

# Growing Up to Maturity

by Zac Poonen

---

*Growing up to maturity requires learning obedience through suffering and self-denial, and hearing God's voice in order to grow spiritually.*

**Duration:** 1:08:09

**Scripture:** Titus 2:2

**Topics:** "Spiritual Maturity", "Christian Living"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual maturity and practical Christian living. It highlights the need for older men to be sound in faith, love, and perseverance, older women to be reverent and not malicious gossips, and young women to be workers at home and teach what is good. It also urges young men to be sensible and emphasizes the importance of studying the scriptures for growth and maturity.

---

## Transcript

The concern in my heart today is the concern that Paul had for Christians who were not growing up to maturity, that the Apostles, the Apostle John had, the writer to the Hebrews had. I want to begin with the verse in Hebrews chapter 5. In case you don't already know, Hebrews is the great book that talks about the humanity of Christ more than any other book in the New Testament. It's the only book that speaks about Jesus as our forerunner who entered through the veil into the most holy place.

And he's talking about how Christ was tempted like us in Hebrews 4.15 and did not sin. And therefore we can also go to the throne of grace and get help like he did. The same grace that helped him can help us.

But he received that grace, we read in Hebrews 5.7, because he prayed with loud crying and tears. So the implication is that if we pray with loud crying and tears, we'll receive the same grace too. And he was heard because of his godly fear.

Verse 7 last part, he was not heard because he's the son of God. We would think because he's the son of God, he should be heard. But it says here he's heard because of his godly fear.

What does that teach us? We've got to take these scriptures carefully. Some of us think, well I'm a child of God, God will hear me. Well if you don't have godly fear, he won't hear you.

Even Jesus, read that. Even though he's the son of God, much more the son of God than any of us sitting here. He was not heard because he was the son of God.

And you are not going to be heard just because you're a child of God. He was heard because of his godly fear or piety. So when God sees godly fear in someone, he hears them.

And there you see the reason why so many people's prayers are not answered. Why God doesn't even hear them. It says he was heard, not just answered, he was heard.

God does not hear the prayers of many of his children because they lack godly fear. Please remember this verse. Jesus himself was heard because of his godly fear.

So that should be a warning to us. And then, he learned obedience. That's another thing.

Obedience is not a popular word with many Christians. That Jesus learned obedience. Does God have to learn something? Doesn't he know everything? He knows everything, but how could God learn obedience in heaven? He doesn't have to obey anybody.

Obedience can be learned only if there's something to obey. God didn't have to obey anyone. Jesus didn't have to obey anyone in heaven.

So when it says he learned obedience, it's because he became a man, subjected himself to all the limitations of man, related to his father exactly the same way that you and I relate to God. Because then only can he be an example for us. He became like us in everything and he learned obedience.

That means from childhood, for example, he learned to honor his father and mother. That means his earthly foster father really. He obeyed them.

He learned obedience. And as he grew up, he learned obedience to the different commandments, like not to lust after women, not to love money. He learned obedience, which he could not do when he was in heaven as a man.

And you and I have the same opportunity now to learn obedience, to be heard by God because of our godly fear and to learn obedience. And that's how he became complete. Jesus became complete because he learned obedience step by step by step, just like a child going all the way to high school.

And then it says, concerning him, verse 11, there's a lot more we have to say. But it's very hard to explain. You see, this is concerning Jesus in this way.

Most Christians don't know anything about Jesus being tempted like us, Jesus' prayers being heard because he had godly fear, or Jesus praying with loud crying and tears, or Jesus learning obedience, or Jesus being made perfect, verse 9. These are verses which are very difficult for most Christians to understand. And I wonder if all of you are being gripped by these truths. That's why he says to the Hebrews, there's a lot we have to say more than we have just said.

But it's very hard to explain. And I've discovered that if you learn these things, the Holy Spirit will teach you more. He'll teach you things that are not written in Scripture.

The Holy Spirit will take of the things of mine and show it unto you about Jesus. You know, and that is the answer that you'll find in every situation you ever face in life, to know exactly the right thing to do. This has been my passion.

Lord, in every situation I face in life, I want to know exactly the right thing to do, exactly the right thing to say, exactly the right advice to give to someone who asks me for something. I don't want to just say something that comes into my head. And if we really seek to follow Jesus and see him in this way, as a man who is just like you, tempted like you, prayed with loud crying and tears, feared God, and was little by little by little completed his earthly education.

Because that word learn, in verse 8, learn is a word that relates to education as you have often said. And you're willing to suffer like it says in verse 8. In order to obey, sometimes we have to suffer. There's some obedience that is easy, but it's the obedience in which we have to suffer that gives us a promotion.

So he learned obedience not from everything, but from those things which he suffered. And that teaches us where obedience leads you to die to yourself. You know, there's a lot of obedience where we don't have to die.

Because, you know, our temperament may be like that, and it's pretty easy, for you to bring up your children in the instruction of the Lord. You don't have to die to yourself to do that. You love to do it, because don't you want your children to grow up godly? There's no suffering there.

But there's some obedience to some commandments which involve suffering, where I have to deny myself when the spirit of God says, keep your mouth shut now. Then you have to suffer. Or don't look in that direction, or don't watch that movie, or don't read that book.

Then you have to suffer, because you have a great desire to do that. But those are the places where you learn obedience. In all the other places where there's no suffering, I don't want to tell you, you don't learn obedience.

You just do it. And you can think you're pretty godly because you're doing those things. You're not.

It's in the areas where you suffer that you really learn obedience. I mean, you see that with your children. If you tell your children, come on, eat that ice cream.

