

Godly Marriages - 2.following Godly Principles in Marriage

by Zac Poonen

A successful and fulfilling marriage is one that is built on a strong foundation of Godly principles and is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:50:31

Scripture: Proverbs 24:3, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:25

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Spiritual Unity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation in marriage, likening it to constructing a house without cracks. It delves into the significance of having a spirit-filled marriage, not just for personal happiness but for accomplishing God's purpose. The speaker shares personal struggles and highlights the need for humility, selflessness, and perseverance in nurturing a marriage that reflects God's love and unity.

Transcript

I've often said that when you build a building, the foundation is very important and a lot of problems that can come on the third, fourth floor may be caused by bad foundation or the first floor is not very strong. So it's very good to think of your marriage like building a house and it's very good to be able to right from the time you are married to have a good foundation and make sure there are no cracks. If there are, fix it.

Don't imagine that it'll automatically, you get a crack in a wall, do you think it'll automatically fix itself? Never. You have to do something there to fix it otherwise it'll never fix itself. So people imagine the crack will automatically take care of itself later on.

It doesn't happen. So I want to share some things along that line. Let's turn to Ephesians and chapter 5. Ephesians 5 and everybody knows this is the great chapter on husband-wife relationships and it's important to see how it begins.

Not wives be subject to your husbands, verse 22, but beginning with 18, 17 rather. Don't be foolish. Very, very good word for husbands and wives.

Don't be foolish. But understand what the will of the Lord is because God has a plan for marriage and that is the most perfect plan. I often call it the manufacturer's instructions.

If you buy a washing machine or a dryer or any expensive gadget, even a car, there'll come a little booklet called manufacturer's instructions. What you should plug in first and which switch you should turn off and turn on, even using a computer. You run a program, it tells you how to do it.

Do you believe that your marriage is more important than any electronic gadget you buy, even if the electronic gadgets cost 30-40 thousand rupees? Your marriage is more important than all that. And do you believe Almighty God would have left us without any instructions? He has given us instructions. Those instructions are in the Bible.

So if you try to run your marriage, not according to the Bible, but according to your own bright ideas or what you call your bright ideas, are not really your bright ideas. They are ideas you have got from others. And I'll tell you where you've got it from.

If you're unconverted for many years, you got it from the cinemas. You got it from romantic novels that you read. You got it perhaps from your parents.

See, for example, in the average Indian village, the husband is like a king and the wife is like a, what's the word? Did I hear queen? No, servant. That's the thing. If she were queen, it'd be wonderful.

But she's not a queen. It's a king and a servant. And the children grow up seeing that.

Here's a boy growing up in a home where mom's like a servant, dad's like a king. 30 years later, he gets married. What does he expect his wife to be? Queen? No, servant.

That is our Indian culture. So, now I say I'm not, I don't believe in Western culture either. There's a difference.

You see that even in weddings. All Western marriages, this is how it goes. The bride room comes in, everybody will be sitting.

Nobody stands up for the bride room because he's a useless fellow in any case. He comes and stands there meekly and then they start the service. Jesus has also come.

And who comes in last after the singing starts? The maharani. And they sing the here comes the bride, they play and she walks in. That is Western culture.

Eastern culture, I'm not talking about general Indian, but you see in the villages and all the Hindu marriages, the man comes riding a horse. Do you think there's a horse for the wife? No. She walks beside the horse because she's supposed to be a servant.

So, in Western culture, it is the bride who is the most important. In Eastern culture, it is the bride room who is most important. They say here comes the bride room.

Then they say here comes the bride. In a Christian marriage, we say here comes the Lord. He's most important.

Even in the way they get married, how is it in Indian culture? How is it with all of you? How many of you wives will say my husband came on bended knee and said will you marry me? No. I sat there and she came asking can I marry this man? I said okay. She's a big Maharaja sitting there and the price has to be fixed in some marriages.

She comes begging and he graciously finally says yes. In an Eastern marriage, in a Western marriage, it's the man who goes after the woman and they had to bend their knees and say will you marry me? Here's a ring. She boasts all her life.

I never went after him. He came and proposed to me and I graciously said yes because she's the woman there. In Indian marriages, the man says I never went after her.

It'd be disgraceful for me to go after a girl. She came begging. Her parents came to the house, begged for me and I said okay.

I'll think about it. After some time, I said yes. In a Christian marriage, we say the Lord brought us together.

It's an entirely different flavor. Can you say that? It's all a question of how you start your married life. So don't be foolish but understand the will of God in marriage.

Just because God wants the wife to be subject to the husband doesn't mean that he has to be a Maharaja. Jesus was not a Maharaja. He refused to be a king.

Once they wanted to make him a king, he ran away. He said I'm not coming here to be a king. I've come here to be a servant.

But what type of servant? A servant leader. Not a servant who meekly obeys his bossy wife. Is that the picture you get of Jesus meekly obeying Peter and James, whatever they tell him? No.

He washed their feet but he was their leader. That's the type of husband must be. One who's willing to wash the wife's feet but is the leader in the home.

It's a balance. Don't be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. Don't get your ideas from eastern culture or western culture.

They are both wrong. They're corrupted by sin, corrupted by Adam's nature, and corrupted by the devil. We want to follow Christian culture where we value one another.

That is why, like somebody said, God didn't take Eve out of Adam's skull bone because so that she bosses over him and God didn't take Eve out of the feet bones so that he treads over her. But God took and made Eve from which bone? From the rib. Can you tell me was it left rib or right rib? Which do you think? It's not written in scripture.

What's your guess? Right? Why left? The heart is there. That's right. I think it was the left.

You know my favorite verse, I have no commandment from the Lord but I give an opinion from 1 Corinthians 7. Okay, I believe it was here and when you get to heaven ask the Lord, where did you get ticket from Lord? Was Zach right? He'll say he was right because it was near the heart because he wanted Adam not to boss over his wife or to be ruled by his wife but to keep his wife near his heart all the time. So that's very important. So and what is the will of the Lord? For your life to, you know we are leading on to marriage by the way in verse 23 onwards.

Don't get drunk with wine for that is dissipation but be filled with the Holy Spirit. So what is the most important exhortation for marriage? You know what it is? Be filled with the Holy Spirit. He's not talking here about preaching.

He's not here about marriage. He's not talking here about speaking in tongues. He's talking about marriage.

How shall we begin? Don't be foolish. Understand the will of the Lord. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and I believe the fundamental reason why there are so many problems in married life despite all the counseling sessions, despite all the teaching of psychology is because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit and the fundamental reason they are not filled with the Holy Spirit is they are not eager to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's the reason. Why am I not filled with the Holy Spirit? Well you're not desperate. You know the one place in the scripture where Jesus said how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? Do you know where that is? You don't know.

It's in Luke 11. Turn there for a moment because he's telling us there how we can receive the Holy Spirit. You know you may think your problems are this, that, and the other.

I want to tell you in Jesus' name those are not your problems. You think your wife is like that? Your husband is like that? That's not the reason. The reason is you are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

So don't be foolish but understand the will of the Lord. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Okay Luke 11 13.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? How many of you have asked him? And he told us how to ask also. Not just ask but how to ask. How to ask is very important.

I'll tell you how to ask. Verse 5. Supposing one of you has got a friend goes to him at midnight and says friend lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to say before him.

Now I want you to see a picture here of husband and wife. Okay. Two people in a home.

Maybe it's the husband who goes who wants to provide three loaves to his wife or the wife wants to provide three loaves to the husband. The meaning here is, I mean here it's a friend but I want to take this a picture of husband and wife. The husband is hungry for something.

The wife is hungry for something. I don't mean physical food. Something the husband needs.

Something the wife needs. And you can be an irresponsible husband or wife like this friend could have said when this friend his friend came to his house at midnight. Hey listen I don't have any food.

Just go to bed man. Don't be a big make a fuss over food. The guy's hungry.

Maybe he came from a long journey. I hadn't had any food for three days. And you send him to bed.

Go to sleep. He's dying of hunger. And that's how your wife is or your husband is.

There's a need there which you don't seem to be bothered about. You see I forget it. That's not a big problem.

It may not be a big problem for you because your stomach is full. But that person is hungry. So what does this chap do? See that as a husband or a wife.

Goes to the neighbor. And the neighbor is God by the way. Should be.

It's a picture of God. But here it is a picture of a reluctant neighbor. He knocks and says, hey I want some food.

I don't have it. The first thing you need to acknowledge is, I don't have that ability to meet my wife's need or my husband's need. I think the problem is with her.

Or within the problem is not with her or him. God gave you as a partner to meet that need. Not just to take care of yourself.

