

Growing in Spiritual Maturity

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the progression of spiritual maturity from being children to young men and fathers in the faith, highlighting the importance of overcoming the evil one by letting the word of God abide in us. It stresses the need to not love the world and to constantly watch against the lust of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life, even as spiritual fathers. The ultimate goal is to do the will of God and abide forever.

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 2:6, Ephesians 1:4, Job 23:10, Matthew 4:4, Ephesians 6:11, 1 John 2:15

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Description

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Transcript

1 Corinthians, we read the frustration that Paul had with the Corinthians because he could not share with them many things that he wanted to. He says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 2, I determine to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. But verse 6, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, a wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory.

So the New Testament speaks a lot about the mystery, things that God reveals only to those who fear him. And Paul speaks about a lot of it in 1 Corinthians, in Ephesians, in 1 Timothy, and he could not share that with the Corinthians because they were not mature enough to understand it. But the Corinthians may have been very clever in other ways, but they could not understand God's mysteries and therefore they did not become mature believers.

And I think the Lord has that frustration with many people in many of our churches today. Most congregations of churches, people sit there and they listen, they're happy to hear, but God wants more and more people who are walking with him daily, knowing him better, and who gradually begin to have a ministry to bless and build up other people. That responsibility is primarily among the brothers.

So God has chosen men to lead the church, and he expects us to grow up to maturity quickly. We mustn't just leave it to just two or three people who are going to take care of everything in the church in terms of the ministry. It's not just the preaching of God's Word on Sunday morning.

There may be few who are gifted for that, but it's the shepherding of people in the church. I've often thought of the fact that Jesus limited himself to just 12 disciples. There were many people who wanted to be his disciples, but he prayed all night, and it says in the morning he selected 12, and he spent a lot of time with them.

And I see that there's a limit to how much any man, no matter how gifted he is, can train other people to be disciples. So we must not leave everything to the elders of the church. As the church grows in size, even with a church like here in RLCF, it's very important that many other brothers rise up to take a shepherding responsibility, even if you're not elders or deacons or you have no official responsibility.

You must say, Lord, what do you want me to do? There are people younger than me in this church, people who've come newly, long after me, to this church. What is my responsibility towards them? Am I just to say hi and have a good conversation with them on Sunday and leave it at that? Why not pray and ask if God will give you a burden in your heart for those whom the Lord lays on your heart? That way, the burden of the elders will be shared by many in the church. See, in practical matters, all of you brothers are so willing, I'm sure, to do anything, to help arrange things and take up various physical, practical responsibilities in the church building, or even to contribute financially for the progress of the church.

But those are not the main things. The main thing God's looking for, that's very good. It's wonderful that so many brothers are willing to take the responsibility for all these physical things.

But the main thing in a church is the spiritual responsibility of so many people who are coming to the church. And I'm not asking you to just go and latch on to somebody you feel you should latch on to, but you must approach it in prayer and say, Lord, is there someone younger than me? Not necessarily in age, but younger than me, the Lord, whom you can lead me to in some sovereign way that I can help him. Of course, there may be a little trial and error there that we try in some cases, and we find there's not any response from the other side.

That means they don't have confidence in us, or the time may not be right. It takes time for people to have confidence in us. But it's very important that the Lord is able to have many brothers in a church like this who can be disciple makers.

If you have to be a disciple yourself, of course, and we can very often be condemned by Satan, because Satan can give us a spirit of condemnation to say, well, you're not really fit enough. You're not good enough. The Lord's told me, and the devil's told me that numerous times when I was a young person.

But I said, okay, maybe I'm not mature enough to help 90% of the people here, but there's a little 10% here whom I can help. I'm more mature than them. So let me concentrate on them.

Let me work with those who are less mature than me. I must not have any false humility there. And I believe if all of us are willing to say, Lord, I'm available to you, so that we don't have a church, which is like in Corinth, full of infants.

And I think part of the reason was that some of the others were not growing up to take responsibility. And that's why many of these people remained infants almost forever. So in that connection, I wanted to turn to

1 John, 1 John 2, where he speaks about little children, verse 12 onwards to 14, little children, young men, and fathers.

So he talks about people at three stages of spiritual development. In the beginning, of course, we're all little children. We are born again.

