 5 and you come to 1 Peter 5 and verse 5, the last part of verse 5. The same thing. Word for word.

God is opposed to the proud but he gives grace to the humble. And you wonder, hey, why is that written a second time in scripture 4 pages later? Can you tell me why? I'll tell you my theory. Because he knows that many Christians read the Bible so carelessly, they missed it the first time.

So I say, okay, I'll repeat it again for your benefit. This is for the benefit of lazy people who didn't get it the first time. God gives grace to the humble.

He's repeated it because it's so important. See, now you can say, why doesn't God give grace to the proud? The Holy Spirit is pictured like a river. Have you ever seen a river flowing up? I've never seen it.

Have you seen a waterfall going up? No. A river always flows down. When it rains, have you seen the parts of the field or the road where rain water collects? Always the lowest places.

In the lowest places in the road the water collects. The high places are all dry. Correct? That is a parable.

When the Holy Spirit is poured out, it goes to the... looks for the humblest people. The humblest people in a church or the humblest people and he fills them. The other people who are pretty proud, they keep on praying and fasting and praying and fasting and nothing happens.

They keep on praying and fasting. I remember one brother who told me, Brother Zach, I prayed for 40 years to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Nothing happened.

God resists the proud but he gives grace to the humble. The easiest way to get water to come to you is go down. You don't have to plead with the water to come down.

It will automatically flow there. But if you are in a high place and you ask for the water to come up there, it just doesn't come because water doesn't climb. It flows down.

The Holy Spirit is poured upon those who are taking a low place. Now, humility is not inferiority. A humble person doesn't feel inferior to everybody else.

Inferiority complex is something quite different. Do you know who is the humblest man who walked on this earth? Who? Jesus Christ. Do you think Jesus had an inferiority complex? People with inferiority complex say, Oh, I am no good.

I am useless. I am good for nothing. I cannot do anything.

Do you think Jesus went around saying that? That's not humility. That's stupidity. If God has given you some gift, use it.

There is no point saying that you can't use it. Humility is very different from feeling inferior. Jesus did not feel inferior to anybody in the world.

He could cast out demons, heal the sick and do mighty miracles. But he never lost his humility. Humility is to recognize I can do nothing apart from my Heavenly Father doing it through me.

It's like the branch I set in the tree which says, I cannot produce any fruit but I will produce a lot of fruit when I am staying in the tree and the sap flows into me and I produce all these lovely mangoes. But even if a mango branch has produced mangoes for 50 years, it never becomes proud. It says, if you go to that branch, if it could speak, it would say, next year, if I remain here, the branch, the mangoes will come.

But if I think I am quite capable now and I cut myself off from the branch, there will not be a single mango on that branch after that. So, humility is not saying I am useless, I am good for nothing. That is all fake.

That is all false humility. A lot of people speak like that, Oh, I am nobody. Deep down they think they are very important.

You know how sometimes people pray in their prayer, Oh God, I am such a wretch. But if you heard somebody else say about you that you are a wretch, you would get pretty upset. Which shows that you do not really believe what you said to God.

A lot of fake things we say to God. Humility is not saying all these demeaning things about yourself. Humility is recognizing, like the branch, I am nothing apart from God.

I am a zero apart from God. But with God, with Jesus on my side, I am extremely valuable. You put a one in front of that zero and I immediately become valuable.

But you remove that one, I am a zero again. That is humility. No matter how much I have accomplished in my life, I am a zero.

But I don't feel inferior because I got a one in front of me. That makes me valuable. And valuable to God.

So, God wanted Paul to always remain humble so that he could use him mightily. But you know the tendency to become proud, you know that if you accomplish something, you become proud. A child comes first in the class and he can be proud.

We have to help our children, particularly if your children are intelligent and capable. You really have to help them to remain humble. Otherwise they lose the grace of God.

I remember my four boys when they were, annual prize giving day in the school in Bangalore. They would get their prizes and come home. And the first thing I would do as soon as we came back home was, Okay boys, now let's pray to God.

Number one. Let's pray and thank God for helping you all to do well in your examination. And let's give God the glory for all that he did.

And, now I said, don't ever show your marks card to anybody. To show how much marks you got. Go and hide it.

And all these cups and prizes and all, don't put it in the sitting room. Go and bury it somewhere else where nobody will see it. We are not here to display how clever we are or how clever our children are.