But to meet the need of your partner. I don't know whether all of you recognize that God gave you to each other to meet a certain need in the other person which he or she cannot meet themselves. God gave you to meet that need.

Okay. So he knocks and from inside that guy says, hey don't bother me. The door is already shut.

We're seven. My children are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.

Now how many of you will keep on knocking if somebody shouts from inside, get away man. Don't disturb me. I'm asleep.

My children are asleep. You'll wake them up. How many of you will knock at a neighbor's house like that? Even if it's a good friend.

I don't think I will. I mean I've got neighbors here. I don't want to go on.

First of all I won't even go to their house at midnight asking for bread. And if I do and the guy says get out, I'll get out immediately. But here is a guy who is so desperate.

That means he loves this other friend of his so much. That's the first thing you got to see. Okay I'm willing to bear the shame of this fellow shouting at me and thinking me a bad neighbor or whatever ridicule I'm willing to face all that.

I've got to meet my friends. My friend is hungry. You know if you people could love one another like that.

My wife is hungry. My husband is hungry. And I have got to go to God to have the strength to meet that need.

I tell you even though verse 8 he doesn't get up to give him because he's his friend. Yet because of his persistence and that's the word I want you to see. Persistence.

He will get up and give him. Here's another expression. As much as he needs.

He asked only for three loaves. Hey listen you want more than three? Here it is. And then the Lord says ask like this and you'll get it.

Why didn't you get it? Because you didn't ask like this. I know perhaps all of you sitting here have asked for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But you didn't ask like this.

You asked and knocked and say hey I'd like some bread. Get away. Okay I went away.

I went back to sleep and told my neighbor. I tried man. I tried.

It didn't work. He didn't give me any bread. Let's go to sleep.

That is how most people are seeking for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I don't know whether you know that CFC was born 37 years ago through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That's that's how it was.

It was just two of us initially Ian and myself. But and that was the whole issue of our moving out of one church into another. There's a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There's nothing else. It wasn't victory over sin. It was the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire.

How did the church begin on the day of Pentecost? Was it by somebody preaching victory over sin? No. It was when those 120 people got baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire the church was born. And that's how God intended every church to be born.

That day of Pentecost is an example. I'm very thankful that CFC started that way. Not by some people coming together.

Hey let's let's have a New Testament church. You know there are different churches I find in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and you know other parts of India which have tried to imitate CFC. Ah this is a good pattern.

Let's follow it. But there's a lot of confusion even in CFC churches. You know that because it didn't start with baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It started this is a nice pattern. This is a nice message. You can't build a church with a nice pattern and a nice message.

It has to be the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. That is the thing that initiates the new covenant. So you say I'd like to have a nice marriage.

Yeah yeah. Go to the psychologist. They'll tell you how to have a nice marriage.

It won't be a Christian marriage. For a Christian marriage like a Christian church you need the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. And if both of you are not eager for it at least one of you should be eager for it.

God will meet with you. But in your list of priorities where does baptism in the Holy Spirit come? I'm sure it is there but maybe it's number 25 or something like that because there are 24 other more important things you have to do such as you've got to get a promotion in your job. You may make a little more money and you've got to expand your business.

And number 24 you come to baptism in the Holy Spirit. I can tell you in a hundred years you will not have a spirit-filled marriage. I can give it to you in writing.

You'll be just one of those nice brothers and sisters. Come here and praise brother Zach and say what a wonderful brother we have and sit here and have a useless marriage. By useless marriage I don't mean a marriage that's fighting with each other.

A marriage that accomplishes nothing for God. That's what I mean. Just because you and your wife are very happy and you've got plenty of money and you've got good children don't think that's fulfilling God's purpose.

Is your marriage accomplishing something for God? God didn't plant churches just for them to be happy together serve one another and smile at each other and have good food and bring up good children. No sir. He wanted a house that accomplishes something for God.

And your house will not accomplish something for God if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus Christ did not go out for his ministry without first being filled with the Holy Spirit. How dare you go out try to build a house without seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is your example. As soon as he stepped out you know Jesus stepping out of Nazareth getting baptized is a picture of a single man stepping out of his house and getting married. In Jesus case it was to his father.

In your case it is your husband or wife. Single girl stepping out of the old home. It says Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum and set up his own home there.

It's a picture of marriage. That's why immediately after he tells his mother what have I got to do with you because the Bible says a man must leave father and mother. That's the first time Jesus said it.

It was a picture of a man getting married and what is the first thing Jesus did before he went into that ministry? He prayed. The Bible says he prayed as he went into the waters. I know what he was praying for.

Father anoint me with the Holy Spirit and he came up. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Can you have that faith? I'll never forget when one of my sons was getting baptized here.

I still remember you know they give testimony before baptism and his testimony was I think he was 17 or something. He said I want to follow Jesus. I believe the Bible says I can follow him and if Jesus could be filled with the Holy Spirit as soon as he came up out of the waters of baptism I believe I can also be filled with the Holy Spirit when I come up out of the waters of baptism.

I said wow I've never heard that testimony at a baptism. I said Lord honor his faith and I see some results in his life today. Faith is what God honors.

It doesn't matter whether you're 17 years old or 50 years old. God doesn't honor you for your age or your knowledge or your experience but faith. Lord I believe you will do this for me.

I believe you'll fill me with the Holy Spirit and it's like this guy saying I'm going to get this bread no matter how long I have to knock. Persistence. I want to encourage you to be persistent.

Don't think your marriage is okay until both of you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't think your marriage is okay. One of the first things that God did for our marriage was God filled God had filled me with the Spirit and filled my wife with the Spirit pretty soon after we were married and that's how we started out.

So I want to encourage you if there's one thing you seek for seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You know how you desperately long to have a child. I wish you would desperately long to be filled with the Holy Spirit like that.

Imagine that if your longing for the Holy Spirit is a hundred times of your longing to have a child. You think God won't meet with you? But the things of earth mean more to you than the things of heaven and you say oh God give us a heavenly marriage. You won't get one because you don't want the things of heaven first.

You want a job, you must have a house and when you get a house you must have a refrigerator and you must have a washing machine and you must have this and that and you pray for this and that and you get it all. Is it a spiritual marriage? It will never be because God sees filled with the Holy Spirit is item number 24. After listening to this message you may make it item number 10.

I hope you will all make it item number one. You know when my wife and I were married you know the tapes I was listening to tapes on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and even if you're against it God can meet with you if you have a need. My wife was initially against the baptism of the Holy Spirit because she grew up in a brethren assembly but God met with her.

So if you have a not because you understand the doctrine. I think I understood the doctrine 10 times better than my wife even now but because of a need. You have a sense of need.

Lord I'm needy. What is it that drove this man to his neighbor's house? Need. Lord I'm desperately needy.

I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You know we can have so much teaching on the techniques of married life and how you should do this and how you see there are a whole lot of books written on married life and even on bringing up children and all that. I'll tell you be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That is the most important thing without a doubt. So but you must ask like this and I tell you everyone who asks like this verse 10 will receive. Everyone? Everyone? Does that include you? Is your name there in verse 10? Can you put your name? Everyone must include you.

If you ask like this you will receive. You say well I remember a man tell me brother Zach I prayed for 40 years for the baptism of the Holy Spirit never got it. You mean this guy didn't wait outside that man's door for 40 years? He waited there for a few minutes.

And I say are you trying to tell me that God is more unrighteous than this man who gave him bread after a few minutes and your God didn't give you out of 40 years? No sir. You didn't ask like this man. That's it.

You would once in a while item number 24 comes up. Lord please fill me with the Holy Spirit and then you move on to other things in life. Well no wonder you're not filled with the Holy Spirit and I can prophesy you will never be filled with the Holy Spirit.

You'll be a nice smiling CFC member, sit here and have an average marriage when you could have had a first class marriage. When you have a choice of sending your child to an average school and a first class school both are available both same fees which one will you send your child to? First class school. Supposing somebody is sick and you have the choice of sending the taking the person to an average hospital and a first class hospital which one will you send? First class.

But when it comes to having an average marriage and a first class marriage why are you happy with an average marriage? Is that less important than school and hospital? I tell you our priorities are wrong. Earthly things are much more important for us and God sees that despite all the so-called piety and holiness and religious talk God sees deep down in your heart and in your mind your dreams are about earthly things. God says you'll get it.

Seek and you shall find. You seek for a job you get it. You seek for more money you get it.

You want a house of your own you get it but the most important thing you never sought for because it's not priority in your life. No wonder you didn't get it but seek like this. Everyone who asks like this will get.

Everyone who seeks like this will find. Everyone who knocks like this it will be opened. What are we talking about? Verse 13.

