

Godly Marriages - 1.godly Husbands, Wives and Parents

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the critical role of faith in achieving godly marriages and overcoming challenges through trust in God's promises.

Duration: 1:31:45

Scripture: Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 3:27, Matthew 6:3, John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 6:2, 1 Timothy 5:8, Hebrews 11:6, James 4:7

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Family Values"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in marriage, highlighting the need for couples to trust God for unity, to overcome obstacles that hinder oneness, and to be overcomers with God's help. It discusses the reality of facing challenges in married life and the assurance that God is there to assist in overcoming them. The sermon also touches on the balance of caring for parents in need while maintaining family responsibilities.

Transcript

Like everything else in the Christian life, the most important requirement for any married couple is faith. Throughout the New Testament, you'll find this emphasis on faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

So what should married couples trust God for? You must believe that God is very, very interested in your being one, not two, but one in every way. And he's very, very interested in helping you overcome every problem that can hinder you from becoming one and help you to overcome every attack of Satan. We read in scripture that God was the one who ordained and conducted the first marriage.

That's in Genesis two. And it's almost the very next verse. In Genesis three, it says the devil came.

So as soon as the wedding is over, very next chapter is the devil, even before the honeymoon begins. We must recognize that. We shouldn't try to shut our eyes and imagine that's not true.

And many of you would have found that to be true. But we must not believe in a huge devil and a wee tiny Jesus. That's the trouble with a lot of Christians, not only in relation to married life, but in relation to many other problems we face in life, which may have been from the devil, or maybe just because we live in a sin

cursed earth.

There are a lot of problems which are not directly caused by the devil. But because we live in a world that's cursed because of sin, the earth is cursed and our bodies are from this earth. And so the effect of that is still in our body.

That's why we perspire and things like this and we get sick and we die. So, but whatever the problem is, the Lord wants us to be overcomers. It's very clear in the book of Revelations, the last message of Christ to the churches.

And you find in every one of the churches, the good ones and the bad ones, his message is to him who overcomes, be an overcomer. And right through the end of the book of Revelation, it says, he who overcomes shall be my son and I will be his God. So you must have faith.

Faith is the most important thing. Faith that God wants me to be an overcomer in my marriage. He doesn't want my marriage to be a defeated failure.

He wants me to be an overcomer and he's gonna help me. That's on the other part of faith that God will help me. The Holy Spirit is called a helper and he will help you overcome whatever problems you face in your married life.

God has allowed us, like I said, to live in a world where there are problems. And I believe the reason for that is, because that's where we know his power. Think of the gospels were, had no examples of Jesus facing any problem.

And it was written that they got into a boat and there was no storm. They safely went across to the other side. And the 5,000 people were there and fortunately everybody brought a lunch packet so they could eat.

I mean, if I could change all those stories, the wedding at Cana, fortunately they had planned ahead and there was plenty of wine available. Every one of those stories you could, you remove, just change it slightly and then it becomes boring. But the Lord took his disciples with him through all these different circumstances, all types of circumstances, to show them one truth that he could handle any situation.

I remember once taking a series of studies on the miracles of Jesus. And I titled the series, God Can Solve Every Problem. And it's very interesting to see that the very first problem that Jesus solved was at a wedding, teaching us that the wine can run out.

You know, weddings we prepare so much so that we don't have any embarrassment with visitors having to go without food. But what that teaches us is despite your best preparations, things can go wrong in a marriage. Despite all that you plan and do, there are things that can happen that you don't anticipate and the wine can run out.

That which started, a marriage which started with, wine is a picture of joy and effervescence and, you know, bubbling over and it runs out. And you don't anticipate that, but it does. And what we learn at that wedding is, go to Jesus.

Tell him, be honest. Lord, the wine has run out in our marriage. Sometimes we try to cover it up.

It's all right to cover it up from other people. We don't want to wash our dirty linen in public, but don't hide it from Jesus. Go and show him all your dirty linen.

Tell him everything. And be honest. Our wine has run out.

We're trying to put up a good front before all these wedding guests, but the wine has run out. And we're in a bit of a panic because it's very embarrassing. We don't know what to do.

And Mary told the servants, whatever he tells you to do, do it. So if you're willing to work hard like those servants were, you know, to fill six water pots, 150, 600 liters. It's not easy to fill a water pot of 100 liters, six water pots like that.

If you're willing to work hard like those servants on your marriage, you will discover that at the end, the wine that Jesus produces is even better than what the movies talk about happy marriages. He can do a wonderful job. That is the message of the first miracle that Jesus did.

That's what I mean by having faith. The most important requirement for a marriage is to have faith that God can solve any problem. I don't know what your problem is.

It doesn't matter what it is, what type of wine has run out in your life, but I want to say that Jesus can handle it. I never find any situation where Christ says, oh, that's tough. I don't know how to handle that.

He doesn't even have to think. Immediately, there's an answer. Whatever it is, he'd say, okay, let's go ahead and handle that.

You know, once he was going somewhere and somebody came, interrupted him and diverted him and saying, in Jairus' house, his daughter is sick. He's okay, let's go there. And on the way, they get the message, don't trouble the master anymore.

She's dead. He said, no, let's go. There's no problem he can't solve.

And you will discover, I think you and I will discover when we get to heaven and we see the full picture of life on earth, that it's not the most righteous people who got the best from God. It's the ones who had faith who got the best from God. It's not the ones who did not make a mess of their life who got the best from God.

Sometimes the people who made a mess of their life got the best from God. Like the prodigal son. It's a question of faith.

Supposing, for example, your married life is really bad. You know, like the old heavens on the earth that were destroyed when Satan fell. And it says in Genesis one, verse two, the earth was without shape.

Darkness was over the face of the deep and it was empty, dark. And without any proper shape. Maybe your marriage is like that.

Another person's marriage is also like that. But that person has faith. Lord, I read in the first chapter of the Bible, you made something beautiful out of that rotten earth and you made it so good that even you could certify it is very good.

I believe you can do it. But on the other hand, you say, oh, well, I don't know, things are pretty bad. My husband doesn't understand.

My wife doesn't understand. Put the blame on everybody but yourself. And it doesn't work out.

And you make a mess of your life. And one day, maybe you do get to heaven, scrape there and scrape in there by the skin of your teeth. And when you stand there and you discover that your life was, your married life was pretty bad and you say, what to do, Lord? My wife was like this or my husband was like this and that's why my married life was pretty bad.

And the Lord will call another couple here. They say, come here. He says, let me show you the video of their life.

And the Lord shows you a video of their married life and it was 10 times worse than yours. And then the Lord says, now I'll show you how what the married life turned out to be, a glorious married life. And you say, how did that happen? And the Lord will say, they trusted me, you didn't.

That's all. You thought your mess was so bad that even I couldn't sort it out. Their married life was a bigger mess than yours.

But the difference was they believed that I could handle that. You know, we honor God so much. When we say, God, there's nothing you cannot do.

You can handle anything. There's no problem you cannot solve. Let me turn to Daniel, sorry, not Daniel, Romans chapter four.

The great example from the Old Testament on faith is Abraham. And he didn't have a marriage problem, but he had a family problem in the sense that he had no children. Every married couple longs to have children and he didn't have one.

And not only that, I mean, he was frustrated because nothing seemed to happen. And then the Lord told him that he would have a son. And not only have a son, he said, I'm gonna make you the father of many nations through one son.