Is that great suffering for that child? But if you tell your child, now stop playing and come inside and do your homework, that's a suffering. That's the place where his will has to be denied. To tell him to eat that ice cream, or let's go out and play.

Those things don't involve any suffering. Those are not areas where a child learns obedience. And the areas in your life, if you look back where, you know, it's not difficult for you to obey God, or come to church on Sunday morning, there's no problem there.

That doesn't mean you're spiritual. You haven't learned any obedience by coming here on Sunday morning. He learned obedience from the things which he suffered.

Please remember this. And that's why many Christians do not grow spiritually, because they obey in all areas where there's no suffering. And obey where it involves suffering, they don't learn obedience.

And that's, I want to tell you honestly, please listen to me, this is the reason why many of you have never conquered anger, and probably will never conquer anger in your entire life. I don't want to say that as a prophecy, but I want to say that as a warning. Because to conquer anger, you have to suffer.

To give up murmuring and complaining, you have to suffer. To give up lusting with the eyes, you have to suffer. So, we're not learning obedience.

We're coming to church, we enjoy meeting with others, coming to the conference, enjoy meeting with others. But wherever it involves a little suffering and self-denial, we withdraw. And the result is, we spend years and years and years never learning obedience.

Which means never getting promoted to a higher class. But Jesus learned it at every stage, and thus he completed, when he says he made perfect, it means he completed his education. And he has become the author, or it says in some translations, of eternal salvation to those who obey him.

That means, now he's become a teacher to those who want to obey him in times of suffering. In times of suffering, when Jesus says, I'll teach you now. Next time you're tempted to, when the Holy Spirit says, now keep your mouth shut, or turn your eyes away, or don't do that, and don't write that letter, or whatever it is, where you feel like doing something very much, you want to tell something to someone, and the Holy Spirit says no.

Or you want to do something, you want to go somewhere, or you don't want to deny yourself in a certain area. Would you listen? Supposing you want to go for a vacation, and the Holy Spirit says, don't go. There's nothing wrong with a vacation.

Jesus himself once told his disciples, come apart and rest a while. You need some rest. God ordained one day in seven as his habit.

Nothing wrong in rest and relaxation. But supposing the Holy Spirit once says, no, I don't want you to go. I think a lot of believers don't even consult God about those things.

They say, I feel like going, I go. There's a lot of difference between those who really seek to bring every area of their life under God's guidance. And say, Lord, I don't want to do this unless it's your will.

My time is yours, my days are yours. Those are the ones who really, the Lord sees, here's a person who is determined to let every area of his life come under my control and guidance. I've really got to use this young man or young woman to be my servant in the days to come.

Be one of those whom God can choose, because in your private life, hidden from the eyes of others, in secret areas, you give up your will and you deny yourself things which you want to do, because you want to please God. You want to do what Jesus wants you to do there. Maybe you don't spend so much money on your self so that you can have some to give to the Lord or to others.

Do you think many people think like that? They say, I have money, I can do what I like. I earned it. It's mine.

It's fine. There's no sin there, but there's a higher life, I can tell you, if you want it. And it's those who choose that higher life who really become useful to God in the church.

And if you see someone more useful to God than you are in the church, you can be pretty sure he's made some choices in areas where you made no choices, or you choose to please yourself, or you choose to just do what you feel like doing. There are things like this, you know. This is what it means to learn obedience.

And concerning him we have much to say, hard to explain, because you become dull of hearing. How do you become dull of hearing? That means I don't want to hear things that are crossing my will. I like to hear things about God that are encouraging, and how God is a loving Father.

Those are the messages I like to hear. And no matter how much you have failed, God still loves you. When you hit rock bottom, remember that God loves you.

Boy, you'll love those messages. And you want to hear such messages again and again and again, how he came for sinners and the prodigal son. If you're a prodigal son, he'll run to welcome you.

You just long to hear such messages. Well, I want to say that that's why you remain in the condition you are. Because those are the only type of messages you want to hear.

Those are the only type of messages that encourage you. But scripture has got that as well as a lot of other messages that Jesus said about denying yourself and putting your flesh to death. Those are the areas where you will learn obedience.

Because Jesus learned obedience in the areas where he suffered. Please remember this phrase in verse 6. He learned obedience not from all areas but from the things which he suffered. He obeyed in many areas where there was no suffering.

There wasn't much to learn there. But from the things which he suffered, he learned obedience and thus he became complete. So out of 100 areas, there are 50 areas where you're going to suffer to learn obedience and 50 areas that are easy to obey God in.

And you choose just the 50 areas all your life, obeying here, obeying here, obeying there. But don't be surprised if you don't grow much spiritually. Don't be surprised if your knowledge of God is very limited.

You're always dependent on having to come to church to be stirred up or to a conference to be stirred up. You don't know what it is like Paul told Timothy, stir yourself up. He says, stir yourself up.

That's a person who is willing to learn obedience in the things which he suffered. You know, it's like students. There are children who are very diligent.

You don't have to tell them to do their homework. You don't have to tell them to do more than necessary for their classes. I mean, there are students like that.

I've seen some. They've got a passion to do really well and those are the ones who get into good colleges and get a good education and press on. And I tell you there are others who are just as intelligent and who are in the same school with the same teacher and the same opportunities and the same intelligence, but who do not do well because they're just lazy.

They just want to play around and play the fool and they don't want to sit down with their books and they do the minimum necessary for their class work and okay, they have completed their homework. It's always their whole attitude is what is the minimum necessary. I want to enjoy myself in life as much as I can, but you know I have to do my homework.

