

God's Original Plan for Man

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being alert, standing firm in faith, acting like men, and being strong. It highlights the example of Jesus as the true definition of manhood, focusing on overcoming sin and Satan rather than asserting worldly power. The message urges believers to be spiritually alert at all times, dependent on God like a branch in a tree, and to live by faith in helpless dependence on Christ.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 16:13, Matthew 11:28, Mark 9:24, John 15:5, Ephesians 1:22, Hebrews 10:7, Luke 16:15, 2 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 4:4

Topics: "Spiritual Alertness", "True Manhood in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Dear brothers, let's turn to 1 Corinthians in chapter 16 and verse 13, which is our theme for this conference. Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Act like men and be strong is our theme.

And the world would get a different meaning when you tell them act like men. They think it means be muscular, be like a macho man who can assert yourself and show that you're the leader. But our example is the man Christ Jesus.

He did not demonstrate his manhood by muscular power or by asserting himself like some leader. He showed this world what a man should really be like, being the servant of everyone. What he overcame was not other human beings.

He didn't want to be lord over people. He overcame sin. He overcame Satan.

And those are far more important things to overcome and people to overcome than human beings. So when it says here, be strong, act like men, don't ever forget we got to remove from our mind the concept of what it means to be a strong man that we have acquired from the world. And we've all got it.

We've been influenced far too much by the values of this world to understand what being a man really means. So when you hear that word act like men, think of Jesus. And here it says be on the alert, which means alert against Satan.

Remember we are always on the battlefield. There's never a moment that we're not going to be on the battlefield until Christ comes back. In earthly battles, soldiers have a time to break away from the battlefield for other people to take their place and they go back and relax a while and maybe sleep a while and come back to battle because it's extended.

But in this battle, the spiritual battle, there is no such time to relax. Spiritually, we are to be alert all the time. We're not to fall asleep.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians and chapter 5, you brethren are not in darkness that the coming of the Lord should overtake you like a thief. So, verse 6, 1 Thessalonians 5, 6, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. It's possible to spiritually go to sleep.

We sleep physically, but what it's saying here is 24 hours a day, we must be alert spiritually. And we can be alert spiritually even when we are asleep. If we are alert spiritually when we are awake, I found that through the years.

I remember in my younger days as a Christian, I did not know these things. I did not know what it is to stand against the devil and proclaim to him that he was defeated on the cross and to be an overcomer, to fight sin. And so when I'm failing during the day, my dreams will be dirty.

My dreams will be fearful. But once I learned how to be alert and strong against sin and Satan during the day, my sleep became more peaceful. There would be no fear.

There would not be any dirty dreams. Be alert during the day and then you'll be spiritually alert at night as well. It's an amazing thing.

The Holy Spirit is the one who makes us strong. We are not going to be strong with any human determination. So think of this, be on the alert, stand firm.

And it says stand firm in the faith. In the new covenant, there's a tremendous emphasis on faith. And faith is not just believing certain things about God and about Jesus.

That is an intellectual faith. That even the devil has. There's not a single thing that we believe intellectually that the devil also doesn't believe.

He believes it all. You ask the devil, do you believe God is a Trinity, Christ is the Son of God, he came and died for the sins of the world, he'd say yes to all those things. Every doctrinal statement of the most fundamental church in the world, the devil will say yes, I agree.

But he's still the devil, lives in sin. And we can agree doctrinally with the most fundamental church in the world and live in sin just like the devil. No, faith is not that.

Faith is more than something that we understand in our mind. This is a mistake that so many Christians have made. Live by faith for them means I believe that Jesus died for me.

I believe he's coming back. And I believe I'm going to be with him. That's not it.

It's much more than that. Faith is a living thing. It's the type of thing that made Abraham give up Isaac on the altar, as we read in Hebrews 11.

It's the thing that made Noah use all his money to build the ark because he knew that was the only thing that would remain once the world was destroyed. Faith was something that produced action. The great chapter on faith, Hebrews chapter 11, teaches us that all of them did something.