As many as received into them, he gave the right to become children of God. And that's where we begin. So at each of these stages, he mentioned certain characteristics.

First of all, as little children, verse 12, your sins have been forgiven you for his namesake. Now, this is very elementary, our sins being forgiven. But it's very important for us to be rooted and grounded in it to the place where there's no condemnation in our spirit concerning our past failures.

All of us have made blunders and failures in the past, including me. And the devil's great master trying to condemn you, condemn all of us, reminding us of those stupid things we did, maybe even in our unconverted days, or the days when we were worldly believers, or when we were backslidden, perhaps. But we must believe in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

And we firmly rooted in what it says in Romans 8, 1, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, no matter what failures we may have had in the past. I write unto you little children, verse 12, your sins have been forgiven for his namesake. We must be established in that.

And I just told you to that verse I quoted in Romans 8, 1, you must see the context of the verse. I've often said how whenever you read the first chapter of a, first verse of a chapter, read the closing verses of the previous chapter, because you learn something there. So most of us know Romans 8, 1, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But in what context is this verse written? In the previous verse, he says, he sees how, in verse 23 of chapter 7, I see a law in the members of my body waging war against the law of my mind, making me a prisoner of the law of sin. There's a constant battle in our mind, inside us. My mind is set on pleasing God.

That's called the law of my mind. But there's a war against that law in my flesh, which is called the law of sin, and it's always trying to make me a prisoner. And now and then we slip up and Paul says, what a wretched man I am.

When will I ever be completely free from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that the Lord is going to deliver me little by little. So then, now look at this, it looks like an anticlimax. After saying thank God, he's going to deliver me.

So then, in spite of the Lord delivering me, on the one hand, with my mind, I serve the law of God. But with my flesh, the law of sin, my flesh will always follow the law of sin. It's never going to be different.

But my mind must be set on doing the law of God, the will of God. And that conflict will always be there. And the flesh will always be there to tempt us in some way.

But our mind is set on doing the law of God. Therefore, there is no condemnation. Do you understand the connection? That even though I find my flesh within me seeking to serve the law of sin, because my mind is set on the law of God, therefore, I will refuse to live under condemnation.

It's very important to know that, so that this is the reason why many people get into condemnation. Oh, this wretched temptation that comes out of my flesh. It'll be there till the day you die.

But if your mind is set on, Lord, I'm determined to do the law of God, there is no condemnation. So that's the connection between Romans 7.25 and Romans 8.1. So we must be clear in this matter of forgiveness. It looks like a very simple thing.

But we must be established in the fact that I can look straight at God's face all the time, every day. From the time we get up in the morning till we go to bed at night, we can look straight into God's face. This is how we must live.

There must not be a moment when I cannot look straight into God's face. If you slip up, don't wait. Immediately cleanse it out.

And don't allow condemnation to come in. Your flesh will only serve the law of sins. But if your mind is set on the law of God, and you say, Lord, you know, my heart is set only on you.

If I slip up, I'll immediately confess it and cleanse it and get back into fellowship with you. It must be, like they say, keep short accounts with God. If I've hurt somebody else, immediately set it right with that person.

So this is very important to live in a constant state of our sin being forgiven. That is the first stage, little children. 1 John 2.12. There's another thing he says about the little children.

And that is in the last part of verse 13. I've written to you, children, because you know the Father. So that's the other thing that these are elementary.

This is the elementary stage. We must be absolutely clear that I'm living with a constant assurance. My sins are forgiven.

All the time. And knowing the Father, always looking up to be clear communication lines. Always.

Never lose that, dear brothers. Right from the morning, I've always told people when you begin the day, as soon as you wake up in the morning, this is what I do. Before getting out of bed, spend a few moments talking to your father.

You, your day will go much better. You spend those few moments before you get out of bed, before everybody's awake, and talking to your father. You know, if you have children that are going to get up early and need your help, then you wake up in the middle of the night, talk to the father then.

There will always be some time while we are in bed. In other words, every night before after we go to bed, sometime before we get out of bed in the morning, we should have spent some time, even if it's a few minutes, talking to the father and being absolutely clear. It's very, very important that the lines of communication are clear.