No. Because I didn't want them to destroy themselves. I said, don't ever talk about your accomplishments.

Give glory to God and forget it. We have to protect our children because the danger to pride is so much in children. Particularly if they are good looking or better looking than others or they are smart or capable.

God did so much to protect Paul from getting proud. So I was just telling you that when God did not heal Paul, it was with a very good reason. And Paul did not doubt God's love.

So there must be a good reason and God showed him, you are in danger of becoming proud. All of us are in danger of becoming proud because we have a tendency to compare ourselves with others. And the devil, I'll tell you, he is very clever.

He will always make you compare yourself with someone who has got more than you. Or who is better off. So that you will always have a complaint.

He will never allow you to compare yourself with people who have got less than you because then you may be happy. Thank the Lord. Have you noticed in your life? You find out the devil ever lets you compare yourself with a lot of poor people in India who don't even have 1% of what you have.

Because if you had, if you compare yourself with them, you'll be thanking God every day. And the devil doesn't want you to be thankful every day. He wants you to be unhappy about something.

So he'll allow you to look at somebody else who's got more than you or somebody you think is not as smart as you are. But he's got more than you and you'll feel jealous of him. Oh, the devil is such a clever person, always making you compare yourself with others.

That's what leads to jealousy in some cases and pride in other cases. Both are evil. You must make a decision in your life that I'll never compare myself with anybody.

See what it says in 2nd Corinthians. There's an answer in scripture to everything. And that is why I say you must learn to read the Bible.

2nd Corinthians chapter 8 Sorry, 2nd Corinthians chapter 10 2nd Corinthians chapter 10 Here's a verse about those who compare themselves with others. And believe it or not every one of us has an unconscious tendency to compare ourselves with others. Even children compare themselves with others in their class.

And here is a verse for all such people. 2nd Corinthians 10-12 In the last part of that verse it says When they measure themselves with each other and compare themselves with each other they are without understanding. Or I'd say they are spiritual idiots.

If you want to be a spiritual idiot compare yourself with somebody else. Never do it. Because it will either make you jealous because that guy has got more than you or it will make you proud that you are smarter than him.

Both ways it's dangerous. So, those who compare themselves with others are not wise at all. So that's why we have to be thankful for the way God has made us.

And believe that God is a God of love and whatever he allows, something he doesn't give me must be some very good reason why he withholds it from me. Now, if Eve, we were talking about Eve in Genesis 4 So the first thing that the devil wanted Adam and Eve to think was God doesn't love you. And once he got into their head that the reason why God is not giving you this fruit is because he doesn't love you.

He's already occupied the house. Then he can destroy them. And once God has put this into your head something you wanted and God didn't give you or something you asked for didn't work out the way you anticipated maybe a healing, it may be a job, it may be some other thing.

And you say God could have done it and why didn't he do it? And then doubt starts to form in your mind and doubt is like a plant that grows and grows and you've got to kill it immediately. It's like a weed that will destroy your garden. You've got to pull it out.

And that's what we see here that if the you know when the devil put into Eve's mind why would God stop you from eating this lovely tree? It makes your mouth water and make you wise. What Eve should have said was this Well Satan I don't know why God hasn't allowed me. It looks like a beautiful fruit and I'm sure it looks as if it can make me wise it makes my mouth water.

Why God told me not to eat it I just don't know. But one thing I know God is a good God and he loves me. That is the answer that will drive the devil away and something you can't explain in your life something happens to your children or some healing or something that doesn't work out as you anticipate you can say well I really don't know why it's like that but one thing I know God loves me.

He will always overcome Satan. That is faith. Faith is to believe God loves me.

That's why Jesus said when you pray don't start saying Oh God Lord I notice when I go to Tamil Nadu most people pray Andhavare I say that's not the way to pray. Jesus said when you pray say Our Father Old Testament they said Andhavare God Devane God but Jesus said when you pray say Our Father who art in heaven I mean in the beginning I also was following other people but as I started reading the scriptures now when I pray I say Heavenly Father why did he say when you pray begin your prayer with Our Father who art in heaven because you know the most important thing when you ask God for anything is faith. The Bible says if you don't have faith you will get zero from God.