The Holy Spirit. This whole parable is about receiving the Holy Spirit power. You know so many people get into theological argument and what is it to receive the Holy Spirit? Do you receive the Holy Spirit when you're born again? Is it like this? Is it like that? I said forget all these things.

I never talk about all these things. I tell people do you know that Jesus said John 7 38. He who believes in me out of his innermost being rivers of living water will flow and he spoke about the Holy Spirit.

If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. I only ask people one question. You know if I ask are you baptized in the Holy Spirit? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? People get theological problems.

So I ask them a question. Listen are rivers of living water flowing out from you your life and from your home? Do you want them to flow from your home? They're not flowing. Why not seek God about it? He said if you thirst come to me and he who believes in me.

He who believes in me. He who believes in me has eternal life. You got that.

He who believes in me rivers of living water will flow out from you. Why don't you claim that? I cannot think how many years I cried out to God for this and my problem is not lack of thirst. My problem is lack of faith.

There are two things required you know thirst and faith. It's like the two wires when they touch the light burns. Every switch electric switch is just two wires touching.

That's all. If the wires are kept so close to each other they don't touch there's no light. The moment they touch there's light fine everything works.

So thirst and faith. Some people have thirst but no faith. Some people have faith but no thirst.

But when you have thirst and faith touch that's it. And I can say to every single one of you God is faithful and if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit there's only one reason. Either you lack thirst or you lack faith.

Thirst means persistence. I am not going to give you like day you know Jacob held on to the Lord one day say I and God said let me go. God said I Jacob said I'm not gonna let you go until you bless me.

And it says God met with him and he saw that desperation. See before that Jacob had been running after money and women and all that and he was clatching clinging on to all that. He gave up all that.

He clung on to God. Many of you can you look back over your life and there are certain things you have pursued in your life. Maybe a profession.

Maybe a degree. Maybe a business. You started out with no degree.

No education. No business. And today you've got a degree.

Maybe a postgraduate degree or you're prospered in your work. You got a good job. You got a good business.

You earned money. Some of you built your own houses. Great.

Imagine if you had the same persistence with which you succeeded in getting a degree and in your business. If you had the same persistence to seek for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Where you would have been today.

You say I've got a happy marriage. It's like the child who comes back home from school and says mommy I got 40 percent. I passed.

I went to the next class. And the mommy says you're a great kid. You got 40 percent.

Make sure you get 40 percent next year also. Okay. All the way to 10th standard.

You can get 40 percent and be a milkman or something for the rest of your life. It's okay. You won't do that because earthly things mean so much to you.

You're not even happy if your child got 90 percent and say why didn't you get a hundred. I wish you had the same earnestness about your spiritual life as well and about your marriage. Have you got a happy marriage? We don't fight with each other.

40 percent we pass. Is that what you want? How many of you are as eager to have a hundred percent marriage as you are eager for your children to get 100 percent in school? What a lot. Extraction.

Why? You already got 40 percent. Why do you want extraction? I want the child to get at least 80 90 percent. Have you ever seen a mother happy? My child got 40 percent.

I've never seen any excited mother coming and telling me my child got 40 percent in SSLC. But I've seen hundreds of marriages. We're okay.

How's your marriage getting on? Yeah. We're okay. Like they say in Hindi.

Getting on. Your marriage is not supposed to be like that. Let all the worldly marriages, let all the nominal Christian marriages be like that but yours is not supposed to be like that my brother.

Don't be foolish. Understand the will of the Lord. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Thirst. Number one. Okay.

Move back to Ephesians 5 18. Believe that the Lord will give you. It's the Lord who instituted marriage and if he's told you that is the will of the Lord and he asks you why won't he give it to you? He'll definitely give it to you.

Okay. Now when you are filled with the Holy Spirit what is the next most important thing? That you must understand the will of the Lord in marriage. Verse 19.

What is it? Speak to one another. What a great exhortation for married people. Don't just say I'm tired.

I want to go to sleep. Drink a cup of coffee and speak to one another. Yeah.

Be filled with the Spirit and then speak to one another. It's very down-to-earth exhortation. And speak to one another with psalms and hymns and you mean I must sing to my wife? Yeah.

Why not? It's a scriptural verse there because the next verse is talking about wives and husbands. It's all about marriage. That's why the Lord wrote Song of Solomon in scripture.

It's called a song. You know the only book in the Bible which is called a song. You're not supposed to read it.

You're supposed to sing it. I like it. It's one of my favorite books.

I pray it'll be your favorite book too. Don't be ashamed of it. I mean out there in the world the cinemas and all they're saying all those words to other people are not their wives.

Yeah. But that was sacred. Marriage is a very sacred thing.

I remember reading of a Christian. There was a Christian movie where the actor they were acting as husband and wife. But in the movie the wife was not his wife.

You know somebody else his wife was not a good actor. So they had to get somebody else to act as the wife and this man was a good actor but he was a believer. God-fearing believer.

And there had to be one scene at the end of it where they were happy and they just kissed each other. And you know what he said? I said I will not kiss her because she's not my real wife. Boy I admire that man.

So you know what they had to do? They had to dress up his wife for that last scene with the same dress that this lady wore and at a distance so that you don't recognize this is another woman with this. He kissed her. I will admire that man for the rest of my life.

That he would not even for the sake of a movie shot kiss somebody even if that in the movie that woman was wife. He said I'll do everything else but not I'm not going to touch her and hug her and kiss her and all that. But in marriage that's a wonderful thing to kiss and hug your wife.

To be thankful. Sing songs to him and always give thanks. That's another thing out of verse 20.

There's another thing which I tell married couples to do. Always give thanks. I want to ask you my dear brothers and sisters.

Have you even once in your life once knelt down beside your bed when you're alone say lord thank you for the wife you gave me or thank you for the husband you gave me. Now you may have done it when you're together because you want to make her happy for some reason or you had a fight and so you kneel down and say lord thank you for my wife thank you for my husband. That's not genuine.

It's genuine when you're alone and you kneel down and say it. Have you ever when you're all alone and your wife is not hearing it nobody's hearing it. Lord thank you for my wife.

Thank you for my husband. That is genuine. What you say to God when you're all alone.

You and the lord. That comes from your heart and if you have never said it once in your married life I'll tell you what you should do. I won't tell you to get a millstone and hang it around your neck and drown because your wife will be a widow then.

So don't do that but go and hang your head in shame and say lord from now on I'm going to do that. Sometime when I'm alone I'm going to say thank you lord for the wife you gave me. Thank you lord for the husband.

I tell you it will cement your marriage. Believe me and once you have children you must start thanking God for them alone. I mean there may be 101 things wrong with your child but it is a gift of God.

Lord thank you for this child. Thank you this is a gift of God. Do you know that you know my children are in their 30s and some of them in their early 40s.

Every single year when their birthday I have sent them a greeting all my life wherever I am. Write a card when they were at home. Card means not these expensive 20-30 rupee cards.

Usually we were too poor to afford that. Some old card with one side torn out and you know that's how we made cards in those days. But the words are so precious.

I still have those cards. Some of my children have written to me but one of the things I said is we thank God that he allowed you to be born in our family. You've kept on saying that to our children every single birthday.

I recommend that you say that. Have you ever said that to your children at least on their birthday? How we thank God that when he decided to send you to earth he sent you to our family. Give thanks.

Always give thanks. Verse 20. Give thanks for one another.

Give thanks for your children. It's a very good habit and you know what is the result of our doing it? The result is that they've started sending cards to each other. Even when they were small I still have some of those cards written with all wrong spelling and all where one boy writes to another boy and thank you so much.

I want to wish you a happy birthday. Those are more precious to me than all these expensive cards that come nowadays. I tell you this is how you build a family.

Learn to give thanks for one another. Don't think of money as the most important thing in your family. The spirit of thanksgiving binds the family together.

Learn to thank God for each other first of all. Then next verse 21. Be subject to one another.

Before it says wives be subject to your husbands learn to be subject to one another. Very important. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit you will learn to be subject to one another.

That means you mean you say you mean I must be subject to my wife. You say as a man not only to your wife brother you've got to be subject to your children as well. What does it mean subject to one another? That means let me explain it.

Don't tread inside their boundary. You know there's a verse in Proverbs which says don't move the ancient boundary mark. I can't remember it off hand but there is a verse like that.

I'll look it up sometime. You know for these plots and all you have these boundary stones. Don't go at night and move the boundary stone.

Nobody none of you will do it. You know move it two feet that side to get a little more of your neighbor's property. No there is a boundary for your neighbor and you'll never try to go into his boundary even if there's no wall.

You won't move the boundary stone. I want to say your wife has got a boundary around her. Your children have got a boundary around them.