You know, my children must know the father. That's not for mature saints. It's for little children who can know God as their own father and find security in that.

And, you know, like little children, when they have a problem, they're not ashamed to come to their father and say, Dad, I don't know how to handle this. Can you do it for me? I sometimes go to God like that. I

say, Lord, there's something I can handle, but this I don't know.

I don't know how to fix it. Can you do it for me? We need to have that spirit of coming to the father. And you know, the little children, you know the father.

I want to ask you, it sounds like something very elementary. But Jesus taught us to pray our father who art in heaven, which there are two things in that sentence. One is, it's a father who loves me.

And the other, he's in heaven. He runs the universe. I have a father who runs the universe.

And I must always remember that. And I'll tell you, in this world, there are 101 things which I can't figure out. I don't know why.

So many prayers of mine which are not answered. I don't know why. I think of sick people who, I don't know why God allows them to be sick, when so many godless worldly people and terrorists and all are so healthy.

It's a mystery. I don't know. But I know one thing.

There's no doubt at all that God loves me just as much as he loved Jesus. That's clear. That is to know the father.

And I believe a little child should know the father like that. For years and years, John 17, 23 has been like a rock on which I've placed my feet. For years, I did not know that.

And there's always a lot of insecurity in my life till God opened my eyes. John 17, 23 is more important to me than John 3, 16. God so loved the world.

It's a great truth. But that God loves me as much as he loved Jesus. That inspired me so much about 50 years ago when I understood it first.

That's when I wrote that hymn that there is no limit to what God can do. As the father loves Jesus, he will love you. So you must be established in that, brothers.

Very, very important. Because there we'll find our security. I have a father who loves me.

If my conscience is clear, I don't have to become some great saint before he loves me like he loved Jesus. I have to just be willing to be his disciple. Maybe I should show you that verse before we go on.

John 17, John 17, Jesus said in verse 9, I don't ask on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those who have given me, because they are yours. Just look at that verse. Because being loved like he loved Jesus is not for everybody in the world.

That's crystal clear. It's for those. He says, I don't ask.

This is not for the people in the world, that prayer. Those whom you have given me. Do you believe that the father gave you to Jesus? I hope you do.

It's quite a truth, you know, that the father took me and gave me to Jesus. And these whom you gave me, for them, I pray. Verse 23.

I pray that they, middle of verse 23, may be perfected in unity and the world may know through them that you sent me and you love them even as you have loved me. So it's not just that I should know it, but my way of life in the world must be something that people in the world are amazed. What type of man is this? He seems to be so secure in the midst of all the problems he faces.

See, brothers, there are many, many things that God takes his children through. I don't know why. I, frankly, I do not know.

And I believe what Jesus says, that if you being evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give only good things to those who ask him? Some of the things that don't look like good things, which God allows in our life. But that's where our faith must rise above our sight. We walk by faith and not by sight.

Lord, everything that I see and that's happening around me seems to indicate, doesn't look as if you love me at all. It looks as if those worldly people have a much easier time. But my faith rises above that.

And I will proclaim in the midst of the deepest trial and suffering, my father loves me as he loved Jesus. So that is the elementary stage, actually. Children, to know you know the father.

So let's turn back to 1 John chapter 2. So as children, we must be sure that your sins are forgiven. And that we know the father in this way that I've just been saying. Knowing that your father only will do good for you.

No matter what happens, no matter what it is in your life, you cannot explain. You may not be able to explain until Jesus comes. It doesn't matter.

You say, Lord, I believe you love me as you love Jesus. That confession of faith is tremendous. Then we go to the next stage, which is young men.

So 1 John 2, 13 in the middle. We move up as we grow spiritually to become young men. This is actually a path to maturity that's being described in these verses 12 to 17 or so.

Young men, the middle of verse 13, you have overcome the evil one. So once you've established as a child, your sins are forgiven. And you come to know the father.

You're established in that. Then you go to stage two. It's like a promotion to a higher grade in school.

And in this school, there are, as he mentioned, there are only three grades. The children and then young men, then your spiritual fathers. So as young men, he says, you have overcome the evil one.

See, we go to the next stage where we overcome Satan. You've come to know, you can't even do that if you don't know the father first. Because the devil will always condemn you, saying that God is against you.