And it says here, it's an amazing word in Romans four, verse 17, as it is written, a father of many sons. It started with a promise. You can't have faith if you don't have a promise from God.

You can't, you know, that's the trouble with a lot of books on faith. They don't start with a promise from God. They start with what people call visualization.

There's a counterfeit teaching in the world called the new age teaching on new age movement, which teaches visualization. It's a counterfeit faith. That means imagine, you know, shut your eyes and imagine that you're gonna have a deep blue car or a Mercedes Benz.

Imagine, imagine that you've got a house with five bedrooms in it and you get it. This is not faith. This is new age teaching.

Abraham didn't sort of shut his eyes and imagine that his wife was gonna bear a son. Any amount of visualization wouldn't have made Sarah pregnant. It was a word from God of I have made you a father of many nations.

He got onto that word. It's a wonderful thing when you can lay hold of a promise from God and base your faith on that, put your foot on it, build your house on it. That's a solid foundation.

And it says here, in the presence of him whom he believed, even God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. Something that doesn't exist, a happy marriage. God calls it into being.

And in hope, against hope, he believed. There was absolutely no hope for a 90 year old woman to have a child, but he believed. Why did he believe? He didn't visualize, he believed because God had given him a promise.

And that's why it's very important for you to read the scriptures, to know the promises. I think of so many situations where you, it's not that you can claim a promise for all types of situations, but suddenly a word comes into your mind in some situation if you're walking with God and listening to his word. And say, Lord, I'm gonna claim that.

You know, when we were, my wife and I were walking down a Friday evening to the railway station to catch the train. In the dark, this person dropped this big six foot handle, iron handle on her foot. And boy, she was in real pain.

And we somehow limped across to the compartment. And I thought now, what should we do? Why has God given us all these promises in scripture saying, ask in my name and I'll give it to you. If you ask the father, anything in my name.

And there are a couple of brothers there with us and said, okay, we have two or three here. Now we can pray. Jesus, you're in our midst.

And if you ask for anything, it'll be granted. Are these all just vague sort of smoke in the sky type of thing, which got nothing concrete about it? I said, Lord, this is the time where I wanna claim these promises. In Jesus name, I'm asking you that she'll be free.

And a word popped into my mind, that worse, not one bone of his will be broken. I said, well, I'm not claiming that for life, but this particular situation, I claim that no bone will be broken. And I wanna trust you that you'll be healed.

And in the name of Jesus, walk tomorrow morning. I didn't have faith to say walk right now, but I said, walk tomorrow morning. Jesus would have said walk right now.

I don't have that much faith. And she did walk. What I'm saying is, it was such a tremendous encouragement to me, to the limit of my faith.

All of us have got faith up to a certain limit. According to that, my faith didn't come like that. It's worked through many, many years, as I've trusted God for little things and little more, little more.

It's like going from first standard to second standard, third standard. You can't jump up to 10th standard. Don't try and do that.

You can't jump up to BSC. But if you start in kindergarten and you're faithful, faithful, it's the school of faith. You've gotta keep growing.

And you can. And that's why God gives us these little examinations. First standard examination, second standard examination, third standard examination.

Every examination is a promotion. Trust in the Lord. You have a problem in your married life.

Whatever it is, it doesn't matter what it is. Trust in the Lord. And don't expect to answer 10th standard questions when you're in first standard.

Handle the first standard ones. And then little by little, you'll reach 10th standard one day. Don't look at somebody else who's doing a PhD and expect to be able to answer the questions he can.

You don't have that faith, but you can get there in your married life if you work at it. But if you're lazy, you can sit in first standard for 25 years. Every little thing that comes up, don't just give up hope and say, oh, there's no hope.

Let the unbelievers and the atheists and all say that. You say no. God can solve this.

And little by little by little by little, you can go higher and higher. It's a wonderful thing. So I say faith is the most important thing.

And in hope, against hope, he believed. And then it says in verse 19, without becoming weak in faith, he contemplated, he didn't shut his eyes and say, oh, visualize, oh, my body is very strong. No, no, no.

It says he looked at his body. No visualization. It was as good as dead.

He wasn't visualizing anything. He was just facing reality. He wasn't imagining himself.

I imagine Abraham, I'm not 100 years old. I'm a strong 30 year old. No, I'm a 99 year old guy and my body's as good as dead.

I'm an important man. It's impossible for me to produce a child. That's what my body is like.

And then he looked at his wife, dead. He didn't visualize some baby coming out of Sarah's womb or anything, dead. We must face reality, not pretend.

God never asked us to pretend. When Jesus touched the man's eyes and said, can you see properly? He said, no, I can't see properly. It's all still vague.

Men and trees look alike. He said, okay, we pray for you again. God loves honest people who tell the truth.

Don't believe all this rubbish of confessing something which has not yet happened in your life. He confessed God's word. That's okay.

But not what you visualize. And he looked reality square in the face. A dead marriage.

A pretty miserable situation. Always fighting, quarreling. It looks as if there's no hope.

Like he looked as if there's no hope for a child. You look as if you'll never see a day when you'll have peace in your home. Okay, absolutely dead.

But he did not waver in unbelief. He said, God wants me to have a good marriage. I see that in chapter two of Genesis.

And whoever's messed up my life, married life, it's not God. It's the devil. Jesus said he has come to steal and to kill and to destroy.

He's come to steal all the happiness in marriage. He's come to kill what little life there is in the marriage and destroy it completely. Jesus said that.

But he said, it's not the end of the sentence in John 10, verse 10. But I, but I have come that you might have life in your marriage and not only life, but abundant life. Why don't you claim a promise like that? Okay, the devil came and he stole, he killed and he destroyed.

But Jesus has come. 1 John 3, verse eight. Beautiful promise.

1 John 3, verse eight. The son of God is manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Whatever mess has been created in your marriage, it's by the devil.

You may blame your husband. You may blame your wife. You may blame mother-in-law, father-in-law.

They have only been instruments. Look behind those instruments and see the devil trying to mess up, give you a very unhappy marriage. If you keep concentrating, looking on your mother-in-law and your wife inside, you'll never get anywhere.

It's the devil. Put the blame on the devil. Who used various instruments and now look at Jesus and say, Lord, I believe you're going to sort it out.

You came to destroy the works of the devil. Well, the devil's done quite a bit of work in my married life and you've come to destroy it now and sort it all out. You've come to give me life.

And so he didn't waver at the prong, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God. That verse has often helped me to understand how do I give glory to God? All of us would say, I want to give glory to God. Well, here's the way to give glory to God.

Being fully assured, verse 21, being fully assured that what God has promised, he's able to perform. Not what I visualize God will do, no. But what God has promised, he will perform.

As he told me that if the devil has come to steal and kill and destroy, he has come to give me life, he will do it. He will do it. As he does it say in the word, the son of God has come to destroy the works of the devil.

He'll do it. You know, that's why it's so important to know these promises in scripture. I feel sorry for people who walk around with all these wonderful checks, huge amounts of money inside the Bible and they don't even cash it.

Think of this verse, for example, what a fantastic check it is. 1 John 3, 8. The son of God is manifest to destroy the works of the devil, every single one of them. I believe that.