It's not a question of what they believed in their head. So here is, that's how Jesus lived. So living by faith means, and let me use the best definition of it that I can find in scripture.

What Jesus said in John 15, in verse 5, we're thinking of this, be on the alert and stand firm in the faith, thus act like men and be strong. So in John 15, Jesus defines faith as I have understood, perhaps one of the clearest definitions of faith that I have found in the New Testament that explains it in symbolic language. Jesus used illustrations a lot, and I found through the years that illustrations helped me tremendously.

So Jesus said, I am the vine, you're the branches. I mean, those days everybody saw vines in Israel. Today, let's use some other example that we see, I'm an apple tree, and you are the branches.

He who abides in me bears much fruit, apart from me, you can do nothing. That is faith, to abide in Christ like a branch of a tree, stays in the tree, and keeps on producing fruit almost effortlessly. It's not a great struggle for that branch to bear fruit.

To act like men will not be a struggle if I abide in the tree. Faith is to remain dependent on the tree. Without me, you can do nothing.

Faith is to recognize that however much experience I have, however much knowledge of the Bible I have, and however much I think I'm spiritually strong after so many years of being a believer, I can do nothing apart from abiding in the tree. I've been a born-again believer for 60 years, and out of that time, about 53 years, I've been in Christian work full-time. And I say today, I am more aware than ever in my whole life that I can do nothing without dependence on the Lord.

I become more and more dependent on Him as I've grown spiritually. I become more and more dependent on Him even to preach the Word, or anything, to live the Christian life, to overcome sin. Everything is by faith.

The branch helplessly dependent on the tree, constantly acknowledging, I can do nothing. What it means is I can do nothing of eternal value. Oh, there are a lot of things I can do in the world, and I'm sure there are a lot of things you can do in the world too.

And many of us think we are very capable, and you bring that spirit into your Christian life, and you'll be a failure. It's okay that you're capable of doing so many things in the world. You're very intellectual, perhaps, and you're very clever.

You know so many things. You'll grasp the truths of the New Covenant, perhaps, and therefore you think you're better than others. That won't help.

It's recognizing that I cannot do anything of eternal spiritual value unless I'm dependent helplessly on Christ my Lord. That recognition and living by that is living by faith. And the Bible says the righteous shall

live by faith.

We're not only saved by faith, many of us emphasize that, by grace are we saved through faith, not of yourselves. We know that we can do nothing to have our sins forgiven. We can do nothing to qualify us to live in God's presence for eternity.

It is all the result of Christ's work on the cross. He died and rose again that we might be His and be with Him forever. But that's being saved from judgment and from eternal separation from God.

But to live by faith, you know, the Bible says in Romans chapter one, the righteous shall live by faith, which is a lot of difference from being just initially being saved and forgiven. Romans one, and we read here in verse 17, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. It is written the righteous man shall live by faith, not just initially be saved from judgment by faith.

That's right. By grace and not by works, but all our life we are to live by that grace, by faith, which is helpless dependence on God. Think of a branch that's been in the tree for 50 years, in my case for 60 years.

I cannot produce any more fruit today apart from the tree as I could 60 years ago. It's exactly the same. You realize that in a branch.

A branch never, never becomes capable of producing fruit by experience of having been in the tree for 50 or a hundred years. That is living by faith and helpless dependence upon God. And that is the person who will always act like a man, act like Jesus Christ, the man whom God demonstrated to the world what manhood really is.

That's the man who can be strong, spiritually strong, not in this macho type of way that the world understands strength. So let me turn now to Genesis and chapter one. See, I always like to go back to the beginning.

And the reason why I say that is we read once in Matthew's gospel chapter 19 that the Pharisees once came to Jesus and said, is it lawful for someone to divorce his wife, for a man to divorce his wife? And Jesus answered them and said, from the beginning, how is it in the beginning? Acts 19 four, how is it in the beginning? Haven't you read how it was in the beginning that God did not provide two women for Adam, just one. And he was to cleave to her. That was his argument against divorce.