I have to go to school. I want to get a promotion. I don't want to fail.

There are many Christians like that. What's the minimum necessary for me to, you know, just be a good Christian and not lose my testimony in CFC? Well, I'm concerned about that. I'm concerned, I'll tell you honestly, I'm concerned with so many brothers and sisters sitting here.

There should be a such a large number of brothers and sisters here who should be godly enough to be shepherds of others. Why is that not there? I don't know your private life, but I want to tell you that when there are things which involve suffering and self-denial in your life, you pull back. You don't choose those areas and so the result is you don't learn obedience at all.

You're obeying in the things like eat your ice cream, go and play. Oh, those areas I like to obey. Children like to obey such commands.

Go and eat that ice cream, go and play, and put on those new clothes. Oh, I love to obey those commands. And I think many Christians like that.

They're obeying. They're obeying in those areas which involve no self-denial at all in terms of time, money, energy. Well, then we don't learn obedience.

That's the reason why he goes on to say, you become dull of hearing. It means you can't hear anymore. And when you come into the church meeting, you hear.

That's another thing I've often said. If the only time God speaks to you is in a Sunday morning service or in a conference, please take it as an indication of something seriously wrong with your spiritual health. If you find when you read the scriptures yourself, God is not saying anything to your personal life.

I don't mean getting some information about knowledge about the tabernacle or information about Jesus' life. I'm not saying that. I'm talking about when you read the scriptures and you don't find God speaking to you personally, something that you got to do in your life.

You're not in a spiritually healthy condition. You may be born again, but you're not in a spiritually healthy condition. It's like a doctor saying, yeah, your child is not sick, but he's not healthy.

And if he continues like that, he's going to be prone to so many sicknesses. That's exactly what I would say to any of you who are not hearing God speaking to you through his word when you read it by yourself. In fact, the Bible says, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And that word that Jesus quoted, by the way, I don't have time to turn to it right now, is from Deuteronomy 8, where it speaks about the giving of the manna. It's in connection with the giving of the manna to the Israelites that it says there, God gave you manna, Moses said in Deuteronomy 8, every day to teach you what? Not just to feed you, but to teach you that man must live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth, just like the manna came from heaven every morning. So have you learned that? That every morning for survival, you need a word from God? You know, those Israelites did not go out in the morning and pick up that manna for their family.

There was no food in the desert. And if they went out a little too late, the sun would melt the manna, it would all be liquid on the ground. You couldn't pick it up.

So what would a responsible father do? Okay, the children can go to sleep. They're not going to get up, the three-year-old, four-year-old, maybe some ten-year-old, all asleep. But daddy and mommy can't be irresponsible like them.

They got to go out, gather enough manna for their family every day for 40 years. That was a pretty good discipline, how God made them all get up in the morning to collect a word from God. Imagine if you were one of those Israelites coming out of Egypt, very thankful that God delivered you, and you've got children, and you know the only way to feed them is to go and collect manna in the morning before it gets too hot.

Boy, I tell you, you'd really get up. You wouldn't say, well, I'm so tired, I'm sleepy today, or I went to bed late last night. You would never make those excuses.

Even if you went to bed at 2 o'clock in the morning, you'd be up there because you got to feed your family. There's no other way to feed them. All the silly excuses that people make today, saying they're tired, they have no time to read the Bible, I forgot, and all that, would disappear if you're one of those Israelites.

Little things like this are the proof that you're serious about your Christianity. That your Christianity is not just a game and not playing the fool. And if you're not receiving like this, that's why you become dull of hearing, because you're not serious about wanting to hear God.

And you don't have to be very old. I remember when I was very young, I was about 21 years old, and I had this tremendous passion every morning to hear what God had to say to me, to read his word and study it. I haven't lost it after 55 years.

I still have a tremendous passion to hear what is God saying to me today, even this morning. And I hope all of you will develop that. Don't become dull of hearing.

And then he goes on to say, because you're dull of hearing, see what is the result in verse 12. By this time, and some of you have been here 20 years, 25 years, 30 years, by this time, you should have been teachers of others. You shouldn't be listeners now.

You shouldn't be students alone. You should have become teachers. You know, it's like a child who goes to school at the age of five, and by the time he's 25, you say, hey, you should have been a teacher by now.

What are you still sitting in school, 25 years old? I mean, by 18, you should have finished school. You should be teaching. You should have been a graduate by now, and probably a post-graduate by the time you're 25.

We want that for our children. Don't you want that for your children? I think all of us who send our children to school and college would want them to be post-graduates by the time they're 25. What about spiritually? By this time, you should have been teachers, but you have need for someone to teach you again the elementary principles.

You like the messages of forgiveness of sins, and how God loves you, and he says, I'll never leave you nor forsake you, and I'll provide all your needs. Don't be anxious. These are the things that encourage you, and even if you fall, get up.

You can get up and walk again, and even if you fall a thousand times, God is still there a thousand times to pick you up. Fine, it's all true. It's like saying, CAT is cat.

It's cat. DOG is dog, and you can keep listening to that. It's all true, but when are we going to go beyond all that to something else? That's the point here.

And you have come to need milk. You know, in the New Testament, milk is the message of forgiveness of sins. That's true.

We drink milk even when we're old. Even if you drink a cup of tea, there's milk in it. It's not that we stop drinking milk when we're older, but we're not at the baby level where we cannot eat any solid food.

You know, babies can only drink milk. It's a real concern for a mother if a baby is six months old and can't eat solid food, even six months. And then it says here that everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness.