I didn't have that faith when I was a young Christian and you know why? Not because I was young. Because the preachers who preached to me didn't have that faith themselves. And they never stirred up faith in me.

They gave me all types of information about the Bible but didn't create faith. They would read it like some Bible study and go to the root meaning of the Greek word and all that rubbish. Instead of telling me, hey listen, Jesus can destroy the works of the devil in your life, in your married life.

What a difference that would have made in my life if I had heard that when I was young. You guys don't realize how lucky you are to hear the things that you hear. Particularly you are young married couples, you can begin your married life knowing that Jesus can destroy the works of the devil.

Don't waver in unbelief. Doesn't matter if year by year, Abraham had to wait 25 years and it looks as if Sarah's womb is going deader and deader. But Lord, I'm going to give glory to you by being fully assured what you have promised you're able to perform.

I want to show you also Matthew chapter 19. See, there are so many books on marriage and bringing up children, all techniques and this and that and the other. It's all psychology.

A lot of it is psychology. I don't want to stand up here and teach you psychology. There are enough, if you want to read that, there are hundreds of books, go and read them.

Go on the internet, you'll find lots and lots of messages on happy married life and all. I'll tell you this, the only one who can sort out your problem is Jesus Christ. Not some psychological technique.

Like they say, from your office every half an hour, call up your wife and say, darling, I love you. That's not the way to have a happy marriage, to call up your wife every half an hour. A lot of people do that, it doesn't succeed.

But if you can trust God that he can do something, he can do it. I don't call up my wife every half an hour wherever I am and say, I love you. That's not the way.

I trust God, we must trust God that God will bring healing and life into our marriage. Matthew 19, listen to this. He's talking about marriage in verse three.

A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. This is Jesus speaking. The two shall become one flesh.

What therefore God has joined together let no man separate. What God has joined together, let no one separate. Who joined you together? Almighty God.

It doesn't matter even if you were non-Christians and you got married in a temple. Do you believe a husband and wife who are married in a temple or a mosque have been joined by God? I believe it. Do you believe God recognizes that marriage which is conducted in a court or in a temple or a mosque? Yes, because marriage is not for Christians.

Marriage is for human beings. Adam was not a Christian. Adam was a human being.

It was her human being that God gave a wife. Because if you say that that marriage conducted in a mosque is not a valid marriage, then that woman is unmarried. You can go and marry her.

Who do you think of doing that? You'd get into trouble with the law of the land. She is married. God recognizes it.

Because marriage was meant for human beings. And so what God has joined together, it doesn't matter. You say, well, I didn't pray and seek God's will before I got married.

It doesn't make a difference. Do you think those people who got married, all the non-Christians who get married seek God's will? They don't, some of them don't even believe in God. But God accepts the fact that once a man and wife come together and they become one flesh, they are married in God's eyes.

God has joined them and nobody should separate them. And so he, now you see that they are, the two have become one. And look at this wonderful word.

I wish you would remember this all your life. Just this little expression. In verse six.

They are no longer two, but one. They are no longer two, but one. That's the word of God.

And then he says, therefore nobody should separate them. And so if the devil tries to separate you, by separate I don't mean divorce. Divorce is one of the last states where the marriage is dead.

But long before that, when the devil's trying to separate you by you don't talk to each other for a few days or you don't talk to each other for a few hours or you don't talk to each other for one minute because you're angry, separation has come. May not be divorce yet, but there is a separation. If you're so angry with your partner that you won't talk to that person for the next 30 seconds, I tell you separation has already come.

May not be divorce, but it's the first step towards it. If there's ever in a time in my life that I get so upset with my wife that I won't talk to her for the next 15 seconds, the devil's already come between us. You recognize that? Or do you say, well, it's not such a long time.

I mean, I just got a bit upset for five minutes. You didn't get upset for five minutes, brother. The devil brought a division between you.

Call it what you like. He took a scissors and cut something. He didn't cut the whole thing, but there is a cut there and you gotta stitch it up.

You can keep on stitching it up. You can keep on having cuts and keep on having stitched up, but your shirt will be full of stitches after a while. Why not avoid that? Why not recognize the Lord? Says you two are not two, you are one.

And if you keep on thinking that the fault is with your wife, you're just following in Adam's footsteps. This woman, she's the cause of the problem, God. And don't forget, you gave her to me.

So part of the problem is with you as well. Why in the world did God give me such a wife? Do you know there are Christian husbands who go around saying that? I can prophesy they'll never have a good marriage because they glorify the devil every single day. You glorify the devil, this is too big a problem.

My wife is so bad, even Almighty God cannot change her. That's exactly like the Israelites said on the borders of Canaan. Oh, these giants are so big, even Almighty God cannot get rid of them.

Well, you say that? None of them entered the promised land and neither will you. Not because God couldn't do it, but because you feel that the problem is bigger than God. So the most important aspect of faith is, I don't care what your problem is, you must believe that God is bigger than the problem.

The whole Bible teaches that, whether it's lack of wine in Cana or big giants in Canaan. Same thing, God is bigger than the problem. I don't care what it is.

And we are in the new covenant where we can have faith. Where I don't consider myself and my wife as two, we are one. And anything that tries to come to separate me even for five seconds, that's the devil, that's not God.

Anything, I don't care what it is. It could be just a little misunderstanding. Sometimes there's a little division in the mind.

Then think of the devil, come with a pair of scissors, he's already snipped up something in your mind. A little misunderstanding. A lot of problems between husbands and wives are due to misunderstanding in communication.

Because we are fallen creatures. We're not perfect, our understanding is not perfect. You may say something with one particular meaning and maybe your wife or your husband is under some pressure at that time because of work or something else or she's thinking about something else and hears you and doesn't hear the spirit in which you have said it.

Hears the words and interprets it in another way. Husband and wife. Which marriage has not experienced that? I say, if you say you haven't experienced that in your marriage, I'll tell you to your face, you're a liar.

Now the question is, how do you handle that? The devil's bringing a misunderstanding about something my husband said or my wife said. If you're a wise person, you can say, hey, we're not supposed to be two, we're supposed to be one. I'm not gonna listen to the devil.

Maybe I need to talk to my partner and clarify, hey, maybe I didn't understand something here. What exactly? I just want to understand you better. It's clear.

Instead of that, you can keep it in your mind, let it fester and fester and become like pus destroying your marriage. Who did that? You. You just cooperated with the devil in allowing it to fester in your mind.

Remember, my dear brothers and sisters, in marriage, your battle is not with your wife or husband, it is with Satan. If only Adam and Eve had recognized, it's not my wife, it's Satan. Instead of pointing at his wife, he should have pointed at the devil and said, that's the one.

But he pointed at his wife. So let's stop pointing our fingers at each other. There's a great verse in the Old Testament, which I love, about how your marriage can be like a watered garden.

Isaiah 58. Imagine if your life is like Eden. It's a picture of a beautiful marriage.

And it says in Isaiah, in chapter 58, about this watered garden. In verse 11, you'll be like a watered garden. Think of that as your marriage, like a watered garden.

Your marriage will be like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. How does it happen? Because in the midst of your problem, verse nine, you call upon the Lord, and the Lord answers. You cry, and immediately he says, here I am.

And you stop pointing the finger at each other. That's what it says there. Do you read it? When you call upon the Lord, stop pointing your finger at each other.