So in the same way, in everything, it's good to go back to the beginning. How was it in the beginning when God made man? How is it? We have so many questions that we need to think about Jesus. How is it in the beginning? Haven't you read how it was in the beginning? Have you read how it was in the beginning? Let's turn to Genesis one.

When God made, he created the heavens and the earth first in the moment of time, and then when the earth was corrupted by the fall of Satan, he remade, not recreated, but remade the earth in six days. And in five days, he had completed all the other parts of creation. And then on the sixth day, he began, not by making man, he began by making animals.

The beginning of the sixth day, he said in Genesis 124, let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, creeping things, and the beasts of the earth, and all the animals that we see on this earth, not in the sea, they were on the fifth day. On the sixth day, he created all the animals from the same dust from

which our body is made. Those animals were made from the dust of the earth.

And but when it came to man, God built him from the dust, the same dust that the animals were made from. But there was a difference. Genesis 2, 7 says, God formed man from the dust of the ground, and at that point, he was exactly like the animals.

But then God breathed into him, into his nostrils, the breath of life. And man became a living soul. He got a spirit within him.

God breathed into man and man became a spirit. In his body, he received a spirit and a conscience that brought him in touch with God, which no animal had. It's that God breathing into him that made him different from the animals.

Otherwise, he was just dust like the animals. Internal organs of dogs and lions are very similar to our internal organs. And when they die and we die, we become dust like that.

And if you go to the dust that came from a dead lion or a dead dog, and the dust that came from a dead man, it's the same. You can't make out. It's exactly the same.

What is it that made the difference in that at the beginning? God breathed into him and gave him a spirit. He became a living soul. Man is spirit, soul, and body.

We read in 1 Thessalonians 5, 23, spirit first. An animal doesn't have that. That is what made man a person who could walk in the likeness of Christ, likeness of God.

A spirit, a conscience which tells him what is right and wrong, a spirit that is capable of receiving the Holy Spirit. So when God made man, he said in Genesis 1, 26, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, so double emphasis. What is the difference between in our image and according to our likeness? It's not a physical image.

God doesn't have a physical image. It means the same thing. It's a double emphasis on the fact that I want man to be exactly like me in character, in behavior, in our image, according to our likeness.

Notice, my brothers, that double emphasis. And let them rule like God had authority. Man would have authority if he submitted to God, like the branch in the tree.

The sap from the tree would flow into the branch and produce fruit forever, as long as it remained in helpless dependence on the tree, as long as it did not block any of those passages from which the sap flowed from the tree into the branch. Authority. It's one of the first things that God said, let them rule.

You know, they're being told to multiply and all that came later, that man could have children. The first thing was authority, to rule. Let them rule.

And then God created man in his image and told him to subdue and rule over everything on this earth. So I see there, God wanted man to have spiritual authority right from the beginning. Let them rule.

I want to say to you, my brothers, that when we were born again, God's purpose was to bring us back to his original purpose. Just like in our Christian marriages, there should be no divorce at all, because God's original purpose was one woman for one man. There wasn't even another woman in Eden that Adam could lust after.

No, there was only one woman for Adam. There was nothing he could lust after. It was just one Eve God gave her to him.

And in a true Christian marriage, it's only one woman who a man who's married to her has eyes for. If you're not like that, you're not behaving in a Christian way. How is it in the beginning? God wanted a man to have one woman, eyes only for one woman, thoughts only about one woman.

That is a man who's acting like a man. All the others are not acting like men. They are weaklings.

They're behaving like animals, like the dogs that would go after any female dog, a lion that would go after any lioness. They're not behaving like human beings is the way God wanted man to be. What does it mean to act like men? Don't act like animals.

That's the point. Don't act like an animal. Don't have eyes for every woman.

How was it in the beginning? One woman act like men. If we don't begin here, don't think that Bible knowledge and the ability to preach and ability to sing mean anything to God. Let's go back to the beginning and ask ourselves, what does it mean to act like a man? God created man in his likeness, in our image, according to our likeness, to reflect the nature and character of God in our behavior and in marriage, to be faithful to one woman.