Do you find a word of righteousness a hard message? Oh, we hear some hard things in CFC. It's like you put a piece of meat into the mouth of a two-week-old baby. It'll die.

It'll choke. It can't. It'll spit it out.

Even two or three months, you put a piece of meat in there, it can't eat it. It can't bite on something. You put some nuts into that mouth, it can't bite it.

It can't chew it. And it's not accustomed to that. And the baby spits it out and says, give me my milk bottle.

And he's speaking about that, of people who don't want to hear any hard, strong message about denying yourself and not loving the world and the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is all of the world and you must forsake it and put it to death. And there are a lot of things on earth that are lawful, but not all the lawful things are profitable. And words like, don't let any bad word come out of your mouth, but only that which will give grace to the hearers.

And words like, every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. You don't like to hear such things. It's like hard chunks of meat in a baby's mouth.

And then you know you haven't grown. You're not accustomed to a strong, hard word of righteousness. You are a babe.

And I believe that all of you should really seek to ask yourself, are you like that? Do you love, I mean, think of us grown up people in terms of spiritual food. Do you just love to drink milk all the time? Imagine if there was a dinner and it was all milk, everybody. Don't you love to eat fish and meat and different things that you have to chew a lot on and enjoy? That's an adult.

But you ask a three-month-old baby, he's not interested. So there is a thing of getting accustomed. Accustomed means I've got used to it.

And I'll tell you something, there are churches where occasionally you'll hear a word of righteousness. I mean, all these television preachers on the internet, occasionally once in a blue moon, they will speak a word of righteousness. But here speaking of people are accustomed to the word of righteousness.

That means you're eating solid food every day. Not that once in a while you eat solid food and the rest of the time you drink milk. Every single day.

Think of your diet every day in your own home. Isn't it solid food every single day, three times a day? That's how we must get accustomed to the word of righteousness. Where the word of righteousness is what I love to have.

Do you love to hear words like every idle word you speak, you'll give an account of judgment. Thank you Lord for that. I love that.

Let your speech always be with grace. Put away all murmuring and complaining. Lord, I love that.

That's what I want every day, three times a day. Those are the words I meditate on frequently. Frequently.

I'll tell you honestly, I love solid food because it makes me strong. I love solid food physically, I love it spiritually. I want you to seriously think about this, my brothers and sisters, because I'm really concerned that many of us, not some of us, many of us are not getting accustomed to solid food even though we've been here many, many years.

And that's not a good sign for the future generation. That's why I'm concerned. This is the mark of maturity.

Let nobody here think you're mature if you're not accustomed and delighted to hear the word of righteousness. It says here in verse 14, solid food is for the mature. And one mark of maturity is through the different temptations they go through, they get a practice to train their senses to discern between good and evil.

You see, that's the difference between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Let me explain that to you, which Adam had to choose between in the Garden of Eden. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was like a factual knowledge somebody gives to you, this is wrong, this is right.

Like in so many question and answer sessions people ask, can I do this? Can I do that? Are there certain type of movies I can watch? Are there certain type of foods or drinks I can drink? These are things, you know, which are people are always wondering how close can I go to the edge of the cliff without falling off. Well, there's a lot of difference in that type of factual knowledge and the tree of life where I'm prompted from within. The life tells me that's good, that's bad.

It's like you put some food into your mouth and immediately the life within you says that's bad food, that's spoiled food. And you spit it out, you don't even think twice, you spit it out, that's life. Think of a little baby, it puts mud into its mouth and just enjoys it.

That's lack of discernment. And that's how it is with a lot of Christians. They take things that are going to harm them spiritually.

What does mud do? Why do you clean out that mud from your baby's mouth as soon as it puts it in? Because you know it's going to harm it. It gets sick. So when people can put things into their mind which harm them, it's exactly think of this baby putting mud in its mouth.

The next time some of you watch something pornographic, I hope you don't, but if you do, think of this, I'm putting mud in my mouth now and I'm enjoying it. That's true. Little two-month-old babies enjoy eating

mud.

And if you enjoy eating mud, that's where you are. I mean, I can't stop you, but at least acknowledge that you're a baby eating mud at that time. Then at least so that you don't fool yourself that because you come to CFC you're spiritual.

When you're in your office and your home, you're eating mud. No. Your senses are not trained to discern good and evil.

You need somebody to tell you. I've used the example of when people have leprosy, they lose sensation in their hands and in their feet. Then they have to be trained.

People with severe leprosy, they have no sensation. They put a hand on a hot plate, feel nothing. A hot stove, they touch it and they don't feel anything because there's no sensation in there, but the hand is still burnt.

It's destroyed. So people with leprosy have to be taught, when you go to a stove, check whether it's on or not. Check whether it's hot or not.

Why is it you don't need such a law? Because as soon as you touch it, your hand will immediately pull back because you've got life. See, that's the difference in the tree of life and the tree of good and evil. God doesn't want us to live like this, like lepers who are to be told, you know, don't touch this.

I've heard of people with leprosy, they wake up in the morning and a couple of their toes are eaten up by rats in the night and they didn't feel it. Imagine having your toes eaten up by rats at night and you don't even feel it. You really got to feel sorry for these people with leprosy.

But you don't need that. I mean, even if a rat touches you, you'll wake up. But these people with leprosy don't.

They wake up and they find a couple of toes are missing. Where did it go? It's all blood there. Some rat ate it off.

See, this is how many believers are spiritually. They don't have sensation when something wrong is coming into their spirit. It's like that rat is eating their body.

Something wrong is coming into their spirit. They don't have any sensation. And then after some time they wake up and their life is spiritually destroyed.