So to develop faith there are two things you need to know only two things one that God is your Father that he loves you intensely that's the first thing that's why you call him Father second that he is in heaven, that he is almighty he can do anything. There are two things you need to know about God. One he loves you intensely and he can do anything that is the meaning of Our Father who art in heaven.

So what the Lord was trying to put into people's mind is you got a Father in heaven now do you know that in the Old Testament nobody could call God Father not even John the Baptist, not Elijah, not Elisha not a single person could look up to heaven and say Dad no you know what a tremendous privilege it is to look up to heaven and say Daddy because you know most of you have never been orphans but those who have not had an earthly father or whose father died when they were one year old or something there is a certain insecurity about them because they never had the care of a strong loving, caring Father and for all such people God says I am your Father it's a wonderful thing, I mean I know in my life also, I mean I had a father till later but somehow when I became a Christian I never felt secure I was always insecure I say Lord there are so many weaknesses in me I am defeated in so many areas I always thought that God must always be angry with me somehow, I don't know whether you have that feeling also but I always felt that if I look up to heaven I see a frowning God looking at me in anger so I was scared to pray so look down when you pray because you don't want to see this frowning God looking at you that was a lie of the devil 100% a lie of the devil so I am not afraid to look into my heavenly Father's face today, not because I am perfect I am far from perfect but I know my Father loves me He is smiling at me and at you believe it or not and you say how in the world can He smile at me when He sees so many weaknesses in me I will tell you because the very fact, please listen to me the very fact that you came to this meeting proves that you have some desire to hear something that will help you spiritually, otherwise you wouldn't be here today there are a lot of other interesting things you can do on a Friday afternoon in Vermont instead of sitting in a meeting to hear about God after you have already heard about Him in the morning meeting, again to come and hear there must be some desire in your heart for the Lord and God knows that and that's why I am bold to say that God is not frowning at any of you He is smiling at you in spite of the weaknesses He sees in you because He can help you to overcome all of them and that was a great day in my life when I could look up to Heaven and believe that my Heavenly Father just loved me so now I see myself like a little two year old child sitting on my Heavenly Father's lap can you picture that, picture yourself like a little two year old sitting talking to your Father who's always happy with you, never smiling at you, if only I can convince you about this, it's difficult because the devil's done a tremendous work in convincing people that God is always angry with you and He's frowning at you and He's got this thing wrong, that thing wrong with you think of the stories of Jesus you know who are the people who kept frowning at sinful people the Pharisees the classic example is the Pharisees on one side trying to stone that woman caught in adultery, you know that story all of you, yes picture it as a case in a court, Pharisees on one side, the woman on the other side, they are accusing her and she deserves to be killed and according to the law it was correct there was a law in the Old Testament that if a woman is caught committing adultery that means she's a married woman committing adultery with a man, she must be stoned to death that was a law and the Pharisees said it is written there Moses said it but what they did not realize is that the person sitting here, Jesus was the one who gave that law from heaven when Jesus was in heaven, He's the one who gave that law to Moses that people caught in adultery must be stoned to death, not because God is against people who fall into adultery but because He wanted people to see how serious a sin it is if you're married to someone to go and sleep with another woman is a terrible sin and God wanted them to see the seriousness of it that's why He said they must be stoned to death, so here's Jesus sitting and He knows the law, because He gave it to Moses from heaven 1500 years earlier when He was in heaven the Pharisees said that Moses said He must be stoned to death and Jesus you know, He had come to earth as a man, so it says He was scribbling on the ground and I know what was happening He was saying, Father give me a word to give to these people and He heard the Holy Spirit telling Him tell them He who is without sin, throw the first stone, so Jesus looked up and said He who is without sin, throw the first stone, then He kept scribbling to see what's going to happen one by one they went away now they knew Jesus