Then your life will be like a watered garden. Don't pray to God if you're pointing your finger at your husband and wife, and say, Lord, change my wife, or change my husband. He's not gonna listen to you, first of all, and nothing will happen.

I mean, if the servants had gone and complained, saying, the manager at Cana, he should have thought about how many people are coming and arranged for more wine. They didn't point the finger at anybody. They just did what Jesus told them to do, filled up the water pots, that was wine.

Better wine than they ever had. God can solve every problem. You know, one of the first problems that come in marriage is exactly what Jesus said here.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother. I find in India that is almost the number one cause of problems, that man and woman, they are more attached to their parents than to each other. They are not one with each other, they are one with their old daddy and mommy.

And daddy and mommy also shed their tears and try to make that attachment very close. Why in the world did an almighty God say a man must leave his father and mother and leave to his wife? Yeah, you have to do that. If you don't do it, if there's no leaving or the leaving is improper, the cleaving will also be improper.

Leave and cleave, that's what it says here in Matthew 19. You leave and you cleave. That's the first commandment in the Bible.

Did you know that? The very first commandment in the Bible, the only commandment given before sin came. It's at the end of Genesis two, which says a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Do you think that was given for Adam? What do you say, yes or no? All great Bible scholars, don't you know the answer? Adam didn't have a father and mother.

Why should God tell him to leave his father and mother? He never had a father and mother. It was written for us that in marriage, a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Then only there'll be, the leaving is proper, the cleaving will be proper.

Now, the leaving has to be emotional. It's not always possible physically. I know very poor families in the villages in India who sometimes cannot afford to move into a separate house.

If they can, it's good, but sometimes they can't. What is good? Does God care only for rich people who can afford to rent a separate house? That's not the God I believe in. There are a lot of people who live in a separate house who live a thousand miles away from their parents and the father and mother are pulling the strings even from thousand miles.

That's not leaving. And another family may be living in the same house due to poverty as their parents and the father and mother are not able to pull any strings there. My wife and I were very poor when we got married.

Believe it or not, we could not afford to rent a house. It's true. We had to live in one room of our parents' house, but I did not let them pull the strings.

I left them. And I know from experience, you can live in the same house and not allow your parents to pull strings. And I know from what I've heard from many other people, parents can live 10,000 miles away and pull the strings.

There must be an emotional detachment. It's not that you don't care for them. The greatest example is Jesus.

Jesus didn't get married to a woman, but there was a day in his life, at the age of 30, the father said, come out of your home. Now you're married to me. He was married to his father.

And it says in Matthew four that he shifted his house from Nazareth to Capernaum. Well, that's because he would have so many visitors coming and he didn't want to trouble his brothers and sisters and mother. He lived separately.

And the very next thing you read is the marriage at Cana, where Mary, why did she go to Jesus? Jesus had never done a miracle till that day. Have you ever thought why she went to Jesus and said they don't have any wine? Because she had seen through 30 years, not miracles. She had never seen one miracle, but she had seen this amazing son of hers who was so resourceful, resourceful, not miraculous, so resourceful that almost any problem in the home, he would be able to find some way of solving it.

And she had watched that for 30 years and said, I think in this house, there's only one person whom I can go to to find a solution to this problem, that's my son. And can you imagine the shock she gets when he turns around and says, woman, what have I got to do with you? And wow, is this the same boy I've watched for 30 years who always said, mommy, sure, sure. I'll do it right now, mom.

Woman, what have I got to do with you? She got the shock of her life. Jesus was leaving his earthly mother saying, I'm not your old son anymore, I moved into another realm. That's what every man needs to say.

You don't have to call your mother woman, but you've got to have that same spirit. When you are detached, call her by the most loving name you like, but say, I'm attached to somebody else because I want to obey God's word. And they will shed that tears, oh, this son of mine, we brought him up for 25 years, 28 years, and now there's some woman comes in from nowhere and he's going after her.

Let them say what they like. You are obeying God's word. I tell you, you'll have a happy marriage.

I did that. Don't fight with them. Don't fight with your in-laws.

When my father-in-law's a very strong man. Unfortunately, he got a stronger son-in-law. But he didn't realize that in the beginning.

He thought I'd be like one of his obedient sons and he would give me all types of advice as to what I should do, like this, this, this, this. I tell you, never once did I argue with him. I listened, listened, listened.

I don't care how long he talked. I never did a single thing he said. The next time I meet him, he'd give me a whole lot of more advice.

I'd listen, no argument. I'd never do a single thing he said. He finally gave up.

Isn't that a better way? Peaceful way of doing your own thing, but having no conflict with anybody. My dad would tell my mom, my wife, rather. My dad would tell my wife all types of things.

All with good intentions. Both father and father-in-law, all with good intentions. My wife also listened.

She'd come and tell me. I'd say, we've got some plans to do. It was quite different.

She never argued with my dad. She never did what he said, because she did what I said. What do you gain by arguing with your in-laws? Just ignore it.

If they don't have victory over sin, and most in-laws, I think, don't have victory over sin, they shout at you, yell at you. What are you gonna do? What do you do if you walk down the street and some dogs bark on the other side of the road? Let them bark. Don't go arguing with that dog.

I'll tell you this, it's not wise to go arguing with dogs that bark. Just quietly go by. When you come back next day, again, they bark.

Let them bark. Good advice for relationship with in-laws who bark. I'm telling you honestly.

But be detached. But I see the same Jesus when he was in agony on the cross, caring for his mother. That is the balance.

To say to your mother, I'm now not the same. But even in the midst of your agony, to think, oh, somebody's got to take care of my mother. But Lord, she's got four other sons.

Why are you worried? That's okay, but I'm the eldest son. I have a responsibility. Boy, there's something I learned from Jesus.

It doesn't matter if there are other sons. Jesus felt he was the eldest and he must provide for her. That's the balance.

Care for your parents when they're old. Sometimes your wife may not want you to send money to your parents who are poor. Now, if your parents have plenty or your parents are using money you sent to them to get drunk or something, then don't send it.

But if they are in real need and they have taken care of you, you should send them money. Someone asked me a question once. What if my wife does not allow me to send money to my parents? I say, obey the scripture, which says, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Very simple. Send off that money before your wife even knows it's gone. It's scripture.

Your wife is like your left hand. Don't let her know it. You're doing good.

But make sure you're not giving money to people who don't need it. I mean, if your parents are very rich, you don't need to support them. I mean, you can give them a token gift or something to show your appreciation.

But you've got to build your own family. I think it's foolish for a husband to keep sending money where it's not needed. See, God also doesn't give where it's not needed.

God gives where it's needed. Once you get married, remember this also. That as far as possible, you should think together in this area.

Think together in the matter of finances because that's the other area where there's a lot of problems. In laws, another big area is money. And you may say, but I earned the money, so I do what I like with it.

Well, you're letting the devil come and bring a division between you. Why did God give you a wife? To be a helper. Why did God give Adam a wife? To be a helper to, let me say, to help you to think straight.

Even in the use of money. You may think you're very smart and you know how to handle everything. Maybe you are.

But God now is giving you a helper because he can help you unless you've got a very unreasonable wife. I think you must respect your wife and recognize that God's given her to you to balance you. You know, I experience a lot of this in dealing with churches where I say the New Testament pattern is two elders in a church.