What happened? Well, some rat came, some demon came and ate off something of your life there and you didn't even know it because you're waiting for some teacher to tell you this is good and that is evil. You don't have life that tells you spontaneously. So I hope you understand that God did not want us to live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

I mean, do you want your children to grow up 15-20 years old and you got to still tell them good and evil, you must not eat mud, you must not eat rubbish. No, you want them to have that sensation on their own. That's how God wants us to have a sense on our own without having to be told.

That is not a good TV program for you to watch. That's not a good book for you to read. That's not a good thing for you to spend your time doing.

I mean, even browsing on the internet for hours and hours and hours and wasting time when you don't know the Bible. Do you hear a voice saying, listen, why don't you turn that off and read the Bible a little bit? Do you ever hear such a voice? Have you become dull of hearing? I tell you, many Christians are dull of hearing when they're on the internet, even though they don't know the scriptures. And they can spend so many hours there, not in essential work.

I mean, a lot of people have to work essential work there. They may have to spend 12 hours on it. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about entertainment, information. There's no end of information in the world today. Knowledge is increasing.

And people who could have become such useful brothers in this church, such useful sisters, they're still wanting to be spoon-fed. That's my concern. We need to develop our senses to train discern between good and evil, which will lead us to maturity so that we can help others.

I want you to turn to 1 John, Chapter 2. In 1 John, Chapter 2, we read about these three levels of spiritual growth. I mentioned it briefly in the conference, but it's good for you to meditate on it again. In 1 John, Chapter 2, verses 12 to 14, it speaks about little children, young men, and fathers.

Now, this is speaking about spiritually. You can be a little child and be 80 years old and be a little child spiritually. And you can be 25 years old and a spiritual father, honestly.

You can have a sense of responsibility for others when you're 25 years old. Or you can be a lazy, laid-back person who wants to be spoon-fed spiritually, even when you're 80 years old. So when it talks about little children, young men, and fathers, it's not physical age.

It's spiritual age. Little children are those who rejoice in the fact, verse 12, that their sins are forgiven. Great.

They're the ones who sing the song, my sins are all forgiven, I'm on my way to heaven, and that's all that matters. The other thing little children rejoice in is, in verse, I've written unto you children because you know the Father. Last part of verse 13.

Last part of verse 13. You know the Father. I'm so happy.

I've got a father in heaven. I can sit on his lap and I know he's my daddy. It's all true.

The Holy Spirit cries out, Daddy. And we can rejoice in that. Very good.

And by the way, that is something we must know even as soon as we are born again. Little children, they must know two things definitely. One, that their sins are all forgiven if they have confessed it and repented.

And secondly, that God has become their father who cares for them. They need not be worried and anxious. But if that's all you know, you're a little child.

It's good. But we don't want our little children to remain little children forever. And God doesn't want that either.

He wants us to go on from there to the next stage. Stage 2. And stage 2 is young men. These are people who are zealous.

And it says here in verse, the middle of verse 13, you have overcome the evil one. Young men are those who have learned to fight against Satan. To resist Satan.

And the way they resist Satan is described in the end of verse 14, the word of God abides in you and you've overcome the evil one. So that's the second stage. And I don't know how many of you have got there.

So let's get that clearly. The first stage is you know your sins are forgiven and you know God is your father. And you love to hear messages where you say, well, no matter how much you have fallen, you can repent and come back to God.

He's not only the God of the second chance. He's the God of the 10,000th chance. You love such messages.

And there's a purpose in failure. Maybe that's one of your favorite books, *The Purpose of Failure*. I just keep failing, failing, failing.

And I'm glad there's a purpose in it. But that's not the end. It's a pathway.

God wants you to come to a place where it's not that you fish all night and catch nothing and fish all your life and catch nothing. No. There's a time when Jesus comes to the shore and says, I want to fill your boat with fish now.

But if you haven't learned that lesson, then of course you're always having your sins forgiven and always rejoicing God is the father. You move on to the place where you're fighting Satan in the temptations he comes to you in your life. We have examples of Jesus quoting the word of God to Satan and driving him away.

And that's how young men are. The word of God abides in them. You know how Jesus had the right word for each temptation.

He didn't just say, Satan, I resist you. No, even Jesus didn't say that. For each temptation, he had one scripture.

Turn the stones into bread. No, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone. Okay, it is written, if you jump off the temple, his angels will guard you, Satan says.

He quotes even scripture to Jesus. And Jesus says, no, it is also written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God. It isn't always the same verse.

Another, if you bow down and worship me, I'll give you all that you want. You came to earth to redeem all this. I'll give it all to you free.

Just bow down and worship me. No, it is written, you shall worship only the Lord your God. How did he have the right word? Well, the answer of the Christian world is he was a son of God.

That's not true. He was a baby born as a baby, just like us with zero information in his mind. And he had to learn the scriptures.

By the time he was 12 years old, he learned it. That's the thing that challenged me when I was about 21 years old. And I read how Jesus knew the scriptures by the time he was 12.

And I assume that, say by the time he was five, he started reading and he could understand. So I believe little children can understand when we tell them something from scripture at the age of five. So from the age of five to 12, Jesus must have gone to the synagogue and spoke to the rabbi and say, can you please read something to me from the scripture? And he'd come the next day and show me something more and something more.

And every day, and you remember, he had a lot of things to do at home. He had time to play, time to do his schoolwork, time to help his mother. And he found some time to go every day to the synagogue because that's the only place there was a Bible in those days.

And the rabbi must have been delighted that this little child is coming to know the scriptures. And that is how day by day, by day, by day, in seven years, by the time he was 12 years old, he got to know the scriptures. So when I was 21 years old, I said, Lord, I'm baptized now.