Let me repeat, there was not a single other woman in Eden. There was no possibility, and I believe it's possible for the Holy Spirit to so fill us and for us buried people to be faithful to our wives in such a way that we never even think that someone else would have made a better wife for us. That's okay for a godless unbelievers who are influenced by Satan, but for a God-fearing spiritual man, zero thoughts like that.

Is it possible to live like that? Yes. Yes. That's our calling, act like men.

Don't act like sissies. Don't act like weak ones who the devil can overpower with just one pretty woman here or another pretty woman there or a little bit of money here. No, we're supposed to rule over money.

It says here in Genesis 1, rule over the earth and subdue everything in it. All the gold and diamonds on the earth, we're supposed to have our feet upon them. That's why God has buried gold and diamonds deep in the earth so that we walk on them.

They're under our feet, but man digs it up from the ground and puts it on his head and puts it around his neck and worships it almost in most places. Gold has become their God. That's not acting like man.

That's acting like the animals who are made of the same dust. You know, you ignore the spirit in man and man behaves like an animal. You see, all animals are always looking down.

You'll never see an animal looking up. Have you ever seen a cow looking up into the sky or a dog or even a lion or an elephant? No. Every animal looks down.

Their mind is set on earthly things. They're always thinking of food or sex or the female counterpart of theirs in the animal realm. That's what they're always, their mind is occupied with that.

And when a human being created in the image of God behaves like that, occupied with gold and silver and women and things like that, he is not acting like a man. He's acting like an animal. And a lot of Christians,

born-again Christians, are acting like animals because they're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

They haven't understood God's purpose. They've not seen what it is to be led by the Holy Spirit. Yes, we have a flesh that tempts us, sure, but then God's given us the Holy Spirit.

We can't excuse ourselves and compare ourselves with people in the Old Testament who did not have the Holy Spirit. We can't say, well, David fell into sin and he still became king after that, remained king after that. I've heard preachers say that, who fall into adultery and continue in their ministry.

They should be ashamed of themselves and give up the ministry and go and do a secular job when they've fallen into adultery. They don't do that. They say, David fell and God accepted him.

You want to go back to the Old Covenant, then say you don't know Jesus. David did not know Jesus Christ. He did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within him.

The first time the Holy Spirit dwelt within man was on the day of Pentecost. That's why David fell. That's why Samson fell.

That's why people in the Old Testament told lies. That's why Abraham said about his wife, this is my sister, to protect his own life. He was not concerned that his wife might be raped by Pharaoh or the other king, Abimelech.

He wanted to save his own life. That's Old Testament. We don't follow that example.

There are good things in those people like Abraham and David, but there are other things we just don't follow because we have the Holy Spirit. We're to act like men. We go back to the beginning.

We are supposed to rule. We're supposed to rule over our lust. We're supposed to rule over gold.

We're supposed to rule over money. Everything must be under our feet. That is God's will.

The Bible says that God has put all things under the feet of Christ. And what did he do after that? He gave him to be head over the church. Turn with me to Ephesians.

In Ephesians, we read about Christ like this, Ephesians 1. Jesus Christ has been placed, Ephesians 1.21, above all rule, authority, power, dominion, every name that's named. This is how God originally made man to be. Read Ephesians 1.21. When God raised up Jesus from the dead, verse 20, and seated him in his right hand, Ephesians 1.21, far above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named, and put everything in subjection under his feet.

Remember what God told Adam? Subdue everything. Everything is going to be under you. Here it was.

When man failed, Jesus came in our flesh and died and rose again, and everything is under his feet. And if it stopped there, you'd say, how does that apply to us? But it doesn't stop there. And he says, then God gave him, Ephesians 1.22, to be head over us, members of his body, the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Now, if Christ is the head and we are his body, where are the feet? In the church. We are part of his body, and everything is under our feet or should be under our feet if we remain under the headship of Christ. Just like we use the illustration of the branch in the tree, it will never stop bearing fruit, even in a thousand

years, as long as it remains in the tree.