And I've seen the tremendous advantage we've had here with Ian and I being elders here right from day one. That's a blessing which I'm extremely thankful to God for. And it's the same in marriage.

Why two elders? Why not one? Because if you have one, I've seen that in some of our own CFC churches where one man, very gifted, very capable, wonderful organizer, does a tremendous work. But he knows that in CFC we believe in two elders. So he appoints the person who's least likely to question him in the church as a fellow elder.

And that person is yes, sir type of person. Anything, yes, sir. Jump into the river, yes, sir.

Yes, sir, yes, sir, yes, sir. And for name's sake, he's got an elder. And I tell them, I can see through that.

I say, it's all window dressing. You're pretending that you're two elders. I say, you're not two elders.

You're just a single Pentecostal pastor running the show. For name's sake, you put one fellow as a elder. And there are some people who treat their wives like that.

Yeah, she's my helper, but only for name's sake. She's just got to come and put the rubber stamp. I've already decided the whole thing.

That's not the reason why God gave you a wife. And that's not the reason why we say there must be two elders in a church. The two elders are what brings balance.

It's like two legs. If you ever think your wife is not needed, try standing on one leg and see how long you can stand, just in case you have some doubt about it. That's the other leg.

Maybe the right leg is more important like the right hand, but you need the other leg to stand on it. What gives you greater stability in your life? And your wife has been given to you to give you stability in your married life. Appreciate her and value her.

Sometimes it may be the wife who needs to value her husband, who she thinks is dumb. Stability comes when both fulfill their part, you know, like two hands, two eyes, two ears, two legs. It's stability.

You have three-dimensional vision because you've got two eyes. You try to, with one eye, what you have is two-dimensional vision. Three-dimensional vision comes because you've got two eyes which are not in the same point, but slightly apart like these three-dimensional cameras.

You have two lenses slightly apart like the eyes. That's how you get a three-dimensional picture. So there's a dimension of understanding of a situation that can come only if you are willing to accept a wife

who looks at it from a slightly different position than yours, like the two eyes, a little separated.

If the both eyes were right next to each other, you wouldn't have three-dimensional vision. These are little parables in nature. God's given you a wife to be a helper and she sees things slightly different from you, but your aim is the same, to glorify God.

Accept her help in the way you run your finances. Run your finances, sure, but accept her advice and don't despise it. That'll build your marriage, not only in a matter of money, but in every other area.

Particularly once you have children, you really need her advice. I'll tell you some areas when it comes to children, she may know better than you. Any father will tell you this.

I can certainly say this. You have a little baby crying his or her lungs out and the poor father doesn't have a clue what's the reason. The mother picks it up immediately, knows the reason.

Is it because she's cleverer? No, there's a little instinct there in a mother that tells her what exactly is the problem with the child when the father is absolutely clueless. And the father may be a brilliant scientist or whatever it is, but he's clueless when it comes to the child. See, that's just an example of how God, we need one another.

It's not just in the ordinary things like that. In many other areas, another viewpoint. So value your wife's input in the matter of money matters or every other matter.

Don't think you're so smart that you can take every decision in life because I'll tell you this, you may think like that when you know children or children are small, but if you grow up like that and think that you can bring up your children best without your wife's advice, I can prophesy your children will go astray. Believe it or not, they will. Because you ran your home like a single Pentecostal pastor.

That's not the way to run a home. There's a dual eldership in the home of father and mother. And that's what produces the balance.

Because none of us can reflect God perfectly to our children. Impossible. The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ full of grace and truth.

And you must be humble enough to acknowledge no matter how spiritual you are, no matter how smart you think you are, you cannot reflect the nature of God fully by yourself. I acknowledged that from day one when we started our church. I may think I'm more gifted than my fellow elder, but I cannot reflect the nature of God fully by myself.

So God gives me a brother to fill up the gaps in my personality and my being able to reflect Christ. And if I'm humble enough to accept him, not as some second class brother, but as an equal who can balance me out, may not have the gifts I have, it doesn't matter. But he's balancing me out in areas where I'll be terribly imbalanced if he isn't there.

So all it requires on the part of husband or wife is humility. The humility to acknowledge that no matter how smart you think you are, you are imbalanced. However clever you may be, however books on psychology and marriage you have read, you are imbalanced.

And you will be imbalanced till the end of your life. I've been a believer 53 years. I'm the first person to acknowledge I'm imbalanced.

But I thank God I'm not a lonely person. I'm a part of a body. This hand is imbalanced, but thank God there's a left hand.

The right leg is imbalanced, but thank God there's a left leg. It's like that. Every part of our body is imbalanced and you need to recognize you're imbalanced.

And that'll give you the humility to consult your wife in money matters and every other matter. So important. That leads on to communication.

Communication is one of the very important things in married life. It's one of the things that distinguishes us from animals. I mean, there are, I hear the animals also communicate with some buzzing noises and all types of things.

I don't know exactly how they do it. The birds migrate and they sort of communicate with each other in some way. But there's no bird that can go to another bird and say, I know, honey, I really love you.

There's no bird or a bee or any dog or cat that can say that. There's something precious about the communicating expressions of love to one another. And God has given us a book in case you don't have any ideas as to what to say to your wife or husband.

Open your Bible in the middle. You'll end up in the Song of Solomon. Right in the middle.

God's given you a book to help you. You don't have to go to the psychology books. Just go to the Song of Solomon and get some ideas from the Holy Spirit as to how to talk to your husband or your wife.

Oh, we are Indians. We are embarrassed. We don't wanna talk all that.

It's Almighty God who put that book there. Basically, it's expressions of appreciation. What's the need for that? We say we're married.

It's like the husband who said, why do I need to tell my wife every now and then I love her? I told her that 35 years ago when I married her. That's it. I signed it and said, I love you, finished.

Now let's move on. Let's move on to other things. Unfortunately, we are human beings who need a lot of assurance.

A man wants a wife who will respect him. And see, that's the meaning of being a head. If you, sisters, if your husband sees that you really respect him, even though you may be clever in many other areas, I tell you, you're doing a great job to build a happy marriage.

And brothers, just like you long to see that your wife respects you, your wife wants to know that you really love her. And you know those expressions of respect that your wife give means so much to you? Expressions of affection that you say to your wife means so much to her. And the Son of Solomon is a wonderful book.

Should I tell you one of the songs I sing to my wife? It won't embarrass you. Razack, holy man of God, singing songs to his wife. You're the lily of the valley.

You're the rose of Sharon to me. Razack, you sing that to the Lord or you sing it to your wife? I say to my wife. Because if you read the Song of Solomon carefully, you'll find the bridegroom is saying that to his

wife.

It's not Jesus who's the lily of the valley, by the way. It's not Jesus who's the rose of Sharon. And in spite of all the wrong songs we sing, it's the husband telling a wife, you're the lily of the valley, you're the rose of Sharon.

To my Lord, I say you're my Lord and my Redeemer. That's different. I'm serious, I'm not joking.

Go to the Song of Solomon and learn how to express love and appreciation and affection for one another. We really need that in these days when the devil's trying to tear marriages apart. That's not romantic cinema stuff.

Song of Solomon is not cinema stuff. It's the holy word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. And mean it.

Mean it. Don't say nice things to your wife just when you wanna have sex with her. That's a pretty selfish reason.