Now I can go the way Jesus went. Let me start studying the scriptures. In seven years, I should know it.

And I don't have to go to rabbi. I don't have to go to synagogue. I got to write with me.

In print, I decided and I worked for seven years to get to know the scriptures. And I want to say to all of you, particularly those of you who are young, I guarantee you can know the scriptures thoroughly in seven years, in the midst of all your work. Remember, Jesus had a lot of homework to do and schoolwork and help his mother and all that.

And he took time, just a little bit of time every day. I've said to people, if you will listen to the series that we have in our CFC website called Through the Bible in 70 hours, it'll take you 70 hours. It depends on how much time you spend each day.

You know how many days that'll take, but it requires discipline. Do you know there are people who are non CFC people around the world I've met who have listened to it twice and thrice. And I said, that's wonderful.

I said to them, because I know there are people who sit in CFC Bangalore who haven't heard it once because they are spoon fed. They never take the trouble to go and find something themselves. So they never grow.

But you guys will grow. You have no connection with CFC, but you're way ahead. I tell them that you're way ahead of many people who sit in CFC Bangalore year after year after year after year, and they are dull of hearing.

That's my concern, but what can I do? The apostles were concerned about some people like that. But I thank God there are other people whom God is picking out, who is coming. If you listen to that, that's the first thing.

And if you're serious about scripture, go to 40 hours of all that Jesus taught. That's 40 hours. And then go to, it's all on our website, verse by verse through the New Testament, which is probably three, four

hundred hours.

And that'll take you about three years if you discipline yourself a little bit of time every day. I tell you, you will really be someone who knows the scriptures in a very deep way. And it would have taken you maybe just half an hour a day, which means it's getting up half an hour earlier in the morning or going to bed half an hour later at night.

And knowing the scriptures, and if you're a young person, by the time you're 30 years old, God will prepare you for a fantastic ministry. But if all you do is learn how to sing the songs and other things like that, that's good. But I think the Lord needs a lot more teachers of the word than song leaders.

I'll tell you that that's the greatest need in the church. And you can be one of those, you young people. And even if you're older, I believe even a married man can find half an hour.

You won't lose much if you lose half an hour of sleep at night. You won't lose it at all. You just got to cut out some of the other things.

You do it. Think how useful your life can be in a few years. Just a little bit of discipline.

That is the thing that's lacking. A lot of people seek for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, but the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God is a spirit of discipline. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power and love and of discipline, it says.

It's a spirit of discipline. And if you have not received the spirit of discipline in your life, ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, the spirit of discipline. That's the only thing that'll help you to be a useful servant of God.

A lot of people who have emotional experiences being filled with the Holy Spirit, they're not very useful in God's kingdom. So that's something practical. I want to say to you, the word of God abides in you, and you'll have the right word every time the devil comes.

So many situations in my life, I can tell you, I get a word from the Lord, which I've stored in my mind years ago, as the right word for that situation. It's such a useful thing to know God in his word. And just like the Holy Spirit gave Jesus the right word at each situation, you know, even when situations that are not clearly written in the Bible, shall we stone this woman to death? The Holy Spirit prompted Jesus to say, he was without sin, cast the first stone.

Or when they tempted Jesus saying, should we pay tax? They wanted to catch him in a word. The Holy Spirit prompted him saying, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what's God's. You know, those are promptings from the Holy Spirit.

Because the word of God had been so much in Jesus' mind. And isn't it wonderful to have experiences like that, where we have a right word that solves the situation. To have a right word, it says, if I keep listening, you can have that word turn with me to Isaiah 50, is exactly how Jesus lived.

And this is exactly how you can live. I mean, many of you know this verse, but it's good to be reminded of it again. And all of you who haven't known this verse, it's a wonderful verse in the Old Testament, that you must know that tells you how Jesus lived every day, every morning.

Isaiah 50 verse 4. It says, the Lord gave me the tongue of a disciple. That's very important. There are a number of things in the verse.

First of all, a tongue that is disciplined. And then I know how to sustain a weary person with a single word, or with a single sentence to help a person who is weary. And I'll tell you, the world is full of weary people around us.

And you brothers and sisters who've been here for so many years, you must have a word to give to those people. Even if it's all of a sudden, somebody just lands up and has a need. Without any preparation, you have a word from heaven.

For one thing, you must have the tongue of a disciple. If you've got a loose tongue, always gossiping and backbiting and all that, God's not going to put his word on that tongue. But if you are disciplined in your tongue, you can live a very useful life.

And it comes by a habit. And the habit is mentioned in the middle of verse 4. God awakens me morning by morning. That's a good verse to think of.

When I woke up in the morning, it's God who woke me up. Or sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night. And he awakens my ear to listen as a disciple.

And I heard what God had to say. And the Lord God, verse 5, opened my ear. And I was obedient to what he said.

And I didn't turn back, whatever the cost. Even if I had to suffer, that means I gave my back to those who strike me, my cheeks to those who pluck out my beard. And I did not cover.

This is suffering. And the Lord spoke to, the Father spoke to Jesus, accept it, accept it, accept it. They're treating you badly.

Accept it. Don't retaliate. Don't answer back.

Keep quiet. Do you hear that voice sometimes in your spirit? Keep quiet. They're speaking to you like badly.

Keep quiet. Yeah, OK. Let them say that.

Suffer. I did not cover my face from spitting. Boy, that's a pretty high level to come to.

Because the Lord God helps me. Seeking God's help at that time. Father, I don't want to react in an unchristlike way now.