We must respect that. How do I let me start with children. How do I respect the boundary around my children? One example supposing they are naughty yeah when they're small five six years old and they're very naughty when some visitors are there.

I don't spank them. I can. Bible says discipline your children but if I discipline them in the presence of these visitors it's a double punishment.

First of all the spanking and second the humiliation the child suffers in the presence of others. So there is a boundary around that child which says dad you can discipline me but don't ever humiliate me before others. So I come to that boundary and I stop.

That means I'm respecting him. I'm subjecting myself to that boundary. Not only when visitors are there.

I would not punish my child in the presence of his three brothers also or any of his brothers alone. There's a dignity about a child. A child has got a dignity.

Respect that dignity and that is why we'd never call a child a pig or a donkey or you moron or something like that. Do you ever call your child bad names? You know there are people who call that you pig. Well who's the father of the pig? It's another pig.

You forget that. The father of a donkey is a bigger donkey. That's all.

So we should never call children by you know in Kerala they have the habit of calling we must never call people by that name. Don't call your wife or children by that name. Use a loving name.

There's a boundary of respect even if they have done horrible things you cannot go inside their boundary. That is the meaning of being subject to one another or your wife also. She has got a dignity about her which you must respect.

You know I mean for example if you recognize that the kitchen is her department well there must there's a dignity about her. She must have some area of privacy where she can run the show. It's not that you're the master of the house and you run every single room.

Recognize that there is an area where she not just to cook the food maybe she wants to do things in a certain way. Respect that. That may not be the way you want it but you back out and she doesn't come to your office and tell you how to run your office there.

Well you don't go into her territory and tell her how to run her department. You see this is the trouble with a lot of Indian husbands. They just think they are lord of everything.

So we need to be careful here to respect one be subject to one another means I recognize that God has drawn a boundary around that person and I respect that boundary that in my being the head the home I don't humiliate my wife. You know people who make crack jokes at their wives in public. Oh she's like that

she's like this.

They have absolutely no respect for the dignity of their wives. It's absolutely evil to humiliate your wife like that. Even in the sexual relationship I want to speak a little plainly about this.

The world speaks plainly about it. There are ways in which sometimes a husband has seeks to have a sexual relationship with his wife in a way that humiliates her. It's evil.

There's a dignity about the way even the way in which you have a sexual relationship with your wife. It must be with the respect. There's a horrible thing in the world called oral sex.

It's detestable. So I remember Christians who talk about it as if it's okay. They asked me once about it.

I said God did not create the mouth for that purpose. You treat your wife like some animal or something. You call yourself a Christian.

Go and change your name to some non-Christian name. Just because you've got some lust for some dirty type of pleasure. Don't rob your wife of the dignity that serves as a human being.

Nobody speaks plainly about these things. Talk about all types of things and all this type of indignity is going on in our home. We must really be careful.

Preserve the dignity of your children. Preserve the dignity of your wife and your husband. Then we'll have some Christian marriages.

Otherwise they'll all be singing wonderful songs in the church and all types of other things going on in secret. Yeah if you don't hear it plainly from anybody else you'll hear it from me. These are not things to be hidden in the closet and all types of evils go on in among married couples.

So be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. It's a subjection which comes out of fear that Jesus is Lord of my house. I'm answerable to him.

The way I treat my wife I have to answer to God one day. The way I treat my husband I'm answerable to God one day. Do you believe that? Do you believe that my brothers? You young couples as you've begun you're beginning your married life.

You recognize that Jesus Christ is to be in the middle. Is that a reverence you have for Christ that makes you respect your husband and wife? You see I always say the New Testament elevated everything in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament one day in seven was holy unto the Lord.

In the New Covenant seven days in seven are holy to the Lord. In the New Covenant you give your first born son only to God. In the New Covenant you give all your children sons and daughters to God.

In the Old Covenant they gave one tenth of their produce of their fields to God. In the New Covenant we say Lord everything is yours and tell us what we should use for ourselves and how we should use it. It's all higher.

Okay one of the things that was said in the Old Testament I don't have time to show it to you. I think in Leviticus 19 it says honor a gray-haired person. Stand up whenever a gray-haired person comes.

That's a habit which is not found even among so-called believers children and the fault is 100% with their parents. They have no respect for parents for older people. But anyway the Old Covenant was that honor or respect older people.

Rise up before the gray-headed. In case you don't know where that verse is maybe I should show it to you. It's in Leviticus and it's one of those interesting laws in the book of Leviticus chapter 19 verse 32.

You shall rise up before the gray-headed and honor the aged person. You shall thus reverence your God. The Lord was saying the way you show your respect for me is by respecting older people and that doesn't mean just older believers.

The Lord taught me even if a beggar who comes to the gate when I was much younger is older than you speak respectfully to him. I mean the circumstances of his life may have made him poor but he's a person who's a creature of God. I must respect him and I've always sought to do that.

Well not in the early days when nobody taught me these things but now I have learned. But in the New Covenant in the Old Covenant it was respect the older person. In the New Covenant you know what it is? Whom shall we honor? 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 17.

All people not only older people. That's how the New Covenant goes higher than the Old Covenant. Honor older people has become honor all people.

So you must honor your wife. You must speak respectfully to your wife. You must speak respectfully to your husband and when even when you speak to your children speak to them with dignity.

That's why I said you can't call them pig and dog and moron and all that type of stuff. With dignity. The dignity of a human being.

Remember that person is a person whom Jesus felt was so important that he came down from heaven and died for that person. And you treat that person without dignity? Someone whom Jesus felt he should shed his blood for? That's amazing. I mean non-Christians doing that is okay but a Christian? So always look at your wife as someone whom Jesus felt was so important a person that he's it's worth coming from heaven to die for her.

Look at your husband like that. You know it's all a question of how we look. That's the New Covenant look.

Give thanks and then we go on in Ephesians where it talks about like the wife and the husband is like the head to the body. Now you know the head and there are the word head has got different meanings. Head of department, head of the country, head of a corporation, head of a company and head of the body.

All head. The word head is used. Many husbands behave like the head of the corporation.

Okay we've got a corporation in this house and I'm the CEO. That's not the type of head. He's speaking here as head of the body.

My head doesn't act like a CEO to my body. It's very sensitive to the needs of my body. Any little injury immediately the head knows about it and sets does something about it.

That is the picture used here. It speaks of a fellowship. See a CEO of a corporation has got no fellowship with the workers.

The prime minister of India doesn't have any fellowship with you and me. But the head of the body, can you imagine a head and a body not having fellowship? Everything they're doing together. Doing together, together, together.

Fellowship, fellowship, fellowship. It's so intimately united. See man is spirit, soul and body and a woman is spirit, soul and body.

And let me tell you the whole purpose of the sexual relationship. The physical relationship between man and woman. It's a very sacred area and I'm no hesitation to speak about it because my mind is not polluted with the cinema and the movies teaching on sex.

Once upon a time it was but I've cleansed it all out of that garbage. And I hope you have also but I feel that it's possible some of you younger people have not. You got that dirty image of sex that you never talk about sex because that's dirty stuff.

It's not dirty stuff. It's the most sacred thing. You know what? You know that's one of the first things that God told Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 1. If you don't believe it, he talked about sex to Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 1. As soon as he created Adam, he told him God blessed them, verse 28, and God said to them, let me paraphrase his words.

First words to man, have sex with each other. That is Zak Poonen's paraphrase. I don't think you'll find it in message translation or anywhere else but that's exactly what it means.

God blessed them and said have sex with each other and have children. You don't see it there? Tell me, am I exaggerating or not? Is it some fanciful interpretation? How did he expect them to be fruitful by shaking hands or something and be fruitful? You don't become fruitful by shaking hands. What did he mean by be fruitful? And don't these super spiritual religious people say, no he was telling them to have the fruit of the spirit.

Rubbish! He was just telling them to have children. These super spiritual people get on my nerves sometimes. He said be fruitful and multiply.

What does it mean be fruitful and multiply? Have sex and have children. Very first words of man. Is it sacred or not? And God looked at it and said it's very good.

Verse 32, 31. He saw everything that he had made including sex and he's just very good. How many of you can say the sexual relationship is something wonderful God has created? It's something very good.

It's very sacred and holy just like kneeling down and praying together. We can have sex together as a holy act before God. And if you can't do it, ask God to cleanse out the cinema ideas from your mind and all the dirty pornographic ideas from your mind.

You still got the leftovers are there. You know it's like food you've eaten and the leftovers are still there. The stinking leftovers from food that you ate one week ago.