Express your appreciation when you want nothing. Do you go and say praise God only when you wanna get something from God or He's always worthy of praise? So when you express your appreciation for your wife, you're not saying she's the most perfect woman in the world or the most good-looking or anything like that, but she's good-looking in your eyes. Sure, should be.

I like that expression. You know, Ezekiel in chapter 24, when God, you know, these prophets had to go through a tough time and Ezekiel's wife was gonna die. And God had warned Ezekiel, I'm gonna take away your wife in death.

But notice what he calls his wife. That's the thing that really struck my heart. Ezekiel 24, verse 16.

Word of the Lord came to me saying, son of man, I am about to take away from you the desire of your eyes with a blow. What a word. How many of you husbands will say honestly, my wife is the desire of my eyes? I don't have eyes for anybody else.

She is the desire of my eyes. It's a scriptural expression. I base everything I say on scripture.

Tell her, you are the desire of my eyes. And say that to God, Lord, my wife is the desire of my eyes. The other expression I love in the Old Testament is in Malachi in chapter two, where the Lord speaks about the wife in verse 15, as the wife of your youth.

That's another beautiful expression. Twice, verse 14 and 15. The wife of your youth.

And that's particularly applicable to your wife gets old, you got old too. And you still look at her as she was when you first saw her when she was 23 or 24. She may be 70 or 80 now, but the wife of my youth.

Look at these beautiful expressions the Bible speaks about to save you from so many temptations in the modern world. You can look at your wife as the desire of your eyes and the wife of your youth, look back. One of the favorite pictures I have of my wife on my table is when she was about 25 or 26 years old.

So I see her even today. You know, we must express appreciation and communicate with one another. And that's why in a busy world, like many of you are working in jobs where you're away so long from work, at work and so long away from home.

You need to have what they call quality time. You don't have the luxury of having long periods of time, but quality time, maybe five minutes, 10 minutes, where you can, you know, make sure that everything is clear, that the air is clear. What shall we do in a situation like the world we live in where unfortunately, if you take all the commute time and the work time, a lot of people are away from home 11 to 12 hours every working day.

It's very unusual. It's the world we're living in. And out there at work, men, women, men working, women working.

There are pretty girls who would like to be friendly with you, even married ones. That's the world we're living in. You gotta be very careful.

You gotta be very careful. Let me ask you, brothers and sisters who work in an office, do you joke with your friends? Even some of the glum looking people, they joke with their friends, by the way, I've discovered that. They joke with their friends in their place.

Okay, men, men with men, okay. Second question, do you joke with your wife? No, the wife holds serious matters. Isn't she your friend? I believe we should joke with our wives.

You see, I can't think of anything. How do you suddenly think of so many things when you're with your friends in office? You're not cracking some great joke like some comedian, just funny things in life. Don't make fun of her.

Don't say, brother Zach said I must joke and make fun of her. I'm not talking about that type of jokes. If you wanna make fun, make fun of yourself.

That's okay. But I believe humor is a very important part of communication. I mean, with all the sternness that Ian has seen in my military conduct, he sees me joke now and then.

That's why we have a good relationship. He forgives me many times saying, oh, he was in the military, it's okay. But humor, it just makes the atmosphere so wonderful.

I wanna encourage all of you to joke and laugh with your marriage partner. You don't have to be a great comedian to buy a book of jokes and tell stories. I'm not talking about, that may be pretty boring.

Honey, I'm gonna read a joke to you now. I'm not talking about that type of rubbish. You don't have to buy any book of jokes.

Just, you know, there are a lot of things in life that are pretty funny. God has a sense of humor. That's why he made the monkeys.

Have you ever looked at a monkey? And God's got a sense of humor. And I wanna be like God. It's very important to have a sense of humor.

I really believe if I want to know whether you have a good relationship with your wife, I will not ask you, do you read the Bible every day with her? Do you pray every day with her? Do you have family prayer? I say, do you joke with her? Because you know. Now answer me this question. Supposing sometime you have a tension with your husband or wife, and that can happen.

Can you still pray together? Sure. Can you still read the Bible together? Yes. Can you go to church together? Yes.

But can you joke together when you have a tension? No. You can't do that. Look back over your life.

Sometime when you had a tension, did you joke with each other at that time? No. But you could still pray morning prayer, evening prayer, even though you were not talking to each other for a few days. But you could pray together, you could read the Bible together, but you couldn't joke.

So I say the test of a good relationship is humor. Well, you say, where's the verse? The verse is, I'll show you the verse. You want a verse for everything, right? Brother Zack says, there's always a verse for everything.

It's in 1 Corinthians chapter seven. I don't have a commandment, but I give my opinion. That's the verse.

I don't have a commandment, but I give my opinion. So that's my opinion. I can't find it immediately.

It's somewhere here in this chapter. Where is it? Do you find it? I do not have a commandment from the Lord. 10, not 10.

Which one? 25? Yeah, that's it. Remember this verse. I have no command from the Lord, but I give an opinion.

That humor is the test of a good relationship. Got it? So you've got a verse also now for that. But I tell you from many years of experience and watching a lot of serious husbands and wives, I'll tell you this, humor is very, very important in marriage.

And I want to choke with my wife and pull her leg, even if I'm 100 years old. Sure. But never making fun of her, no.

Communication, brother, sister, please take time to speak. And you know, the young couples, I always say, go for a walk together. You know, when you have children, it's not so easy.

But if you still don't have children, go for a walk together. Even a 10, 15 minutes, just whatever has happened during the day, air it all out and clear everything before you go to bed. Very, very important.

Make sure that when you go to bed, there are no outstanding tensions or things that are unresolved. Very, communication is a very important part of marriage. And I want to say a word about when you have teenage children.

Let me come to that now. See, when children are small, I'll tell you, this is the experience of all children, all parents rather. When children are small, they're such a job, they mess up the floor and they don't eat properly and all types of things, they fall, jump, break, it's like injuries and all that.

And you say, oh, I wish they'd grow up. And they do grow up and become teenagers. And then what do you wish? So I wish they were little children again.

It was so easier when they were three, four years old. Now they won't even listen to me. That's it.

At every stage, we need wisdom. And when, if you have teenage children, I'll tell you something. Make sure that they become your friends.

I disciplined my children pretty strongly when up to the age of 12, I used the belt. I used other forms of punishment like you can't play, lie down in bed. Two hours, can't do anything.

They're different forms depending on the gravity of the crime. If they ever spoke rudely to mommy, I would say, you're not gonna do anything now till you go and apologize to her. My wife had other forms of punishment, like write down 100 times, I'll never do this, I'll never do this.

And once she looked up one of my son's drawers and found pages of I will never blank, I will never, ready for filling up the blanks and quickly. Yeah. Yeah, there's different forms of punishment.

It doesn't all have to be spanking. But once they became teenagers, 13 onwards, I don't remember, maybe accidentally I did in anger, maybe once or twice did it, I really repented of such occasions. But it wasn't maybe once.

But otherwise, after they crossed 13, I say, I wanna be their friends now. If I haven't succeeded in disciplining them by the age of 12, I better try other methods now. And I tried to win their heart, pray with them and seek to be their friends.

Whenever I prayed, I put my arms around them. I don't know whether your parents put your arms around your children and pray. I would pray, even with my 40 year old son, I put my arm around him today and pray.

I want him to know that touch of a father. It means a lot, I tell you, means a lot when your children feel your arm around them. You fathers and mothers must hug your daughters and sons.