And I'm not disgraced. And therefore I've set my face like a flint. And I will not be ashamed.

I will not vindicate myself. Because the one who vindicates me is my father. So who's going to fight with me? Let us stand.

You've got a case against me. Come near. The Lord God is my advocate.

He helps me. Who will condemn me? Then he goes on to say, verse 10, Who is among you that fears the Lord like this? That obeys the voice of his servant? And you walk in darkness without any light. Let him

trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.

I want you to go sometime and take these verses, verses 4 to 10, and meditate on them. This is the way Jesus walked. Isaiah 50, verse 4 to 10.

Take it and say, Lord, this is the way I want to walk. I guarantee you'll come to maturity. To hear the word of God abides in you.

And you'll overcome the evil one. And you'll have a word in season for anyone who comes to you. I mean, it won't come overnight, but over a period of time.

Jesus couldn't have done it when he was 12. But by the time he was 30, he had got so used to listening to the Spirit that he had a word for everyone. And over a period of time, if you're faithful, I want to say to you, believe me, you can have an answer for every person who comes to you in need.

Something that is an appropriate, not just a comforting word. Oh, I'm sorry for you, sister. God bless you.

We'll pray for you. And then you forget to pray for him. Not that type of rubbish, but where you'll have a word in season that will encourage and help and guide that person to a proper life.

And they'll be thankful to you for the rest of their lives. Think that don't you want to live on earth to be a blessing like that before you leave this earth? I have a desperate passion. Even now I say, Lord, I want to be much more of a blessing than I have been.

And I want to because that's why God places us on earth and says the blessing of Abraham is yours and the blessing of Abraham is I will bless you. And you will be a blessing to every family that you meet. Boy, I want that.

When you hear that, Galatians 3, 14, the blessing of Abraham through the Holy Spirit is that you will be a blessing to every single family you meet, even unbeliever family, anybody. They'll get a taste of something. They may not come to Christ, but they will.

They will always remember. I met a saint once. I met a man who knew God or I met a woman who knew God.

That's the reputation I want everybody in CFC to have. Get rid of all this careless speaking, gossiping, backbiting, speaking evil, passing out opinions. Finish with all that.

Have a tongue of a disciple. Say, Lord, some of us have spent so many years of our life. Life is almost gone.

Very few years left. Why not do something with the rest of the years you have? Start today. Let the word of God abide in you so you can overcome the evil one.

Further in 1 John and chapter 2, that's how we overcome Satan. And some of you wonder why you can't overcome Satan. You're not letting the word of God in the morning and saying, Lord, speak to me.

You're not taking a little time off from your sleep to maybe listen to something that will instruct you in scripture. We have so many resources today and we don't make use of it. And if God sees, here's a child of mine who's got so many resources, which he can take freely.

He doesn't have to pay one rupee for it. And he's still lazy. Well, I'm just going to leave him alone.

I really believe that's what God is saying about many of you. Because he's not going to spoon-feed you forever and ever. No.

I hope some of us will take this seriously, because I'm really concerned that many of us are not growing up to maturity. And then the third stage, fathers, 1 John chapter 2. I write unto you, fathers, verse 13, because you have known him who has been from the beginning and is repeated again in verse 14. I know you write to your fathers because you've known him from the beginning.

That means you have known God, not the way children know God as a father. See, children know God as a father, that he cares for me and he loves me and he takes care of me and he does everything good for me. But fathers know God as a father, that I can be like a father to other people.

That's different. A child is not acting like a father to other people, but a spiritual father is one who sees God, look at the way he cares for me. That's the way I must care for other people.

Not just sit back and say, oh, he cares for me, he cares for me, he cares for me. He's so delighted. I must be such an important person that he keeps caring for me.

It's like the illustration I used once about a cat and a dog. You know, a cat, people have pet cats. I don't think many of you have got pet cats, but if you have pet cats, I've seen people who have pet cats.

They do everything for them, so many things. A cat does nothing. What does a cat do in your house? I mean, most of the houses, there are no mice running around the house.

He just enjoys the food and he doesn't warn you about strangers coming to the house, nothing. He just likes being stroked and petted and the food must be there. And the cat's idea in his mind is, look how nicely my master treats me.

I must be God. That's why he treats me so nicely. The dog is the other way around.

He thinks in terms of serving, and it's the master who is God to him. I must serve him. I must protect him.

I must take care of him. See, that's the difference. One is just receiving, the other is doing something for that's maturity.

Which way are you? Do you just sit back like the cat and the other people do things for you? Or do you say, I'm a watchman in this house. The dog is, I'm supposed to take care of this. I'm supposed to bark if some stranger comes.

I'm going to take care if somebody's attacking my master. It cares for his master, respects him. And fathers are like that.

They look around and seeing, is there a need here I can meet? Is there somebody I can encourage? Is there somebody I can visit and say a word? Is there somebody I can make a phone call? Nowadays, you don't even have to visit to encourage people. Is there somebody, I've got the phone numbers of the church. I can call up somebody and say something to them.

It just costs a few paisa to phone people nowadays. That's a father who's concerned, who's always thinking. You can't expect the elders to be thinking all 500 people here.

How in the world can they do that? This church needs many spiritual fathers and mothers who don't go around giving advice. I'm always scared of people who are eager to give advice. I met especially some older sisters like that.

Always ready to pounce on young people like a lion to give advice. And if you really look into the heart of those young sisters, they feel like running away. This sister's coming, I better run.

She's coming to give me some advice. Don't be like that. Be one who encourages, not just going around telling people what to do, what to do.