that if anybody stood there and said I have not sinned Jesus would have made a big list of all their sins, that would have been more shameful, so they quietly went away and then there was still one man left who was without sin, who could throw the stone Jesus said He who is without sin can stone this woman there was one man left that was Jesus Himself why He didn't throw the stone because God loves people who even those who have fallen into adultery He did not come to judge the world, He came to save people so He comes to the woman and says nobody condemned you? She said no Lord and He told him two things I don't condemn you don't sin again that's the full gospel which we preach in CFC John 8 verse 11 no condemnation now you can overcome sin so what I learned there is God is not here to frown even at sinful people, He's here to save them and I'm almost 100% certain that that woman never went and committed adultery again never I'm absolutely sure do you think after Zacchaeus who had cheated so many people as a tax collector one day Jesus came to his house do you think that man ever cheated anybody again? I don't think so I don't think he ever cheated anybody again because he saw how Jesus who's against cheating came to his house and his house because all the religious Pharisees would not even go to their house this guy is a sinner, he cheats everybody how can he go to his house? And Jesus said I'll go because he didn't come to condemn people, he came to save people it's very important for you to see these stories how to show you that when you look up to heaven you're looking into the face of one who's smiling at you not because he approves of your sin but because he wants to save you from it he wants to save you from adultery he wants to save you from anger he wants to save you from everything that's destroying your life I mean I look at it like a mother who's looking at his poor child who's got wheezing if you've got a child who's wheezing and wheezing and can't breathe properly how do you look at that child? You don't look at that child with anger if you're a mother, you look at that child with such compassion or your child has got some other sickness you look at that child with such compassion and a true mother would say I wish I could take that sickness into myself so that the child can be healthy that's exactly how God looks at you and that's why Jesus came to earth and said let me take that sin upon myself if we can be convinced about this we will not make the mistake that Eve made so have you understood what the temptation was that the devil made to Eve? God does not love you he's always looking at you with anger and Jesus came to remove that wrong understanding of God he's come to save you from the sickness sin is like a sickness and God looks at you like a child that has got some sickness he loves you but he doesn't love your sickness, he doesn't love your sin and he's not angry with you is a mother angry with a child who's got some sickness? no mother feels so sorry, he hates that mother hates that sickness but doesn't hate the child remember this God loves you even if you're a sinner but he doesn't love your sin it's your sin that he wants to separate from you just like a mother wants to separate that sickness from a child so that's the first thing now if you turn back to Genesis and chapter 3 the other thing so one thing which the devil tried to put into Eve's mind is that God doesn't love you like he tries to put into your mind in so many things the second thing that he wanted to tell them, tell Adam and Eve was has God he told him, verse 1 has God really said you shouldn't eat from any tree? the woman said yes we can't eat from this one tree because God said if you eat it you'll die and now the devil says to the woman in verse 4 you will not die that's the second thing that the devil tries to tell people what's the first one? that God doesn't love you and the second one second thing that the devil tries to tell people is disobedience to God is not serious you will not be punished don't worry there is no hell there is no punishment you will not die you will not be punished by God even if you do something wrong now that's a deception which the devil tries to fool so many people in the world and that's why so many people keep on doing wrong things and thinking that oh nothing will happen nothing has happened so far you will not die you surely will not die and even Adam believed two lies one was that God doesn't love me and second that even if I disobey God I will not be punished I want to say to you my dear brothers and sisters don't believe these two lies of the devil one that