A lot of them don't feel that love at home, unfortunately. Because father and mother are so busy, they're providing everything, good clothes, good food. They need a hug.

They need expressions of love. And you don't give it to them, you know what they do? They go looking for it somewhere else. With some worldly boy or girl in college who's ready to offer them what the parents should have offered them.

All human beings want to be loved. That's why orphans, there's a thing called an orphan syndrome, they grow up without having father and mother hug them when they were small. They grow up with insecurities, a lot of insecurities, because they never experienced affection.

Your children may not be orphans, but you can make them grow like orphans because they don't hear you talk to them. I'm very thankful that whenever, that's one reason my wife stopped working. Whenever the children came home from school, there was a mom there at home to talk to them about what happened during the day.

She wasn't so busy doing something else or earning money that she didn't have time to talk to the children. I believe that is what protected them. And that's where we could quickly spot, because children can pick up all types of bad habits in school.

But it mustn't be detected five years later, it must be detected immediately. What did you do today, honey? Where did you go? What happened, who talked to you? And don't make them only tell you the formal things like we studied physics and played cricket and all. So my wife would ask them things like, is there some girl in your class you think is pretty? You ask questions like that? We don't talk such things, we talk

all holy stuff.

And so then they'd open up, they'd say, oh, daddy and mommy are not afraid to talk about girls. And we had early boys, you know. And then my wife would say, next time we have a school function, show me that girl.

I'd like to see that girl whom you think is really good. And then they'd go there and this boy would say, mommy, it's that girl over there. And mommy would say, that's not so good.

I think the other one is a little better. We have to be free. I mean, both of us knew this is all what's called puppy love.

You know, little puppies loving each other. They're not serious about getting married. It's a natural attraction.

All boys and girls, they're 12, 13 years old, they have eyes for the opposite sex. And don't pretend to them that you shouldn't have it as if you never had it when you were 12, 13 years old. Aha, tell me another story.

They are just like you. And you may not have it, but what you need to do is restrain them. That don't go and express your affection to that person.

A lot of young people today are messing up their lives, I tell you, in their teenage years because the parents are not giving them instruction. The way I can liken it is this 18 year old boy or girl, you give them your car to drive and never got into a car ever. They don't have a license.

They don't know, they like speed, but they don't have a license. They don't know how to put the brakes. They don't know.

They especially don't know where the brakes are. They just know where the accelerator is and they go full speed and go crashing. So my poor darling, what happened to you? Why in the world didn't you teach them how to drive a car? There are parents who are very eager to teach their children.

Oh, 18 years old, now I can get them a driving license. What about teaching them how to handle sex? It's a million times more important than learning to drive a car. You teach them to drive a car and you don't teach them about sex.

You are a crazy husband, crazy father and mother. You don't have to teach that to a 10 year old, but by the time they are 14, 15 years old, you know, there are desires stirring up in them. You have to teach them.

You have to teach them. You have to warn them. When I, I remember when my children went to college, I, almost every letter of mine was a warning, a warning, a warning against, be careful, be careful, be careful.

All I told them of all the tricks that boys and girls will try. Then that is girls will try to win you. You know, the Bible also warns us about the techniques of girls.

Have you read that in Proverbs? Proverbs is a great chapter. I used to tell my boys to read it regularly, especially chapters like chapter seven and all that. But here's one of those verses.

It says in Proverbs chapter six, how can I keep a boy from an evil woman? Verse 24, from the smooth tongue of some flirtatious woman who wants to get ahold of my boy. I have to warn him, don't desire, verse 25, Proverbs 6, 25. Don't desire her beauty in your heart.

Don't let her capture you with one of her eyelids because that girl will reduce you to a loaf of bread. It'll be like fire in your bosom and your clothes will be burnt. Your feet will be scorched, verse 27, 28.

Be careful. You have to use strong language to warn our boys and girls because sex is a much more, is much greater power inside a person's body than the accelerator in a car. Maybe the accelerator can lead you up to 150 kilometers an hour, sex is much more powerful than that.

And you don't give any advice. Dear brothers and sisters, you've got teenage children, please take this area very seriously. Some of your children are probably messing up in some area and you don't have a clue.

What they're doing. And you'll never know because you're not friends with them. You're wondering what marks they're getting in their college.

But there's something worse than that going on in college. You know, I saw that with some people, some of the children that grew up in the Gulf, Persian Gulf. In the Persian Gulf, there is no co-educational school that is completely forbidden in a Muslim country.

Even the buses, you can't travel in a school bus. Separate bus for boys, separate bus for girls. Small girls, small boys, they're very strict.

And so here are children who grow up, particularly if they are believers, they grow in the secluded atmosphere. They go to school with people of their own sex. They go right up to the age of 18, complete 12th standard, only with the only see boys, only see boys, girls only see girls, and at home they are protected in that particular atmosphere.

They go to a church, they're protected, they come back. And all of a sudden, at the age of 18, they finish 12th, they are sent to a college in India to study. And most of them fall into immorality.

It's happened. Because parents are pumping money into them. It's one of the worst things you can do is keep on giving money to an immature kid who's in college.

And they don't become spiritual. A lot of money, no proper friendship or love or attention or affection. Dear brothers and sisters, be good parents.

Be friendly. Let your heart be drawn towards your children. In Proverbs 7 also, I've got a lot of warnings about that.

In Malachi chapter four. You know the last verse of the Old Testament? The last verse of the Old Testament is about restoring the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. And I would say mothers as well.

Parents, let's put parents there. The hearts of parents being drawn to their teenage children and the hearts of the teenage children being drawn to their parents. What a wonderful thing that'll be, if that can be true in your life.

So I want to warn, and not warn, but encourage all of you parents who've got children growing up 13, 14. The time for physical punishment is always over now. Now you need to win their hearts.

I used to pray like this. I said, Lord, these four boys of mine, they are children now. But I pray with all my heart that one day they'll be my brothers in Christ.

Not just namesake. Oh, they've set the magic formula. Lord Jesus come into my heart.

They got dipped in baptism and they are my brothers. I don't mean that. I mean real brothers in Christ.

That's what I wanted. I prayed for that when they were small. I said, they're my children now.

I want them one day to grow up to be my brothers in Christ. Can you imagine the joy I had when I was sitting with one of my sons traveling on a flight inside the United States many years ago? I think it must have been more than 10 years ago. It's long before all of them got married.

As soon as we sat down and the plane took off, he took out his Bible and said, Dad, I want to talk to you something from here, from scripture. Can you imagine the excitement in my heart? I said, Lord, what a God you are. You answer prayer.

My son taking the Bible and wanting to talk to me about scripture. Boy, that made my day. It made my life.

Pray, pray for your children. The greatest thing you can do is to pray for your children regularly. My wife and I did that regularly.

I encourage all of you to pray for your children every single day. I don't get discouraged if some of them, maybe you hear some of these things and say, oh, I didn't do it right. There's hope for you.

The Lord came to destroy the works of the devil. Maybe the devil has messed up your son or daughter in some way. Jesus has come to destroy the works of the devil.

Hold on to that. That looks impossible. Well, it looked impossible for Abraham to have a child.

And maybe it looks impossible for you to become friendly with your child who's become distant from you. Like one girl said to her mother, who was a working mother, said, Mom, when I was five years old, you didn't have time to talk to me. You were busy with your teaching or whatever job you had.