He doesn't like you or something or the other. So once we are established in our sins being forgiven and knowing the father. Then the next stage is to overcome Satan.

That's not for some very mature prophets or great sins. The next stage after children, the next stage is to overcome Satan as a young man. That's not for fathers.

Fathers and all is something else. As young men, you have to overcome the evil one. And it says in verse 14, the middle also, again, the same thing.

I've written to young men because you're strong and the word of God abides in you. And that's how you have overcome the evil one. So when we see that it's so the only way to overcome the evil one is by the word of God abiding in us.

That means we have spent years meditating whenever in a regular habit of meditating, meditating from the time you're born again in a disciplined way. If you meditate on God's word, even a little bit every day, meditate on it. It stays in our system.

And then when the devil comes, I've got something to overcome. There's only one sword with which we can overcome. If you read the various parts of the armor, you know, in Ephesians 6, it says, put on the whole armor of God.

I don't know whether you've noticed there. Every part of that armor is for protection. There's only one part of the armor which is for offense.

And that's a sword. Turn to Ephesians 6 if you haven't noticed that. Ephesians 6. So this is the second stage.

Children, stand against the schemes of the devil. Ephesians 6.11, put on the full armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil, because we don't struggle against flesh and blood, but against rulers and powers, world forces of this darkness. So one of the things I learned from that verse is I'm so thankful the Lord showed me that at the beginning of CFC, when we were just about two families 48 years ago, never struggle with flesh and blood if you want to overcome Satan.

That's the lesson I learned from verse 12. I will not struggle with human beings. I will not fight with human beings, no matter who comes to fight with me and say no.

And I remember how even in arguments on doctrinal matters, I say, no, I'm not going to. I can explain a doctrine to you, but I will not argue. So I remember the days when some people would come to my house and try to argue about some doctrine.

And I say, no, I'm not going to argue. You can believe what you like. This is my position.

And, you know, like some of the doctrines we preach about overcoming sin and you to endure on to the end to be saved and how Jesus Christ was tempted like us and all these things people get disturbed by and they will come to argue. And I say, brother, I'll take any amount of time to explain from scripture the truth. But if you come to argue with me, I don't want to.

I say, let's talk about something else. I say, let's talk about cricket or something where you and I will not argue. We're both on the same side.

We must not fight with flesh and blood. If you want to overcome Satan in your home, never fight with your wife. Your wife is flesh and blood.

Don't fight with her. She's a weaker vessel. Women get upset very easily about various things.

Don't think you're better at such times. I just said, I'm a man. That's why a woman is a weaker vessel.

And so, but I'm not going to fight and I must be patient. Women have moods. We men don't have so many moods.

And I don't know all the physical reasons for that. But we have to make sure that we never fight with anybody concerning any matter. You stand for the truth.

I stood for the truth for many, many areas. And I say, I will not compromise on that. But I will not wrestle with flesh and blood.

Because then I'm be strong to fight against Satan. And then look at the armor. And the armor is all defensive.

Your loins, protect your loins with truth and breastplate to protect your chest. And keep your feet short with preparation of the gospel of peace. And the shield of faith, verse 16, again to protect yourself.

And the helmet of salvation to protect your head. And then finally, one weapon for offense. Everything is for defending yourself, protecting yourself.

And one weapon with which you attack Satan, the word of God. That's the only weapon of offense. So that's what it says in 1 John 2, 14.

The word of God is in you. And you have overcome the evil one. And Jesus is our forerunner here.

You know, when he was tempted, he did not argue with the devil. Every temptation, he only had one word. And you know, when you read Matthew 4 and Luke 4. Remember, it begins by saying he was tempted for 40 days.

And then at the end of that, what's listed is the last three temptations. And then the angels came and ministered to him. Temptation was over.

But he was being tempted for 40 days before that. And that's not listed there. But I believe that every one of those temptations in those 40 days, Jesus overcame by the same principle by which he overcame those last three temptations.

How did he overcome the last three temptations? Every time by saying, it is written. There's nothing more to discuss, Satan. And if you remember, when the first time Jesus said it is written, you shall not live by bread alone.

And he was tempted to turn the stones to bread. The devil quoted it is written. There we need to see that the devil can also quote scripture to us.