God doesn't love you that's a lie he does love you and secondly that if you sin, sin is not serious you will not be punished, you will be may not be immediately but one day it will come in the new testament there is a law saying whatever you sow you will reap I have met believers who got AIDS they got AIDS before they became believers they lived in sin and then they got converted, they received Jesus and they were born again but they did not get healed of their AIDS and they died of AIDS but they were forgiven and they went to heaven but they reaped what they sowed what is that? they died of AIDS they were not supposed to die like that but they died so God forgave them but they reaped what they sowed so it's a double thing one God forgives us but certain things we have to reap what we have sown for example the bible says train up a child in the way it should go Proverbs 22 6 when he is old he will not depart from it now if you are very careless with your children when they are small you allow them to do what they like you allow them to be rude to you as parents and disobedient and careless in the way you discipline your child what will happen is that child will grow up disrespectful not only to you but disrespectful to older people in society and that child will go astray and when he is a teenager he will become rebellious or she will become rebellious and then you will lose that child to the devil it will go into life of sin and so many things I have seen this happen with believers children and then when the child is 18 or 20 years old you can go before God and weep oh God what to do and the reason is that you were careless when the child was small you are reaping what you sowed when the child was 1 year old people have asked me at what age should we begin to teach our children obedience I said when they are 1 year old because even at that age they can understand they may not know the language but they understand one word no and I will tell you how I learnt it we were visiting our children and one of our grandchildren is just about a year old and just crawling up and was going to climb up the staircase and her dad said no 1 year old it understood that I am cannot ok the next day I saw the child going near the staircase and looking back to see if anybody is watching that's how I knew that they can understand even at the age of 1 all children I am sure my children are like that and your children are like that they understand so you got to teach them obedience from the age of 1 but if you ignore it ignore it and say oh you are loving child it doesn't matter like that you will reap when they are 18-19 years old and it will be you know you sow one seed you reap 100 times what you reap will be much worse than what you so and so we got to be very careful the bible says train up a child in the way it should go when he is old he will not depart from it that means the wrong way it will go the wrong way right way it will go the right way one of the great examples in the old testament is Moses you know that Moses his mother had to the law in Moses time was all male babies must be killed because Pharaoh was afraid these men will grow up and rebel against Egypt so when she looked at this child and said I can't kill this boy so after some time they couldn't hide it anymore they put it in a I don't know 6 months or something put it in a basket and prayed put it in the river and God sent Pharaoh's daughter there to pick up that basket and Miriam Moses older sister was standing around and mother had kept her there and she came up to Pharaoh's daughter and said can I get you a Hebrew nurse to look after this child Pharaoh's daughter said sure and so Moses mother came he didn't know it was a mother and Pharaoh's daughter said please look after this child for some years till it's grown up and can understand maybe I don't know 8-9 years or something and then bring him to the palace so she had that child at home for 8 or 9 years and she knew after that I'll never see this child again and I don't want this child to be lost I want this child to grow up as a God fearing person and a father was not there all the time a father went to work as a slave at 6 o'clock in the morning came at 9 o'clock at night at no time but the mother put so much into the head of this in 8-9 years into the head of Moses and by the time Moses was 40 years old he remembered all that I'm not an Egyptian I'm an Israeli we belong to the God of heaven we are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and God's got a plan for us and these slaves are my people that's how we became their deliverer but I've often thought about that that when Moses was 40 years old I want you to see this verse

Hebrews chapter 11 in Hebrews 11 we read when Moses was 40 years old in verse 23 verse 24 when he grew up there were 3 things he refused I want you to see this verse 24 25 26 there were 3 things that Moses refused when he became 40 years old one he refused the honor of the world I don't want to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter that is the greatest honor you could have grandson of Pharaoh he said no I belong to that despised group of slaves called Israelis second he rejected the pleasures of sin verse 25 you know when you were in Pharaoh's palace you could enjoy every type of evil sinful habit there and you know the palaces of the world rich people's children are all spoiled he rejected it he kept himself pure in that wicked palace he rejected the pleasures of sin how does a young man reject the pleasures of sin right up to the age of 40 particularly when you are surrounded by other people who are sinning it's amazing I mean think of your own life did you reject the pleasures of sin when you were 20 years old 25 years old he rejected it right up to the age of 40 he rejected the honor he rejected the pleasure and the third thing he rejected verse 26 were the riches of Egypt he was the wealthiest person and he said I don't want this money so there were three things that Moses rejected the honor of the world the pleasure of sin and money the wealth the honor of the riches of this world those are the three things with which everybody is tempted all of you and all of us honor pleasure of sin and money and how did Moses reject it he didn't hear anything about these things in the palace it is what was drilled into his head the first nine years it is like a brain is like a computer and the mother had put so much data into this computer reject the pleasure of sin don't seek the honor of this world don't think money is everything drilled drilled drilled drilled drilled drilled into his head for nine years and when he is 40 years old he doesn't forget it train up a child in the way he should go when he is old even if he is growing up in the worst palace in the world he will not reject it what an example Moses mother is what an example for all mothers and that's how Moses grew up so we have to help our children to see these things when they are young and you know I remember my children all left home when they were 18 years old to go to college and I was frequently traveling preaching in the ministry so it was my wife who really brought up my children and she gave up her profession as a doctor just to be with the children but she felt that was more important than making money as a doctor and I don't I agreed with her 100% and you will realize the value of it only much later when I see today that she could have either made a few million rupees as a doctor or have four children following the Lord I know which is heavier you put it in a balance millions of rupees this side and four children following the Lord I know which is heavier so if you don't do these things when they are young you can lose them very very important because particularly in our day and age they are being influenced by so many other people around you have to protect them you have to teach them God's ways teach them these stories don't think you can escape by committing sin let me show you a verse in Ecclesiastes Ecclesiastes chapter 8 Ecclesiastes chapter 8 I hope you all know where it is Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and verse 11 because punishment against sin is not executed immediately therefore the children therefore men and women are given fully to do evil but I know even if a sinner does evil a hundred times and lengthens his life verse 12 finally it will go well only with those who fear God and it will not go well for an evil man even if he lives a long life so because punishment doesn't come immediately that's why people live in sin see for example if every time I tell a lie my tongue gets a little paralyzed don't you think everybody will stop telling lies very quickly or if every time I get angry my tongue gets a little paralyzed people will say brother I can't get a victory over anger they'll get a victory over anger in no time but the punishment doesn't come immediately so they keep on saying make silly excuses no brother it's very difficult to get victory you'll get victory pretty quickly if your tongue gets paralyzed every time you commit a sin it's a very important verse because the punishment doesn't come immediately for example every time you lust after a woman or you look at some pornographic picture your eye becomes a little blind and next time it becomes a little more blind I tell you you will get victory over your pornography within one week you'll never have a problem with