Now I'm 18. I don't have time for you. Sorry.

I got to talk to my friends. Because that time you were busy with your work. Now I'm busy with mine.

Can you blame that girl for saying that? Make friends with them when they're small. When they're five years old and they come to you, or four years old and they come to you with a broken toy and you're busy doing your work. And they say, Daddy, can you fix this toy? You know my advice? Close down your important work and fix that toy.

You'll make friends with someone which you'll value 15 years later. All you did was fix a little toy that 10 minutes meant the world to that child. I'll tell you a true story.

There was a man who he was now a widower. His wife had died. His children had grown up and got married.

He was alone in the house. Rich businessman. He one day went down to the basement or attic or somewhere where some of his old books and ledgers and all were lying there.

And he saw there a little diary that his son had written when his son was very small. And he also used to keep a diary, you know. His son's was a ragged old book in which he wrote a diary.

And his diary, you know, businessman, nice gilt-edged type of diary. So he decided to compare what happened on a particular day with what he had written and what his son had written. So he opened up his diary for that particular day, 20 years earlier or something, so-and-so, 8th of July, some year.

And he had written there, my son wanted to go fishing with me. I went the whole day and spent fishing. We didn't catch a single fish, a wasted day.

Okay, he turns to his son's journal, 8th of July. Boy, what a wonderful day this was. My dad actually came fishing with me.

And we sat out in the boat and we fished. I know we didn't catch anything, but it was a wonderful day just being with dad. The best day of my life.

See two different perspectives of exactly the same event. For a child, I remember reading this and the heading of the story was, for a child, love is spelt T-I-M-E. That's how love is spelt for a child, T-I-M-E.

You wanna love your child, give T-I-M-E. Spend time with your child, make friends. And if you have not done it till now, follow that last verse.

I want to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to the fathers. Let's raise up a generation of teenagers in our church who've been drawn to the Lord because their fathers and mothers took pains to draw them to themselves. Don't just feed them, clothe them, send them to college, become friends with them.

Pray that they will grow up to be your brothers and sisters and not just children. And for that, you will have to come down. You know, I have encouraged my children to argue with me.

I come down to their level. And if you, you know, when they got married, their wives were surprised that they would all argue with me as if they were my equals. I said, yes, that's how I've encouraged them to speak to me just like an equal because even if they disagree with me on some scripture, I say, I want you to disagree with me.

Disagree with me as strong as you like because I know 10 years later, you'll agree with me. You'll finally come to it. I know that.

So it doesn't matter if you disagree with me right now. I have no problem. It's the young age, you know, where they think they know so much.

I say, fine. I don't want to shut them up and say, hey, shut up, I'm your dad. You just listen to me.

That's the best way to shut them up for life. Don't ever do that. Let them speak to you as equals.

You know, I say the first principle of ministries, you see in Jesus, I've always taught this. He was made like his brothers in all things. He who was almighty God came right down to our level.

Now what a height that is. Is it difficult for you 50 year old to come down to the level of your 18 year old? That's not a big distance. Almighty God could come all the way down to your level.

That's how I see it. When I speak to teenagers, I talk to them as if I'm a teenager. That's why they love to talk to me.

When I talk to little five year olds, I talk to them as if I'm a five year old. I don't talk to them about Hebrews. I talk to them about Tintin and comics like that.

I read them, by the way, so that I can talk to these eight year olds or nine year olds because I want to be their friends. And when I'm their friends, then when I turn to Hebrews or James in church, they will listen to me. Or sometimes I go to a home and some 12 year old is there and I say, hey, listen, what did you study in school today? Geography? Okay, bring your geography book.

Let me see, what did you learn today? Then I teach him a little bit of geography. I become friends with him. We must become friends with our children.

Take some interest in their studies. Take some interest in their studies. I believe a lot of children don't do well because parents just don't take any interest.

They say, we don't know the subject. I'll tell you what my wife did when she doesn't know a word of Kannada. Knows a little more than me now, but children had to study Kannada.

Boy, there was a torture. If anything was that, that was it. I remember once my son was speaking on a debate in the school.

If I were the prime minister of India, what did I do? He said, one of the first things I would banish is all this learning Kannada in schools. Anyway, so she couldn't teach Kannada to my children. So she got one sister who knew Kannada.

She had the tape recorder and say, can you please read out this stuff which I from the Kannada book into that tape? And so she read out very kindly all that into the tape. And then my wife would play that tape back to the son who is not, all the children did it. They were not interested.

They'd be lying down in bed. Oh mom, leave me alone. But the tape would be running.

That's how they passed in Kannada. We got to be inventive. My point is there are children, don't think all my children are very eager to study, but they have to study to get a job.

Otherwise I used to tell them, you'll be a milkman going around for the rest of your life. You want to be that or what? You got to study, man. You got to work hard.

India is like that. It's not like America where you're going to be a plumber and carpenter and earn a lot of money. It's not like that here.

You got to work hard. So, but if you got to take some interest in sitting with them and helping them, not just say, oh, my child is not interested in studying. Parents must take an interest and it builds a friendship there between the parents, even in studies and helping them.

If you don't know it, then at least sit down with them and read it to them or something. There are always ways of building friendship. So I want to say that I'm not saying my wife and I were perfect.

When I look back over my life, I think of so many mistakes I made, but God was merciful. That's why I say prayer is the most important thing. Just one or two questions before I close.

What is the children's view? What is the biblical view on family planning? You know, there are areas of our life which the Bible speaks nothing about. New Testament especially says zero. So whenever the New Testament says zero about a subject, then that means it's up to you to decide how you should do it.

So my principle is if the Bible speaks strongly about something like humility, holiness, I speak strongly about it. If the Bible speaks just a little bit about it, like in the New Testament, there's very little teaching on healing and tongues. I speak very little about that.

If the Bible speaks nothing about a subject, I don't speak about it at all. I say that's up to you. So family planning is in one of those categories.

Be wise, seek, I would say abortion is a crime because that's murder. The child in the womb is a child and that's wrong to kill a child in the womb. But other than that, to prevent conception, if you feel that you cannot afford, there's nothing wrong in that.

That's my view, but I don't object to another person having another view saying that they should have as many children as they've got years and that's fine. We can agree to differ on that, but make sure it's your own conviction. I remember one brother who went to Norway and came back and said, oh brother, I've got faith now to have as many children as the hairs on my head.

I said, boy, I said, before you proceed having as many children as hairs on your head, make sure your wife also has that faith. And don't just, because she's the one who's gonna bear them. So fortunately, he listened to me and stopped with just one more child.

And I'm sure his wife was more thankful to me than anybody else. So remember that, your wife and you must be united in that opinion. Okay, brothers, I think I've given you a little example of what humor can make in an otherwise boring 90 minute message.

Your humor makes a lot of difference, I tell you. Keeps us awake. It'll keep your marriage awake as well.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I think of the tremendous potential there is in all these married couples sitting here. Oh, how the devil would love to have them mess up their life, mess up their children.

But I thank you, Lord Jesus, you came to destroy the works of the devil. You came to build homes on the rock, unshakable. You came to give us faith to believe that you can do the impossible things in our marriage and in our home.

Do it for us and for our children and help us to build a strong church here, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

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