There are stinking leftovers from the worldly ideas of sex you got from movies and stories and dirty pornographic pictures. And you've got to get rid of those leftovers like you get rid of leftovers from food. Get some fresh food and from God.

And you find it's a sacred thing. It's a holy thing. It's one of the purposes of marriage.

You know that? One of the main purposes of marriage. 1 Corinthians 7. Let me show you scripture. I'm going to bring you down to earth.

1 Corinthians 7. You've got to see scripture. Verse 2. Supposing I read it like this. Because you will feel lonely, you must have a wife.

Or because it's good to have children, you must have a wife. Or what is even worse, if you have a wife you can earn more money for the house. Because you can get somebody to cook the food you like, you must have a wife.

You put 101 reasons there and they're all wrong. What does it say? Because you might go and have sex with another woman, get married. How down to earth the bible is? All these super spiritual religious people.

What did you marry your wife for? It says here. Because the danger is otherwise you're going to have sex with some other woman. Get married man.

And then okay let's move on to another subject. No no no. Holy Spirit says we can't move on yet.

Verse 3. The husband must fulfill his sexual duty to his wife. And the wife must fulfill her sexual duty to her husband. What's this? The holy spirit's crazy about sex? He's not crazy about sex.

He's just telling you the facts of life. To all the super spiritual religious pharisees who act as though they're not interested in sex. He's trying to cleanse our mind of the wrong attitude to sex in marriage.

That's why I paraphrase it. Because of the danger of your going and having sex with another woman, get married. Verse 3. You must fulfill your sexual duty to your wife.

And the wife must fulfill her sexual duty to her husband. Because, reason. The wife does not have authority over her own body but her husband does.

Until she was married, her body was hers. The day she got married, she lost authority over her body and it became her husband's. How many of you wives acknowledge that your body does not belong to you? It belongs to your husband.

It's his. Why are you so reluctant to give it to him? Would you steal somebody's wallet, keep it to yourself? And when he asks for it, you don't give it back. It's his but you won't give it back.

It's exactly the same thing. It is his. And so you must fulfill your sexual duty to your husband.

But you say sometimes I'm so tired and exhausted. Right. Then you must tell your wife, see, I'm very tired and exhausted now.

Can we postpone this to some other time? Sure. Husband must be considerate. But you must recognize your body belongs to your husband.

And now that all the husbands are happy, I've got a word for you. And I tell you, this is tougher. The husband does not have authority over his body, but his wife has.

And husband says, sure, I'm ready anytime. That's not the meaning. The meaning is your eyes, which are part of your body, which belong to you till the day you got married, don't belong to you anymore.

How many of you husbands can say my eyes belong to my wife? I like to see a husband who boldly says that. I have recognized that my body belongs to my wife, not just the sex part of me. Every husband would be eager to have sex.

But what about the rest of your body? It says your body belongs, not just the sex part of you, but your body. Your wife has got authority over your body. Are your eyes a part of your body? Yes.

You're not supposed to look at another woman to desire her, either in a picture or physically, because your eyes belong to your wife. Can you honestly say that you look at every girl's picture the way, in exactly the same way you would look if your wife was sitting right next to you? Can you look at, can you say that you look at every girl in the office or in the bus or on the street the way you would if your wife was sitting next to you and saw what you were looking at? Then you're a wonderful husband who recognizes that you don't have authority over your body. You who are so eager to tell your wife, the Bible says you don't have authority over your body.

I have listened to your wife saying, honey, you don't have authority over your eyes. Don't forget that when you're away from me. We are such hypocrites.

We demand from another a right and don't allow that person to have a right over us. The Holy Spirit is very plain when it comes to sexual matters. And then it says, stop depriving one another except by agreement.

That means that both agree that for a period we're not going to have sex because just like we avoid food for a day or so to fast and pray, you can avoid sex to fast and pray. But otherwise once it's over, come back again. It looks as if the Holy Spirit never stops talking about sex.

Come back again. Come together again. Otherwise, no matter how strong you are, Satan will tempt you because the urge is so great in a man.

A wife is not so tempted because God has not put such a big urge in her. But it's such a strong urge. Sometimes wives say, why is my husband so eager to have sex every day? I'll tell you because he's a man.

Do you want him to be a woman who walks on high heels and walks delicately around and not able to do hard work in the house? Do you want a woman like that or you want a man? If you want a man, you've got to take the whole package and sex comes with it whether you like it or not. So you have to come together. And then he says one thing.

Don't try to stay single thinking that you can overcome this. It says in verse 9, it's better to marry than to burn. You know, sexual desire is compared in this verse to burning.

A fire that is burning. You pour water to quench it. Sex is like that.

It's a burning passion in a man and it's only a sexual relationship that quenches it. That's why the Bible says the two shall become one flesh. But you say man is spirit, soul, and body.

Don't we have to be one spirit? That'll come. You know what the super spiritual people will say? We cannot be one flesh till we become one spirit. Uh-huh.

Then you'll be waiting 50 years after marriage before you have your first sexual relationship. I tell you, believe it or not, there was one married couple that just after marriage, they stayed in our house for a few

days. Not in our church.

I think they were then. And the poor man came to me. It's a few days after marriage.

He says, Brother Zach, my wife says I have to be one in spirit with her before I ever become one flesh with her. I think I'm doomed to be a brahmacharya all my life. That means like a bachelor.

I have an unmarried relationship with mom. So you know what I do when I see women like that who are super spiritual. I call them and tell them what I think of that type of rubbish.

I say the bible says the two shall be one flesh. And then progressively they become one in mind and body. One mind and spirit.

With the Lord, we become one in spirit first. But with our married partners, we become one body first. And then that one body leads on to if you have a good mutual relationship.

The sexual relationship is an expression of a wonderful fellowship together. And it must not be something reluctantly done. It must be an expression of love.

It must be a holy expression of love. One which just like you pray before you eat food. Lord thank you for this.

You know you can pray before you have sex. Invite Jesus. Don't invite anybody else into your bedroom but definitely invite Jesus there.

Because he's the one who ordained it. Lord bless us as we eat this food. Bless us as we have sex.

Bless us as we sleep. There are three things God has given man. Food, sleep and sex.

You can ask God to bless all three. Get all the cinema ideas out of your head. Yeah fellowship and sex relationship is a one expression of intimate fellowship.

That is where a man and a woman are closer to each other than he is with her his father and mother. And that she is with her parents. He doesn't have that type of close relationship.

He and she don't have that type of close relationship with their own parents. But when it comes to marriage it's physical. Absolute physical union.

It's supposed to be closer and God ordained it like that. You know God could have made man and woman in such a way that they sort of kiss each other and have a child. I'm sure God could have done that.

Would that have been difficult? Not at all. But God didn't do it that way to show that there's to be such an intimate relationship between the two which you don't even have with your parents. That's why marriage is closer than relationship with parents and you must recognize that.

And that's why it's important to break away from the control that your parents seek to have into your marriage. Let me say it reverently. If you let your parents control your marriage and you're closer to them than to your marriage partner it's like having sex with your parents.

Are you disgusted? I hope you are. It is like that. You want to have sex with your parents.

What? It's with your wife man. She's the one you're supposed to be one with. Don't let your parents interfere in your life.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother. Leave to his wife. But my parents took care of me for so long.

It's like you know when a baby is born and this umbilical cord is there connecting the baby to the mother and for nine months this umbilical cord supplied everything and if the baby could speak. Don't cut that umbilical cord please. That is what supplied me with life.

I would be dead if it were not for this umbilical cord. Don't cut it please. I like this umbilical cord.

I want to always be connected. You think that baby will live? You think that marriage will live where this husband or wife says this umbilical invisible umbilical cord that connects me to my parents. They've cared for me all my life not just nine months.

Don't cut it please. Don't cut it. Cut it.

How long does the doctor wait before cutting the umbilical cord? Does he fast and pray over it for two three hours should I cut this cord or not? How long do you wait before you break that emotional attachment to your parents? Let them control and run your life. Seek their advice but don't let them run your life. If you want an unhappy marriage first prescription let your parents run your life.

You must love each other and sexual relationship is just one part of it and now you see you may take this matter of decisions. Decisions. Taking decisions together.

You know how much conflict comes in decisions. My way. Your way.

To take decisions together let me suggest to you must be exactly like having sex together. Don't you enjoy having sex together? You should enjoy taking decisions together. To take a decision all by yourself is your wife is sitting there and you're going and having sex by yourself masturbating or something like that.

That's crazy. It's as stupid to take a decision all by yourself. It must be as enjoyable as like having a baby.

How do you have a baby? The husband contributes something. The wife contributes something. They come together and a baby is born.

How should you take a decision? The husband contributes something. The wife contributes something. They come together and a healthy decision comes out.