The fruit will get better and better and more and more and more and more. In the same way, as long as we live under the headship, under the control of Christ as our head, everything will be under our feet. We will rule over sin.

Sin will not have power over you because you're under the headship of Christ. You're under grace. Grace flows from the head down to the members of the body.

It's when I don't live under the headship of Christ that other things have power over me. Otherwise, God has put everything under his feet and doesn't stop there. He's put everything under his feet and Ephesians 1, 22, given him as head over us in the church.

So that is how Christ has brought us back to God's original purpose for Adam. Everything under his feet, married to only one woman, having eyes for no other woman anywhere around there. As far as Adam was concerned, and it's true, there was no woman either.

And as far as a married Christian man is concerned, there are no other women in the world except his wife. Dear brothers, married brothers, have you come to that place? If not, you're far short on God's purpose for you. Don't just be happy that you love your wife and you're faithful to her.

Say, Lord, I want to come to the place where Adam was. There is no other woman in the world for me. I look around, there is nobody else.

Everywhere I look, it's just my wife, nobody else. Act like men, be strong. So different from the world's concept of a muscular man, a he-man.

That's all the devil's ideas that we see there. I see a he-man in Jesus Christ. He is the man.

See, if God only sent Christ to die for the sins of the world, he could have made Christ like Adam, just made him like a man, and he came to earth as a full-grown 33-year-old man, lived one day, and when he died on the cross, and our sins are forgiven. But he didn't do that. He allowed Jesus to be born as a helpless baby who had to cry for his milk, helpless, just like any baby, and grow up to be a man, grow up to obey Joseph and Mary for years and earn his own living as a hard-working carpenter, perspire in the carpenter shop and earn his living and then be a full-time Christian work, be dependent on gifts that he received from others for three and a half years, though he never asked anybody for anything.

He really trusted his father, never sent any reports of his work. So different from today's Christianity, but he was a man. He ruled over sin.

The devil couldn't come anywhere near him. There is our example of what a true man is like, because God sent him as a baby so that people of every age, from childhood, have an example to follow. A little five-year-old boy or girl has an example to follow, and Jesus is a five-year-old.

And a working man has an example to follow, and Jesus is a carpenter. A full-time Christian worker has an example to follow in Jesus. Every human being has an example to follow.

That's why Christ came and lived on earth for 33 and a half years. So if I want to follow him, I must not just look at the last six hours of his life when he died on the cross. That's true.

I need that for the forgiveness of my sins, to see him coming out of the grave alive, sure, and to wait for his return from heaven. But if I want to live on this earth, if I want to act like a man, I have to look at Jesus, how he lived as a man for 33 and a half years, in absolute purity, in total humility, in love for people who that even as well as almost his last words when people killed him was, Father, forgive them. That's acting like a man, not having bitterness and anger, no.

So we need to understand what it means to act like a man and to be strong and get all these other ideas out of our head. That is what it means to live by faith, to live in helpless dependence upon God as a branch in a tree, or as we read in Ephesians, like the parts of a body under the head. You see, when a hand, an arm, loses connection with the head, we call it a paralyzed arm.

Some people, they get a stroke and their arm gets paralyzed and they can still use their left arm, but their right arm is paralyzed. Why is that? They're not dead, they're alive. The blood is still flowing into that arm, it's still a part of the body, but it's a useless part of the body.

There are born-again Christians like that. Yes, the blood of Christ forgives their sins, but they are absolutely useless to the body of Christ. What use is a paralyzed arm to the body? It's a burden on the body.

The other hand is to do so many things. If the arm was cut off, then at least you can ignore it, but this arm is still hanging around there. It's so many things that it needs nourishment, it needs supply of health and strength, but it doesn't do anything because its connection with the head is gone.

There are Christians like that who are absolutely useless, but they say they are born-again. They sit in church meetings every Sunday, they sing, they pray, they may even share the word, but their usefulness to the body of Christ is zero. I'm not saying they should become preachers or travel the world as missionaries, no, they don't even pray for the church.