So, the devil can put a scripture into your mind to lead you astray from God. Jump off the temple because it is written. He will give his angels charge to protect you.

There are people who quote that verse to not take medicine. Don't take medicine. It's like jumping off the roof of the temple.

Because it is written, then he will heal you. It is also written, take a little wine for your stomach's infirmities. So, the Lord knew the exact scripture to quote when the devil said it is written.

He said it is also written. It's like the two wings of a bird, you know. You have only one wing.

It is written. It is written, written. You go around in circles.

So, when the devil quotes it is written, you must say it is also written this. And so many people have gone astray for just quoting one verse. So, there is a balance in scripture.

And that is what we see in that temptation of Jesus. The word of God abides in you and you overcome the evil one. And Jesus allowed that word to come into him from a very young age.

And I am sorry to say that in all of our CFC churches, there is a pathetic ignorance of the word of God among most believers. They don't take the study of the scriptures seriously. And so, you have to say the word of God does not abide in you.

And so, the evil one overcomes you. Your sword is not in your hand or it is not sharp. So, you try to overcome Satan by saying, I resist you, Satan.

I command you in Jesus' name. That is not what Jesus did. That is not how he overcame Satan.

He says, follow me. The word of God abides in you. It is solid in there.

And Jesus, how did it abide in Jesus? From a young age, he kept on meditating on God's word. And think of that at a time, as I've often said, when there was no printed Bible. Jesus had no printed Bible in his house.

He had to walk over to the synagogue as a young boy to ask the rabbi, Rabbi, could you please go to the next verse where we stopped yesterday and continue reading? And after some time, Jesus said, stop. Okay, that's all. I want to meditate on what we read today.

I'll come back tomorrow. He did that for so many years. And finally, at the age of 12, he knew enough to even discuss with the great scholars in the temple.

That has been a tremendous challenge to me. And I'm very thankful that I was challenged with that when I was, soon as I got baptized at the age of 21. From that day for the next six, seven years, I kept on meditating on God's word.

That's what helped me in so many battles when I was not attending a church that preached victory. I was battling alone. So many things I did not know.

There was no older brother to guide me. I didn't have a spiritual father to never heard any powerful messages. It was all dead preaching in the church I attended.

Academic stuff. So the only thing that preserved me in those years, and I was in the Navy, was meditating on God's word every single day. I hope you have that habit.

No matter how busy you are to take time to meditate on God's word. And now when you have an audio Bible, you can have it even playing when you're doing something else. And you can be listening.

I spent 20 minutes on the treadmill every day, and I listened to God's word. And it's tremendously encouraging. I listen to it so much.

It just keeps on going. I keep on listening. We have so many privileges and advantages today that Jesus didn't have.

So there's no excuse for us, the word of God not abiding in us. I believe this is the reason why there's such a shallowness in the ministry of the word among many, many brothers. I've urged all brothers, you must try and spend, try and spend if possible, half an hour at least every day, meditating on God's word.

Even if you have to sacrifice some sleep, and if you may have little children, fine. I also had little children, and I take time to study the word even then. Even if it means after they've all gone to bed, and I take a half an hour then, after my wife's gone to bed, children gone to bed, I spend half an hour.

Or get up before all of them get up and spend half an hour with God's word. It'll make a tremendous difference in your life. I tell you, God will then begin to give you his word.

I found that when I sought the Lord like that, that along with seeking for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I first sought for the baptism of the Holy Spirit when I was 23. And in my room, I pray, I say, Lord, I need the anointing of the Holy Spirit, because only then can I be a witness for you.

And the combination of meditating on God's word, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, I found that at a very young age, God began to give me his word to share with others in a profitable way. So, I'm so disappointed when I see so many brothers, worldly things are so intelligent and capable, but they don't seem to give time to the study of the word. Not much.

If you can't give half an hour, spend 15 minutes, but meditate on God's word. And when you get a little spare moment, meditate on God's word. In those days, there was no audio Bible or something way back 60 years ago.

I used to have a small pocket New Testament, which I used to carry in my pocket. I was traveling in a bus or a train, always take it out and read it all the time. That's how I got to know God's word.