Supposing my husband says I'm the boss here. I'm going to have a baby without my wife. Just my part is enough.

You try it brother. You'll never have a baby. You know that.

However smart and clever you think you are you need your little wife's help to have a baby. I wish you would realize the same thing when you take a decision and you're supposed to enjoy those decision-making times just like you enjoy having sex together. This is spiritual.

It's 100% spiritual and that is why I talk about it very plainly like the Holy Spirit speaks about it plainly. Why isn't it like that? Because we've got all these worldly evil ideas in our mind and when we take decisions you know just like I said when you have sexual relationship you must be considerate. If your wife is tired or in other way not ready you should be considerate.

Deny yourself like it says here. You must say okay we won't have we're not going to have a sexual relationship. It says here that there must be a certain amount of self-control sometimes.

Consideration. Just like you wouldn't make your wife carry that heavy suitcase you carry it must be consideration in these areas. Very important.

Consideration. The Bible says in 1 Peter chapter 3 that a husband must live with an in an understanding way with your wife. 1 Peter chapter 3 live in an understanding way.

Verse 7 with your wife recognizing that she is weaker. Why is she weaker? Not because she's unspiritual. Sometimes you think she's weaker because she's unspiritual.

The Holy Spirit says she's weaker because she's a woman. I like that. Why is she weaker in her mind than you? Because she's a woman.

Why is she weaker in certain areas where you you know why she's so upset that you paid two rupees more for the cauliflowers or the cabbage? You couldn't care less even if you had ten rupees more. Not because you're more spiritual brother but because she's a woman. She's particular about these little little things.

God made her like that because only such people can care for babies. You won't be able to care for babies but she can. That's why she's so particular about little things in the house should not be broken and must be preserved as much.

You couldn't care less. You throw it around. But she's careful because she's a woman.

Live in an understanding way. Don't say I'm so spiritual. I don't care for these things.

You're not spiritual. You're a man. That's all.

Sometimes we it's like saying I can lift 50 kilos because I'm spiritual. You can't lift 50 kilos. You're not spiritual.

You ever heard anybody saying so stupid things like that? That is the type of attitude some husbands have. Oh see how I don't cry over those little things. Silly thing.

You start crying. She's crying not because she's unspiritual. She's a woman and you don't cry perhaps because you're a hard-hearted man.

So God has made men and women so different. It's so good. One needs the other.

So live in an understanding way with your wife. Our goals are common. You must have a goal.

The goal is to glorify God in your life. Make that your goal. Not just to live for each other.

Not even to have sex. But to glorify God. In our home must glorify God.

If God gives us children must glorify God. And if you don't have children then both of us together glorify God. That's it.

We're not here to get upset with God or dictate to him. We say thank you Lord whatever you've given me I accept. Take time to be with each other.

Recognize that a woman understanding way means she needs to have time with you. You know I'll tell you I never knew the needs of a woman till I got married. I studied in an all-boys school all the way till I was 15.

I joined the military academy for three and a half years. I was only with men. From there I went to a ship and in a ship there are only men.

This is how I grew up till the age of 28. Then I found a woman. This was a new experience for me and I did not know anything about a woman.

I wanted that temperament and tendency or anything like that. And I didn't realize what a selfish person I was till I got married. I only thought about myself and that's why the early years of our marriage was a struggle.

Just like your early years of marriage. Don't get discouraged in the early years of your marriage was a struggle. Brother Zach's was also probably worse than yours because I didn't have anybody to teach me like I'm teaching you right now.

I wish I had. It may have been a little better but I struggled. I would get angry and I did not know my selfishness but gradually I learned.

I was determined. I knew that God wanted us to have a happy marriage and it took some years. It didn't happen overnight.

We worked on it, worked on it, worked on it and I said, Lord I am determined. I don't care how long it takes to have a marriage which is like a foretaste of heaven on earth. I'm determined.

Don't give up. It's like climbing Mount Everest. Lord I'm going to get there.

I'll tell you we're not perfect today but we are closer to the top than we were when we married 44 years ago. Much closer. There's perfect peace and fellowship in the home.

That doesn't mean we're perfect. We've still got a long way to go. And that's why I say whenever there's a conflict in the early years, there will be conflicts.

You will see things in your partner which you never even thought were there. Hey, I didn't know he was like this. I didn't know she was like this.

And you know why God hid it from you? So that you won't reject her. So that you won't reject him. God cleverly concealed certain bad points in your wife.

So that you would marry her. God concealed certain bad points in your husband so that you would marry him. Because he wanted you to marry him.

He wanted you to marry her. Because he knew that if you see all the bad points, you may think there are no bad points in you at all. And you will say no and you'll remain a bachelor all your life.

Or a unmarried woman all your life. Because there is no perfect man. I remember telling one sister don't look for a perfect man.

Because you're not a perfect woman. How can God unite an imperfect woman with a perfect man? Recognize you're imperfect. So God has to give you somebody imperfect as a partner.

God has ordained dogs for dogs. Cats for cats. Rats for rats.

And imperfect human beings for each other. Rejoice in that. Don't say I want a perfect one.

It's like a dog saying I want a cat or I want a lion. Maybe good to have a lion. But a dog and a lion won't match.

Lioness. So to say that I want a perfect person when you're imperfect. It's like a dog, a female dog saying I want a lion for my husband.

You're imperfect brother sister. God knows you're imperfect and has given you a thoroughly equally imperfect wife. So whenever you see some imperfection in your wife or your husband you say God saw my condition and gave me the right person who's as imperfect as me.

Remember that. It'll bless your marriage instead of always finding fault with each other. It's absolute truth.

So that's why we need to learn to when conflicts come it's just because you're imperfect. That's like the thorn gets into your foot. I always say pull it out immediately.

Why do you wait? You hurt one another. Pull out that thorn. Don't wait till the evening to pull out all the thorns.

You never pull out a thorn from your foot late at night. As soon as it gets in set it right. Make your relationship right.

And let me tell you one more thing about I've always thought the Lord must be first in your life not your husband or wife. Even today I know Jesus is first in my marriage. My wife is second and I wanted her always to have Jesus first in her life and me second.

I'd be disappointed if she put me first because our marriage won't be strong. Our marriage is strong if Jesus is in the middle. Be very strong.

He's the glue that holds us together. But then second must not be the church. That's the thing I want to say.

Second must be your wife not the church. Some people make the church second thinking I'm very spiritual. I remember in one of our churches down in Tamil Nadu where the brothers were so zealous that every day they would come back from work and go straight to the meeting hall and pray for half an hour or one hour before they went home.

I told them you're a bunch of Pharisees. You're not spiritual. Close those prayer meetings down.

Go home first. We don't want these daily prayer meetings immediately after work in the church. Some of these unspiritual commands I gave them so that they have a happy marriage and that's a wonderful church there today because they put their home above the church.

Not the home above the Lord. Lord, home, church. Always.

That doesn't mean now I've got an excuse not to come for any meetings because I'm going for a walk with my wife. You can take any truth and put it out of proportion and feed your own lust. That's up to you.

Some people will always take advantage of the grace of God but you know what I mean. You must take time to spend with your wife early years of marriage and always say go for a walk and let your wife especially unburden what is in her heart. I remember you know one of the ways I didn't understand my wife was I never realized that particularly when she had a child she used to tell me that I feel like I'm in a prison.

Four walls and we were very poor. Just a small one room house. Four walls.

It was like a prison. All day and night there. Me, I could go on the scooter here, there and go out for a ministry and I'll come back but she's in the four walls and I never realized it does something to a woman when she's inside a prison all the time.

I've had the diversion of seeing things and coming back and all. You forget that she has not had that diversion. You say but I've been so tired in my office and all that.

I know you've put that in your office but you had the diversion of something different and your wife was sitting inside a prison for 10 hours and you come back and just go to sleep. Drink some coffee and keep awake and go for a walk. I would exhort you.

Remember that when you come back from work, you have come back from work enjoying talking to so many people, meeting so many things and the diversion of your profession and your wife has been bored sitting inside a prison the whole day. Have some fellowship. Give priority to that and if you give her an exhortation.

My wife once told me please don't give me an exhortation when I'm tired. Wait till I'm a little fresh. One of the wisest bits of advice I ever got.

That's not the time to give an exhortation to your wife. End of the day, listen honey I've got these five points. I've been thinking about it.

That is not the time to tell her those five important points. They can wait. Throw it in the flush and flush it down.

Talk about it some other time when you're fresh and happy. You know just like you don't load somebody down with work when they're tired. That's not the time to give an exhortation.

Or when people are angry. Either husband or wife are angry. That's not the time to sow seed.