They hardly do anything. They never give any of their money to the poor, no. Everything they do is receive, receive, receive, receive, like this paralyzed arm, receives, receives, receives, receives supply, receives blood supply, receives energy, receives strength, but what does it do? Zero.

It's paralyzed. It hangs there. That's not acting like a man.

Look at the other arm, active, doing something for the body. What's the secret? Connected to the head, like the branch, dependent on the tree. This is living by faith.

To live by faith is to be like an arm that is connected to the head, not to say, I am a member of the body of Christ. I am born again, but I'm a useless, paralyzed arm. What are you, my brother? What does it mean to act like a man? This is just to say, I'm born again.

The blood of Christ has cleansed me and I don't do much, but I'm a part of the body of Christ. A paralyzed, useless arm. No, we must be strong, act like men, be strong, don't be paralyzed.

The opposite of being strong is to be paralyzed. You need to ask yourself, don't judge others. That's another miserable habit that many Christians have.

When they hear something in a meeting, they think, no, that's for my wife or that's for that other person. No, brother, it's for you. You know what the Bible says in Hebrews in chapter 10? That's a great verse,

which you must always remember.

Hebrews chapter 10 is talking about how Jesus read the Bible, and that's a good way for us to read the Bible too. It says here in Hebrews chapter 10, it's talking about when Jesus comes into the world, verse 5, when Jesus comes into the world. And one of the things he says is, behold, I've come, verse 7, Hebrews 10, 7. In the scroll of the book that is in the Bible, it is written about me.

It's not written about my wife. It's not written about the other person. No, it's written about me.

I don't have to go to my wife and say, hey, the Bible says wife, submit to your husband. No, that's for her, that's not for me. It's written about me.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, period. I don't look in the Bible to see what's written about other people. In the scroll of the book, it's written about me, and it's written about me so that I might know his will and I can do God's will.

That's what the rest of verse 7 says. That's how Jesus lived. He read the Bible.

He understood the scripture as a man to do the will of his father, and he did it completely. That's what it means to be a man, to be strong and act like man. When God spoke to Adam, there was nobody else.

God told him of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Genesis 2, verse 17, you shall not eat. And remember, he said that to Adam before he was created, Genesis 2, 17. He was created later on in verse 21 and 22.

But before that, God told Adam, you can eat from any tree of the garden, Genesis 2, 17, but don't eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And Adam very faithfully taught that to Eve. Eve never heard it from God.

She heard it from Adam. That's why when the devil asked Eve in Genesis 3, 1, are you allowed to eat from any tree of the garden, the woman said, no, we can eat from any tree, except there's one tree in the middle of the garden, which is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God has said, you shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.

She modified it a little bit. You know how man has the habit of modifying God's words, you notice that she modified it. God only said, don't eat from it, but she added a little more to try and be more spiritual than God.

It's a habit with many Christians. They try to be more spiritual than the scripture itself. You shall not eat from it and don't even touch it, or you shall die.

But she heard from Adam, and Adam had fulfilled his function as a man to tell his wife, remember this, darling, you must not eat from that tree. I'm sure he told her exactly what God said, nothing more. She added on something to it.

That's why the Bible says, a woman should not be a teacher, because she usually leads people astray. You read that in 1 Timothy and chapter 2. But here it says that when the devil tempted Eve, where was Adam? He wasn't in some other part of the garden. It says very clearly in Genesis 3, verse 6, that she gave the fruit to her husband, last part of Genesis 3, 6, who was standing with her right there next to her all the time.

Was he acting like a man? Was he acting strong like a man? No. When he saw the devil through the serpent talking to Eve, what should he have done as the husband? Eve, stop it. Don't talk to that serpent.

Let's get away from here. We have to go to the tree of life. But he didn't do that.

He didn't act like a man there. He just gave the instruction and did not take his position as the head of the home. This is the condition of many men today.

They are not head in their own home. They don't exercise spiritual authority. The only authority they exercise is human, master type of authority, strong man, yelling at his wife and ruling in all earthly things, but nothing spiritual.

That is not God's way. Not at all. That is not God's way.