I want to encourage you to develop that habit. So many other people, I used to travel in a train or a bus, and I see all the people looking around and wasting their time or gossiping. I would take out the New Testament and read it.

There are lots and lots of time we have, even when there are people who have the regular habit of listening when they are driving to work, you know, turn on an audio Bible. So, it's very important. This is the second stage.

After children, you become a young man. And as a young person, before you go to become a spiritual father, you have to overcome the evil one. And that is by letting the word of God abide in you.

So, let's move on from there. Then the third stage is, he says here, I've written to you fathers. That is when you become a, when you take the responsibility to be a spiritual father to other people.

1 John 2 verse 13 and 14. I've written to you fathers, because you've known him who has been from the beginning. This is more than knowing him as father.

As a little child, the last part of verse 13, you know God is your father. But then as you moved up from the stage of being a child to be a young person, to be a spiritual father, then you begin to know God as the one who is from the beginning. You know him as the eternal God.

You know him as a father. You never lose knowing him as a father. That's always there.

But just not knowing him only as a father, but knowing him as our father who art in heaven. That's a much wider knowledge of God. It's not the knowledge of a child who can go to his father and just ask for anything.

That's true. But to know God in his purposes, to know the mysteries that God wants to reveal to us, that is to know him who was from the beginning, who had plans for us from the beginning. It says in Ephesians 1.4, he knew us before the foundation of the world.

To know God like that, in what way did he know me from the foundation of the world? What plan did he have for me before the worlds were created? To think of that, to meditate on that. As you know, when you're spiritual babies, you can't think about all that. But as you grow more mature, you begin to think that long before Genesis 1.1, before the creation of the heaven and the earth, God knew me in his mind.

And he had a plan for my life and planned my birth, where I was to be born, where I was to grow up. Everything planned. This is to know God who was from the beginning, how he knew me from the beginning.

And he had a plan for me from the beginning. And every little detail of my life. That's a lovely verse in the book of Job.

I think it's in the living Bible. I don't have the living Bible here. I think it's Job 23, verse 10, is it? Yeah, Job 23, verse 10.

It says, he knows the way I take when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. He knows every detail about me. Something like that in the living Bible.

He knows every detail of what is happening to me. That's a tremendous comfort to know that. That he knows every detail of what is happening to me.

Meditate on that. It'll help you tremendously to be at rest. In the midst of many trials that you may face.

He knows every detail of what is happening to me. Think of Job, what he was going through. Seven sons and three daughters, all dead in a moment.

And all his property lost. And on top of that, he has all the probably leprosy that he got because he was sitting outside the gate, sores. And to sit there without a Bible, there was no Bible printed those days.

I mean, there's no written word anywhere. All his knowledge of God had to come through revelation by the spirit into his heart. And he had this revelation.

He knows every detail of what is happening to me right now. And how much more we should be able to say that. Think of those little details that cause anxiety and fear.

All of us, they come. Those are the trials that come on life's path. In all those situations to say, father, you know every detail of what is happening to me.

You're not only my father, but you're our father who art in heaven. Who chose me before the worlds were created, who planned every detail of my life. Before the worlds were created, and I'm here now.

Walking in something you have planned. There's nothing accidental. Many things I cannot explain.

That I agree. Many things I may never be able to explain on this earth. But there's nothing accidental in God's dealings with me.

And even if I made blunders and have suffered because of that, God is so gracious. He can even make something good come out of that. God is able to make good come out of the blunders we have made.

That's an amazing truth that God shows us in scripture. The New Testament is a great example of, I think of Paul and Barnabas. Chosen by God.

Specifically through the voice of the Holy Spirit. These two are to be set apart from my service. And they split up so quickly.

And but God's work still went on. Paul chose Silas and Barnabas went with Mark. And it's amazing how though they looked as if the devil succeeded there in splitting them up.

Still God's work went on. So nothing can hinder God's plan from being fulfilled. When we look at all the evils happening in the world, the dangers.

And I've been very concerned when I hear about what is happening here in the United States. In this transgender business and change of sex. And how it embarrasses so many young sisters.

When men walk into their restrooms saying that I'm now a woman. And exploit them. All is going on in this country.

A country which once had Christian values. I say, Lord, you've got to come soon. But there's nothing that escapes your notice.