You know darling the bible says please leave the bible and all out of it. Resolve your conflict first. The more you quote scripture, the more there'll be fury from the other side.

Sow the seed but wait till the storm subsides. Go and ask any farmer. Sir do you sow seed when there's a storm? What do you mean sow seed when there's a storm? All my seed will be lost.

I wait till the storm subsides. Let's calm. Then I sow the seed.

Learn from the farmer. Very simple advice right. The other is the matter of you know when you discover things wrong with each other after your marriage.

There's a wonderful expression that I use. Keep both eyes open before marriage and keep one eye shut after marriage. That means don't see everything.

You must keep one eye shut after marriage. But before marriage, before you get married, inquire, investigate, keep both eyes wide open, get a pair of glasses or binoculars, everything. Then only get married.

But once you're married, throw away the binoculars, throw away the telescope, throw away the microscope especially and keep one eye shut. And that means ignore a lot of things because your aim is not to make the other person perfect. Your aim is fellowship and in that fellowship you will make each other perfect.

So another problem sometimes people have is when a child comes in and it's true in almost all Indian homes. One of the evils of this corrupt heathen culture that men love their children more than their wives and women love their children more than their husbands. I have no hesitation in saying that is an evil from the pit of hell.

I do not love my children more than my wife and I never will. God gave me a wife to be one with. I'm one flesh with her.

I will never be one flesh with my children or my parents. So my children are not closer to me than my wife and the sexual relationship proves it. It is incest to have sex with your children and to put your children above your wife is like incest.

You may not realize it is a spiritual form of incest and most Indian families practice it. And if you're more attached to your child after the child came, husband or wife, I would say you're practicing spiritual incest. Repent of it and learn to love your partner once again.

Put that child in the proper place. Care for it but don't let that child or anyone come between you and your husband or wife. Only Jesus must be there plus nobody.

No husband, no wife, no child, no one. I speak strongly because this is one of the evils that I see in this country and I can stand before God and say that 44 years my children have never come between me and my wife. Never, never, never and they will never come.

That's why you see in Indian homes once the children are all gone away, the husbands sit each other, they're bored what to do, nothing to do, we only got each other. What do you mean only got each other? You should be happy, you're together now. So start when as soon as the child is born.

Make sure that child is never going to come as a separator between you as much as you enjoy your child, enjoy it, but enjoy your wife even more. As much as you enjoy that little child running around, learning to walk, enjoy your husband even more. You don't follow these simple principles.

You're doomed to have an unhappy marriage but you're the one who made it unhappy because you violated God's laws. You put the plug in the wrong place and the machine has broken down. Machine broke down because you didn't follow the manufacturer's instructions and that's the thing that we need to.

One last thing, would you like to go on for another one hour? You're hungry right? Money, boy what a lot of problems can be caused by money. Starting with dowry. Dowry is one of the greatest evils in this country.

Thank God the government has passed a law against it but 99.9 percent of people in this country don't follow the law. Even Christians, even tongue-speaking Christians go for dowry. Pentecostal pastors promote dowry.

We're about the only church that stands against it and not only stands against it. I take a certificate from every married couple saying there's been no exchange of money between us and there will not be any till the day of our marriage and if you can't give me that certificate I say go to somebody else and let him conduct your wedding. I won't have anything to do with it.

Of course somebody may give me a false certificate and tell a lie or find some loophole around it. Let them do that. God will judge them.

I always say I'm one check post and if you cheated me and went past the check post there's another check post there. God will send you back. So don't try to fool God.

Don't let money be a factor in your marriage. In making your choice should I marry this person? Does her father have enough money? In my marriage I never, I insisted the dowry will not be discussed. You know how unconverted relatives are.

I remember one of my unconverted uncles was sitting there and as the discussion Annie's parents and my father and all and after everything was settled my uncle said ah there's one more thing right? I said no there is no more thing. I knew what was coming and I nipped it in the bud. I said there's no more thing it's over finished and he says to me I'm trying to help you man.

You're not helping me. He's unconverted. He doesn't know what help me.

The same thing that came to my children. I did not find out. I'll tell you what all I did not find out when I wanted to get my children when they suggested a girl to me.

Is she from a rich family? I couldn't care less. Let it be from a poor family. Has she got an education so that she can also work and earn some money? No not interested.

None of my daughters-in-law are working. It's not doesn't interest me and does she have too many brothers or sisters that my son will have to help them? Unimportant. Let him help.

Do good to the poor. This is the way I conducted my children's marriage. Have you heard of Indian parents doing it like this? This is Christian.

I only want to know do they love Jesus? Do they care for the poor? Are they willing to serve the Lord? I want to know those things. Do they love the Lord? Do they love God's word? Let me see some evidence of that. And when I found that I told my boys go right ahead.

I couldn't care less about anything else. I haven't regretted it. You've never had mother-in-law, daughter-in-law problems with them or father-in-law any type of problems at all.

Don't make money a factor. Don't make money an issue in your marriage. Try to be united.

Recognize that it's possible that a man may have more wisdom in this area. Sometimes a woman may have wisdom. Take your decisions like you have sex together.

Be united. Input from both sides and have a baby called a decision. A healthy baby.

In this money it's very, very important. Avoid debt. I am so immensely thankful to God that I had a wife who was willing to live extremely simply when we had very little.

That was the only reason why I've never been in debt in all our years of marriage or my whole life which was easy in my single days but not never been in debt for anything. I say if I can't afford it we don't buy it. I never believed in buy now and pay later.

No. That's why I say if you use a credit card please be extremely careful. Do you know the number of people who have ruined their lives with credit card debt? Buy, buy, buy, buy, buy and then no end to that buying.

Then how shall we pay all this money? It's not worth it. Why not live a little more simply? We lived simply. We didn't buy new clothes.

We bought only what is absolutely necessary for our home. Don't make money your goal. If God gives you money, fine and many of you you think you have very little.

I'll tell you what the devil will do. Listen to me. It's the devil's standard tactic.

He will always make you look at people who have more than you because that's the way he'll make you unhappy. Do you think the devil will ever make you look at people who are less than you? Never because then you'll be happy. He doesn't want you happy.

I remember once one couple came here many years ago it was to see me and they were talking about oh brother we have so little and we are struggling. I said you know there's a slum down here about a mile away. I want you to just have a walk down there and come back and then talk to me.

You know what the cure was there? Walk through that slum. See all those married couples living there and come back to me. Okay, you got any problems? No, no problems.

No counseling, nothing. They just had to walk through the slum. That's all.

The devil will always make you look. You can earn 50,000, 80,000 rupees a month, 100,000 rupees a month and you won't be happy because the devil will show you somebody who's getting 150,000 rupees a month. He won't show you that person who's earning 20,000 a month because you'll be fantastically happy then and the devil doesn't want you to be happy.

This is how it is with money. You know let me get what they have. You go somewhere you say ah I want to get that for my house.

If it's useful for the house get it and if you can afford it otherwise don't get it. Just like women look at a sari say wow I wish I could get that sari and they pester their husband for the next so many months to get that type of sari. Whether they have money or not you must know how much money you have in your home and don't unnecessarily buy things and I tell you this credit card has destroyed so many Christian homes and Christian ministries because you become in come into debt.

You cannot have an anointing. I don't believe God ever anoints a person who's in debt and I believe that is the number one reason that many many of you do not have a richer anointing. I don't know about your finances but it's possible you're carelessly using your credit cards.

Could be one reason. I'll tell you why because God spoke to me. I know that in some situations you need a credit card but my boys for example they live in the United States.

In many situations in America you need a credit card whether you like it or not. I decided never to have one. I don't need one here in India.

So I've always lived with a debit card but sometimes you need it. There are certain situations where you cannot do it. For example you get airline tickets and so many things.

You have to have a credit card because you can't do it. Some airlines will accept a debit card most of them don't. So I saw this verse you must owe no man anything and I told my boys listen okay you have to have a credit card because certain situations in the U.S. like if you rent a car or something they'll never give you a car on a debit card.

It has to be on a credit card okay. If a single month goes by in your life without paying that credit card bill that shows you're unfit to have a credit card. That's the test I gave them.

One month went by and you didn't pay that credit card bill. You're unfit. Either throw it away or make sure that doesn't happen again and I believe all four of my boys are without debt at all and that is a very strange thing for 99 percent of people in America.

Do you know that? That's because most Christians don't teach that it's a sin to be in debt. Is it a sin to have sex with somebody else's wife? Oh yes of course. I'll tell you it's equally a sin to be in debt.

See what it says there. Romans chapter 13. Romans chapter 13 verse 9. You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. Verse 8. You shall not be in debt.