it but because it doesn't happen immediately so true because the punishment is going to come only 50 or 100 years later I can escape you cannot escape anything because the punishment doesn't come immediately there's a record of every single sin I've ever committed in my life there's a record of it and it's in our memory it's not in heaven that God keeps all the record there are no record books in heaven where everybody sins it's all in our memory do you know that every single thing that you ever did in your life good or bad is stored in your memory you can't remember it all because we can't recover all that data our recovery method is not so efficient because the recording head is a bit weak after some time in our mind but everything is there it's like a videotape that's from the day you were born it's been running your memory recording your thoughts your words your actions even your motives and one day you know bible says when you die it all becomes dust but our bodies will be raised up and one day when we stand before the Lord each person is going to be judged for his own life I'll tell you this is how it's going to happen you read about it in Revelation chapter 20 God is just going to press the rewind button you press the rewind button your tape goes back to zero and then from the day of your birth it will be projected on a screen for the whole world to see every single thing that you did spoke thought, the motive with which you did everything will be there on the screen for the whole world to see and nobody will be able to say I never did that like in a court of law they can say no I never did that it's all going to be there and for a Christian the only thing that you can erase from there you know what it is 1 John 1 9 if we confess our sins it's a great verse 1 John 1 9 if we confess our sins God is faithful to cleanse us from all sin you know the word cleansing from sin is not in the Old Testament the Old Testament it only said your sin is covered it's like you put a sheet over it, it's covered but when Jesus died it's cleansed so whatever you confess to God, Lord I'm sorry I did that, it's cleansed and it doesn't take long the thief on the cross in one moment he confessed everything, his whole life was cleansed in a moment he could go to paradise so cleansing doesn't take long but it will never be cleansed if you don't confess it if you blame somebody else you know how Adam blamed somebody else God asked him a simple question did you eat of that tree there are only two answers possible yes or no you know these multiple choice questions that you get in question papers tick yes or no did you eat of that tree, tick yes or no he doesn't tick either of them, underneath he writes third point, my wife gave this to me go out of the garden don't justify yourself be like the thief on the cross and say I'm guilty my fault Lord, I don't blame my mother for the way he brought me up, I don't blame my friends or anybody, me, me, I'm the one who's guilty Jesus said really come with me to paradise, paradise is made for people who will take the blame who won't blame others Adam was kicked out of paradise because he blamed somebody else don't ever blame somebody else for your sins, take the blame that will be erased from that videotape whatever you confess Lord I am to blame it will be wiped out only the good things will remain on the videotape but whatever you don't confess will remain there that's why it's very important to confess our sin, whatever you remember so then people can take advantage of that and say oh then it doesn't matter I just sin and confess it, it gets wiped out then again I sin and I confess it, it gets wiped out and then in the final day when my videotape is played nothing is there, but there will be so many blank spots in that tape, people wonder what were you doing in all those blank spots in the videotape so it will be pretty embarrassing if there are huge blank spaces in that videotape of your life so don't be satisfied in the fact that your sin can be forgiven your life can be wasted, even if your sin is forgiven, remember that it's not enough just to have our sin forgiven we have to live a useful life so remember the two things, one don't believe that God doesn't love you and second don't believe the lie of the devil that sin is not serious ok, let's pray Heavenly Father, please help us to be gripped by the truth of your word so that we can live and walk in the light in Jesus name Amen

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