In the midst of this evil world, you've called me to be a witness. You've called a church, our church, to be a light that shines against all this corruption. And every brother in this church must take the lead in standing for the truth personally.

So that together we will be bold to stand for the truth. And that is if the word of God abides in us. I'm convinced that God knows every detail about me.

And so the devil cannot harass me and say, see what's happening now. You've been so faithful and see what's happening. I say, Father, you know every detail of what's happening to me.

Our Father who art in heaven, my first prayer is not meet my need here. My first prayer is, hallowed be your name. Whatever the price I have to pay, hallowed be your name.

And even my next prayer is not for myself. My next prayer is your kingdom must come on this earth. And my next prayer is your will must be done as it is done in heaven.

Then I will come to my knees. Give me, Lord, my daily bread and help me to overcome my problems and things like that. But it must begin with, Father, my number one passion is that your name must be hallowed.

So dishonored in the world. So dishonored in Christendom with Babylonian pastors and preachers running after money and ruining the name of Christ on this earth. In the midst of that, God has placed a church like ours that stands for the truth, that has got a clear stand in money matters and things like that.

Father, let your name be hallowed in our midst. In my home, let your name be hallowed in my home. Let your kingdom come in my home, Lord, be your rule.

Your kingdom come means I want you to be the ruler in my life. I want you to be the ruler in my home. I want you to be a ruler in the church.

There's many things I may not understand. Doesn't matter. So long as you are ruling and we are bowed and submitted to you, that's great.

And may your will be done exactly as it is in heaven, where they instantly run to obey you. The angels may be done like that in my life, in my home and my church. You have that type of passion, you will overcome the evil one.

The evil one will not be able to touch you. And you'll mature from that being a father who knows God's ways. And the more we know God's ways, the more we'll be able to advise and counsel others who come to us for help.

And then we go on to 1 John 2 verse 15 to 17. I'll conclude with that. See, just because we become fathers, we've gone through verse 12 to 14, children, young men, fathers, does not mean that we'll no longer be tempted by the world.

Fathers, I write unto you fathers, don't love the world. Verse 15. It's all the same context.

Verse 14 is I write to you fathers. What is he telling them? Don't love the world. Verse 15.

All the things in the world. So there's never a time, even if I've come to a height of spiritual maturity, where if I'm not watchful, the world can still try to drag me down. So I have to always be watchful.

Don't love the world, nor the things in the world. If I love the world, the love of the father is not in me. The world is passing away.

Verse 17. It's all I got to look at the world and say, it's all going to perish. So, so long as I have enough to survive here.

Let me remember that ultimately the only thing that will remain is what it says in verse 17. The one who does the will of God will live forever. Now the child says, I'm going to live forever because I trusted Jesus and my sins are forgiven.

Yeah, it's true. But this is the mature spiritual father who's saying, if I do the will of God, I will live forever. Live with a capital L. In other words, when I get into, when the Lord comes, I'll be able to enter into a life of tremendous joy that I spent my life, at least from a certain time onwards, for the rest of my life, only to do whatever is his will.

Lord, I want to do your will. Many things I couldn't understand why, but I want to do your will. I want to do your will.

The best I know it, I want to do your will. He who does the will of God abides forever. And I do constantly watch against the, verse 16, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life.

Yeah, there's never a time when we can say that the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, I can be careless about. Like someone said, fire can burn you even if you're a hundred years old. So it's temptation.

It's not just young people. You got to be watchful against the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, even if you're a spiritual father. Always be alert.

And the pride of life, that's the other thing in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. That's the other thing we must remember. Pride is one of those subtle things that is always sort of lurking around the corner.

Something you do and pride comes in. And you can be in the most spiritual place of all, and pride will come in right there. So we have to be very watchful.

That's why Jesus said, learn from me, for I am humble of heart. And you have to constantly say, Lord, I want to look at you, I want to look at you, and I want to see your example. And humble myself constantly, even if I'm a spiritual father.

Yeah, my burden is, my brothers, that all of you will grow up to be spiritual fathers to the younger ones in this church. To be examples, to encourage them, to take some people under your wing and help them, and that God will give you words to share to them and with the church as you walk with him. May God help us all.

Amen.

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