Here it says, he just stated, not only he didn't stop her from eating of that tree, when she gave it to him, he just opened his mouth and said, thank you, darling, instead of saying, no, I'm not going to take part in that. I love God more than I love you, and I'm not going to disobey God, even if you did. Boy, that would have been something.

You find men like that, who when their wife disobeys God in something, says, no, I'm not going to take part in that. Maybe your wife comes and has this bad habit of gossiping, speaking evil of others, holding hands with the devil, who's the accuser of the brethren, and accusing somebody to you and gives you something, sweet morsel of gossip to swallow, and you open your mouth and take it in. You're not acting like a man, you're acting like Adam.

You're more effeminate than your wife. You're not strong, you're not saying, hey, let's ignore that, let's forget it. I'm not asking you to get into a fight with your wife, no, we shouldn't, we should never fight, but we shouldn't participate in evil.

You're to love Jesus and God more than you love your wife, that's to be strong and act like a man. You should have said, I'm sorry, we shouldn't eat that, that's wrong, God told us not to eat it. Just because your wife disobeyed God, do you have to disobey God too? Why did he have to eat it? And then you see, once he's eaten it, he becomes so weak spiritually, he became a sinner, and when God asks him, you know, when you become a sinner, you become a fool, and you see that happen to Adam, he wasn't acting like a man anymore.

It says, when he heard that God was coming in Genesis 3, 8, and when he hid behind the trees of the garden, and imagine how foolish a man is when he thinks he can hide behind a tree, like some hide-and-seek game, and think that he has hidden himself from God. Is there anything more stupid than that? A lot of believers commit sin in secret, and they think God hasn't seen them. And they come to the church and act so spiritually, but they don't realize God has seen them in secret.

What they've done, they're hiding behind the trees, thinking that God is not seeing them. Of course he sees them. He sees through them, through and through.

And then, you see some more of how he's not like a man at all. A man must be one who is willing to take the blame. Be bold enough to take the blame.

When you did something wrong, say, take the blame. Say, yes, I'm sorry. Lord, I did it.

That's another area where a man becomes effeminate, weak. Put the blame on somebody else. It says here, God came to him and said, did you eat of that tree which I told you not to eat, for which there's only one answer, yes or no? It's like these question papers sometimes you get in some examinations, multiple choice.

Not multiple choice, only two choices. This question, answer it, yes or no? Tick one. And Adam doesn't tick either.

He doesn't tick yes or no. He, underneath that, he writes something else, let me give you an explanation. My wife gave it to me and I ate it.

That's not what God is asking. Did you eat of that tree, yes or no? It's so difficult for a man to just simply acknowledge, yes, Lord, I did it. Now, don't judge Adam, judge yourself, and see whether you acted like that when you know in your conscience that you did something wrong.

Clearly, your conscience is always yelling at you, that's wrong, and you try to find some justification for it, then you're not acting like a man. You're acting like an effeminate woman or like an animal. The conscience is gone.

You see, when man is without his conscience or ignores his conscience, he's back to dust. As I said in the beginning, on the sixth day, God first made animals, and then He took the same dust and made a man and gave him a conscience that made him different from the animals. There's one thing that made man different from the animals, that's his conscience, and that's what makes him strong when he lives by that.

The moment he ignores his conscience, he's down to the level of the dust from which the animals were made, and that's what happened to Adam. He ignores his conscience. He can't even tell God.

There was nobody else listening to him, God and Adam. Did you eat of this tree? Can't he confess the truth at least to God? No. He tries to justify himself even before God.

Jesus said something about this matter of justifying ourselves. Turn with me to Luke's Gospel chapter 16, Luke 16 and verse 15. He's talking to the Pharisees in verse 14 who were lovers of money, and when a man loves money, he's not subduing the earth under him, the gold and diamonds that are on the heart of the earth.

He's not subduing it under him. He's putting gold on top of his head, into his mind. They were lovers of money, and he said to them, Luke 16, 15, you are those who justify yourselves, but God knows your heart, and you can justify yourself before men and get a reputation.