There are some people who have such a lust to give advice to others. They think they are godly. No, they are ungodly.

I'll tell you the type of person you must be if you listen to me. People must be so eager to get advice from you that they long to come and talk to you and say, tell me. I want to hear something from you.

That's the type of sister and brother you should be. Not one who's got a lust to tell people what to do, whom to marry and what you should do this way, that way, the other things. Be very careful in these areas, dear brothers and sisters.

Be a father. Be a father and a mother spiritually. We need many people like that and we've got to grow up to that.

There's one more passage of scripture which I want to share very briefly before we close and that is in relation to maturity and that's in the book of Titus, letter to Titus, Paul writes to Titus. He talks about how various types of people should behave. Titus in chapter 2 verse 2 speaks about older men, older women, young men, young women, young men.

All of us fall into one of these categories. Are you an older man? You must be serious and dignified. You must not be that playing the fool type.

Sensible, mature, sound in faith. If you're an older person and you're not solidly established in the faith and you've been here even 10 years, I want to suggest something to you. When you go home, fall on your face before God in your bed and hang your head in shame there.

Lord, I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself that I've been 10 years in CFC and I don't have wisdom to share with others. I want to change. I don't know how many of you take me seriously.

You should be sound in your faith, in love. If you're the type of person who can get out of love just because somebody stops loving you, you don't deserve to. I mean, you don't deserve to say you've been in CFC 10 years.

Older men, be sound in love. Nobody can shake you sound in faith and in perseverance. Then older women, older women must be reverent in their behavior.

I mean, you don't expect older women to be jumpy like little girls. They must be serious in their conduct and not malicious gossips. Why doesn't it say about men they should not be malicious gossips? Are men

allowed to be? No.

See, men and women have different temptations. Men have great temptation to sexual lust. Jesus never spoke about women lusting because it's only a perverted woman will have sexual lust.

Man, there may be sexual desire, but sexual lust is a different thing. Men have it, and that's why it speaks about men. When it comes to women, it's not sexual lust.

It says malicious gossips. Take that seriously. Your weakness is not sexual lust.

Your weakness is about opening your mouth and blabbering all types of information that you got from different people and rejoicing in hearing that and passing it on. And especially malicious, where you like to say not something good, but something bad about other people. That is your prime temptation, just like lusting with the eyes is the prime temptation for men.

Please remember this. That's why it says women should not be malicious gossips and not enslaved to much wine. I don't think we have a problem there.

We can go and move on from there. Teaching what is good. Imagine being a sister, a godly sister, who, instead of being a malicious gossip, teaches what is good to the younger ones.

Teach the younger ones how to love their husbands. Isn't it a wonderful thing, you older sisters, if you can teach younger women how to love their Don't teach theology and all that. Forget all that.

Leave that to the men. How to be sensible. Teach younger women how to be sensible, how to be pure, how to be a worker at home, how to be kind.

You see, this is a great need among our younger sisters, I tell you. A lot of our younger sisters know how to operate the laptop and sing in the choir, but they don't know how to cook. They don't know how to mend their clothes.

They don't know how to wash their clothes. They don't know how to keep their house tidy. But laptops, sing in the choir, wow.

That's not what it says here. It says young women must learn how to be a worker at home. And if you haven't learned to be a worker at home, you're not fit to get married.

Forget about marriage. Go and join a convent or something. No, you're not going to operate laptops when you get married, I'll tell you that.

And sing in the choir there. You'll have to look after children. And if you've seen babies, they mess up quite a bit.

And so there are a lot of things young women have to learn. And that's what the Bible says. Paul is telling Titus, teach young women to be workers at home.

I want to ask you, young sisters, have you been a worker at home? Have you helped your mother cooking food or washing clothes or cleaning up the house or helping your younger siblings or any such thing? Or you've just been a lazy person instead of operating laptops and singing in the choir. Think about it. Don't think you're spiritual.

However well you can operate a laptop or sing in the choir, you're not spiritual. And that's what the older women should be teaching the younger women. That's what it says here.

Otherwise, what does it say? The word of God will be blasphemed and dishonored. Verse five. Imagine that the word of God is dishonored because young women are not workers at home.

Or they're not subject to their husbands, the ones who are married. In the same way, urge the young men to be sensible. There's some good instructions there for people of all ages.

The Bible is very practical. And it's very, very important that in CFC, our young people grow up to be practical Christians, helping one another, caring for another. And this knowledge of scripture and the knowledge of God leads them to this type of good works that will bless others.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. I hope you realize, my dear brothers and sisters, as we pray that whatever you've heard, don't take it as a word of rebuke. No.

Take it as a word of instruction. That's the only way I meant it. I don't know most of you.

I mean, I'm away from here so long that more than half of you, I don't even know your names. And I know nothing about your personal life. So this cannot be personal because I don't even know you.

So it's not rebuke. It's instruction. Instruction that will really make you a godly older person and a godly younger person whose life can really accomplish something before you leave this earth.

That is my burden. That's why I encourage you to study the scriptures. Start a disciplined life today.

Discipline in studying the scriptures. You young girls, discipline in learning, work at home, etc. So that you'll grow up to be a godly balanced young person.

Yeah, Heavenly Father, we really want all of us to grow to maturity. We want the young people here to grow to maturity, strong, to be practical Christians, not just with a lot of head knowledge and be able to sing a lot of songs, but Lord, lead us and guide us, we pray. We pray that we shall raise a generation of practical Christians in this church.

Help us, we pray that we'll do that in the days to come. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/5PNS89DMSLs.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/growing-up-to-maturity/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**