So what's the difference? It's all lumped together. Don't commit adultery. Don't murder.

Don't steal and don't owe anybody anything. Can it be clearer than that? What would you think if you kept on committing adultery every month with somebody? It's only once a month or worse than that you just murder one fellow every month. You know it says in the previous verse don't be in fact that comes before these verses.

Don't owe anybody anything. Take it seriously. That's why the only way to do it is husband and wife work together and recognize what can we afford.

I want to live within that amount. What can we afford and I tell you God will bless you. I'm so thankful.

You know the advantage of it is that our children saw how we would struggle and even when we were living here in Bangalore, even after the church started, I said I want to prove that it's possible to live within our income. Let me tell you some of the things we used to do. We could not afford to buy rice from the market.

So my wife and I would stand one hour in the ration queue out there on Machin's Road to get rationed rice which is cheaper. It's not so good quality. They had to clean out a lot more stones etc.

We'd stand in the ration queue. I remember so many years to get sugar because we couldn't afford to buy it. We were not the rich type.

We could just throw around and get whatever we want. I say God could have made us millionaires but he didn't. He taught us to be disciplined.

He tested us to see what would we do when we have little. God never gives a man a ministry without testing him. My wife would stand there in the ration queue to get kerosene because gas was too expensive for us.

We'd cook on a kerosene stove. This is when we had children at home right in this house. Then we'd stand in the queue to get kerosene.

We'd stand in the queue to get this because it was cheaper in the ration shop. We wouldn't travel if we couldn't afford it. Even when my mom had a car and was lying in our house I hardly ever used it.

I hardly ever used it because I couldn't afford the petrol cost. I was lying there once in a while. I had to take the children out once in a while and that's why I think I did about when I finally sold it after 25 years.

The average was about 600 kilometers in a year. I drove it 50 kilometers a month because I couldn't afford it. I don't want to get into debt.

I say a scooter is good enough. My wife and children would go on a scooter or make two trips. Determined I will not get into debt.

I'm not going to buy something I can't afford. We'd never buy new clothes for the children on their birthdays. We couldn't afford it.

We'd buy new clothes for them and the old clothes wore out whether it was birthday or not birthday. I said let the rich people do what they like. We're not in that category.

We would take when they were in kindergarten, we'd take a pencil and cut it into two and say use the small pencil in kindergarten because you may lose it. We can't afford to keep buying new pencils. Little children lose pencils.

We'd cut an eraser into two. You may think we are stupid, crazy. You know what the result? 72 years without debt of one rupee.

I'd like you to beat that record. You may think I'm crazy for cutting pencils into two and erasers into two. All these fellows who spend lavishly just see how much money they make.

Just see how much debt they are in. Just see how much unhappiness there is in their homes. Which do you prefer? Little, little things.

We would not buy fish. Too expensive. You don't need fish.

You can live without fish. I'm not talking about today. Today God has given us enough.

Our children are well off. We have plenty. But those were the days when our children were in school and to pay the fees and so many things.

We would not buy anything we could not afford. We never went out to a restaurant. Even ice cream was a once in a month luxury.

Why? Not because we were misers. Even those days I never took a cent from the church. I've never taken a cent from this church in 37 years.

I'm not going to be a paid worker. But I was not going to be in debt and I was not going to be dependent on another person. I'm not going to send reports and get money from people.

No. But boy, what a lot of lessons we learned from it. And what a lot of lessons our children learned from it.

And they've learned the value of taking care of things. Get your shoe resold. If there are holes in the bottom of the shoe, don't throw it away.

There are cobblers here. You can get it resold and use it again. Use it again.

Little, little things, you know, we can be careful. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know.

I don't know. If you are careful with things like this, I was the most thing I was most eager about. I'll tell you honestly, it's the same today.

Lord, I do not want to lose the anointing of the Holy Spirit. At any cost, give me an anointing so that I can build your church. Tell me the price for it.

And the Lord said, be faithful with money. And he gave that verse to me from Luke 16. If you are not faithful with unrighteous money, Luke 16 verse 11, God will not give you the true riches.

Luke 16 11. If you are not faithful, let me paraphrase it, if you are not faithful with money in your house, God will not give you the anointing of the Holy Spirit. No, you're careless with money.

You think you got... And I'll tell you the other thing. The great danger is when you have plenty. This is the other extreme.

Oh, I'm not in debt. But you have money just because you got plenty. You can go and splash it around, going regularly to restaurants and wasting that money, which you could have used for some poor people in the villages in Tamil Nadu.

Why should I give to the poor villages in Tamil Nadu? Let me go and spend hundreds of rupees and have a grand dinner in this restaurant today and the other restaurant tomorrow. The other... You don't do it even today. You may think we're skimping on this, skimping on that.

Say what you like. In the day when God opens the record books, let's see what the final record is like. I can see it already today in the lack of anointing there is in so many people who could have been mighty servants of God in many of our churches.

I don't know their private life, but I can say they are not faithful with money. That's why God does not commit the true riches to them. He doesn't... The revelation of God's word... You know what all revelations

God has given me in his word? True riches.

God said, be faithful with money. You were faithful when you had little. Now be faithful when you have much.

I said, Lord, help me. I don't want to buy things just because I've got money. Dear brothers, there's a word here for everyone who wants to have a happy marriage.

And if you find your husband extravagant, you know what these people who ride horses do with the reins? Give a little pull. If you find your wife extravagant, give a little pull. You must help one another.

Money is a very, very important area. The people who have little get into debt and the people who have much splash it around thinking that this is my hard-earned money. One of the first things God taught me when I was in the Navy was, it is not your hard-earned money.

It is what I gave you as a salary, as a gift. Take it. Thank you, Lord.

I learned that lesson 50 years ago when I was working. Learn it. You may all be getting fantastic salaries, but I tell you, I don't envy you who can splash around money, which I could not do at your age.

I feel sorry for you. You'll have your grand restaurant meals, but you won't have the anointing. You'll have your grand vacations, endless money splashed around here and there, but you won't have revelation on God's word.

You can have your choice. I made my choice, and I don't regret it. I feel sorry that God has got so few prophets in India because they are so careless with money.

I have longed and longed for 37 years to see prophets rise up in all of our CFC churches. I see a few. One, two, three, four, like that.

There should be many more. God has not united you in marriage just to keep each other happy, but to build his church. Be faithful and don't complain when your husband can't buy something.

Live simply. Help the poor. Don't splash it all on yourself.

God will reward you abundantly. I'll give you one verse on that. Psalm 41.

Psalm 41. How blessed is he who considers the helpless the poor. The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble.

Do you know how many days of trouble the Lord has delivered me from? I cannot number it. The Lord will protect him and keep him alive. He has protected me in numerous places.

He'll be called blessed on the earth. He will not give him over to the desire of his enemies. I've had numerous enemies because I stand up for the Lord.

The Lord has never given me over to their desire. The Lord will sustain him upon his sickbed. In his illness, he will restore him to health.

I cannot tell you the number of times I've been sick and up the next morning healed. Otherwise, I would not have been able to serve the Lord all these 46 years. By the grace of God, I've never missed a meeting

in 46 years due to sickness.

It's not something to glory in. Well, my wife has had a part in it to keep me healthy, but God has taken care of me. That's all.

I give the glory entirely to God. I say to you, my brothers and sisters, care for the poor. That is why I went mostly to the villages in Tamil Nadu for so many years just to break my back sitting in 16 hours in those bumpy buses to these conferences, but I see the result today.

Well worth it, and I haven't broken down because of that. God's given me health still. So don't take care of yourself.

Take care of the Lord and his work. And put it first, you will never regret in this earth or in eternity. May you all have a marriage that goes on happily forever and ever.

Amen. They lived happily ever after. It's not a fairytale ending.

It's a real Christian marriage the way it should be. Let's pray as far as Heavenly Father, thank you for a wonderful time you gave us this afternoon and for these wonderful young married couples beginning a journey in life which can become glorious or disastrous. Help them to obey the manufacturer's instructions.

Help them to obey down to the last detail, to be humble enough to acknowledge that they don't know the rules as well as you do. Bless them and lead them on, Lord. We commit them to you.

Each one here, I believe there's tremendous potential here which the devil sees and which he wants to destroy their lives and which you see and you want for yourself. Help them not to be overwhelmed with what they heard today, but to recognize that step by step, little by little, through many mistakes like a child learning to walk, falling down, getting up, falling down, getting up, they can also learn. For I know, Lord, it was through many falls that I slowly learned and I'm still learning.

Help us all. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/FduGbM99RmA.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/godly-marriages-2following-godly-principles-in-marriage/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net