You can live and sin in secret, and nobody in your church knows about it. You can have a dirty thought life. You can watch pornography in secret, and nobody knows about it, and you get a reputation before men as a godly man, hypocrite, deceiving others.

God says that is an abomination in the sight of God. It is detestable in the sight of God. God detests it.

It's an abomination. We need to see how terrible it is to try and justify ourselves before men and to try and prove before men. To justify ourselves before men is to prove before them that I'm right, there's nothing wrong with me.

I'm a spiritual man. That's not acting like man. That's acting like fallen Adam, not the Adam of Genesis 1, 28, as he was created, but the Adam of Genesis 3, hiding from God, obeying his wife, covering up his sin.

You justify yourself in the sight of men. Yes, it's not really my fault, Lord. He did this, and she did this, and as a result, I had to do this.

It's an abomination in the sight of God. In the Old Testament, you read in the book of Deuteronomy that when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, God said, when you go to relieve yourself outside the camp, take a spade with you and dig, and when you're finished relieving yourself, cover it up because the reason given is the Lord your God walks in the midst of the camp, and he must not see any abomination there. It's an abomination for God to see that uncovered filth that came out of your body when you relieve yourself, and you did not cover it up.

It must be covered up. It's an abomination before God, and that is the word here. It's an abomination before God when I try to justify myself like Adam.

God detests it, and I need to see that, that I'm not acting like a man. A man who acts like a man is one who says, yes, Lord, I'm sorry. I'm ashamed of myself.

It's not my wife. It's me. It's me, Lord.

I opened my mouth, and I ate it, and it looked as if my wife was enjoying it, and I thought, boy, that looks as if it tastes nice. I want to get a taste of it, too. I was tempted, and I ate it, and I'm not going to justify myself and say my wife gave it to me.

No. It was me, Lord, 100 percent me, not even 99 percent. I opened my mouth wide, and I ate that fruit which you told me not to eat.

Please forgive me. It's my fault. That's acting like a man, otherwise you're justifying yourself, and that is an abomination before God.

We need to understand what God means here when it says, be on the alert, act like men, and be strong. And Jesus came to redeem us from that fall into which Adam came, and to bring us to the place where we overcome all the time, and we can say like the Apostle Paul, thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph. These are not occasional times when we spring up and become strong and act like men.

No. 2 Corinthians 2, and verse 14, thanks be to God, that means I give God the credit for it. I can't take any credit.

I'm like the branch in the tree. I can't take any credit for it, Lord, but thanks be to the tree from which I get sap so that my fruit comes all the time, every year. Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, always means 24-7.

There is only one meaning for always, 24-7. 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14, thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and thus manifests through us the aroma of the knowledge of Christ wherever we go. That was his testimony, Paul's testimony 24-7.

He hadn't fully become like Christ, but according to the light he had in his conscious area, he was an overcomer. That is God's will for us, to be able to say that in the area where God has given me light, I know nothing against myself. Let me read this to you.

1 Corinthians 4, in verse 4, Paul says, I am conscious of nothing against myself. That means in the area of my conscience has given me light, I am not conscious of any wrong that I've done. But 1 Corinthians 4, 4, that doesn't mean I'm acquitted, because there's a whole other area around me.

Unconsciously, I could be doing 101 things wrong. I don't know that, but in the area that I know, my conscience is clear. But the one who examines me is the Lord, and he sees things I don't see.

That's what it means to act like a man. I live with a clear conscience before God, and I never seek to justify myself. I want to be like Adam.

I want to rule over everything God has put under the feet of Christ, made me part of his body so that I can rule over it all. Let us pray. As our heads are bowed in prayer, close your eyes and concentrate on the Lord and ask him to remind you, not just now, but for the rest of your life, of the things that God spoke to you today.

Say, Lord, I want to obey that command, to be alert, to be strong in faith, and to act like a man, not like an animal, to be strong. Help me, Lord, Heavenly Father, forgive us where we have failed and cleanse us in the blood of Jesus Christ. Lord, give us the fullness of the spirit to walk as Jesus did on this earth.

We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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