

Honeydew - God Holds Us Responsible

by Zac Poonen

God holds us accountable for our actions and expects us to live according to His standards, and obedience, humility, and brokenness are necessary for spiritual growth.

Duration: 56:58

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:19, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 3:15

Topics: "Responsibility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following the examples set by Jesus and the apostles in the Bible. He criticizes the focus on glory and success in modern Christianity, stating that it is far removed from the teachings in the Acts of the Apostles. The speaker urges listeners to ensure that their work originates from listening to God and warns of the accountability we have to Him. He also highlights the significance of quality over quantity in our spiritual lives, emphasizing that our work will be tested by fire on the final day of judgment.

Transcript

Happy to be here with you. One of the things that I have told people in our home church in Bangalore for 25 or 27 years is that if you take heed to what you hear in this church, it will go much better with you in the day of judgment. It's like telling a student, you can get good results in the final examination if you pay attention to what you are being told now.

One of the things that we all must recognize is that God holds us accountable. To whom much is given, much is required. To whom less is given, less is required.

So that's another thing I tell people who come to our church, and that is, it's very dangerous to keep coming here if you don't plan to obey what God speaks to you. Because every time you hear something, your accountability to God increases. And if you are planning to obey, you can rise to great heights spiritually.

But if you are not serious about obedience, then the very message that is meant to lift you up spiritually can lead to your damnation. Because God's word is a serious thing. Jesus said, to whom more is given, more is required.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3, that our life is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3.11 No man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. So once we are born again, we are on that foundation.

But on that, it says here that we are building. And every day of our life, we are building. We are building with our thoughts, our words, our attitudes, our motives, our actions.

In all our work for the Lord, we are building. Personal life, our family life, our church life. We are doing something, we are building.

And it says here that we can build either with gold, silver and precious stones, or with wood, hay and straw. And then, even though it may not be evident now, in the final day, it says, our work will become evident. 1 Corinthians 3.13 For the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire.

And the fire, now this is the part I want you to listen carefully. In the final day, this is talking about the final day when God's judgment is pictured like a fire, testing our work, which means our life, the way we spent our days on earth from the time we were born again. The fire will test the quality of each man's work.

Now generally speaking in Christendom today, quality is not emphasized. It's only quantity. Every report that you read or hear of Christian work is always numbers.

Number of converts, number of people who were healed or made decisions or etc. etc. But never an emphasis on whether these people who made decisions have become disciples.

Have they become wholehearted followers of Jesus Christ or superficial converts? And if you continue like this, it's going to be a whole pile of wood, hay and straw in the final day. And you know when you put wood into the fire, you know there's a great pile of it. Wood, hay, straw, it's all going to be burnt up.

It's all reduced to ashes. But a little bit of gold, a little bit of silver, a little bit of precious stones will endure the fire in that day. That's the point of this.

Very simple illustration that it's not the size of your work or your life, what you can count in terms of statistics that's going to matter in the final day, but the quality. And it speaks here about a man's work remaining in that day. Remaining because it's a work that can endure the test of God's fire.

And such a man will receive a reward. But if a man's work is burned up, he'll suffer loss. Now he won't go to hell.

He's not talking about going to hell. There's a man who's saved. But it says here, even though he's saved, he'll be saved as through fire.

That means, okay, he's got a place in heaven. But his entire life's work is burnt up. I've often said in many places that a lot of people go to heaven, they're going to have a regret.

And that's a concept that many people can't understand. They say, if you go to heaven, how can you have regret? You're only going to have joy. Well, let's think about it.

Is it possible when we enter eternity and stand before the Lord, we know that we are saved. We know that we're not going to hell. We know that our sins are all forgiven and I'm going to spend all eternity with the Lord in heaven.

Is it still possible that there will be regret? Think of this verse. This is actually going to happen. When we stand before the Lord, our entire life's work and all that we've done and everything in our life is going to be tested.

And imagine, I think of myself. Supposing I discover in that day that, yeah, I'm saved. It says here in verse 16, I'm saved.

But I discover that my entire life's work is burnt up. Even though while I was on earth, everybody thought I did a wonderful job for the Lord. Don't you think I'll have regret when I see everything being burnt up in that day? I can't imagine myself not being without regret in that day.

I will have regret. I will have regret because I didn't concentrate more on the quality of my life. I will have regret because I concentrated more on impressing other people with what I was doing, with my reports, with my statistics.

Or satisfying myself that I was doing something for the Lord without examining myself in the light of God's word. I'll have regret that I wasted so much of my earthly life on useless pursuits. I'll have regret in the way I spent my spare time.

I'll have regret in the way I spent my money. Many, many things. But that's too late to think of it then.

I have to think of it now. I'll have regret about the times I lost my temper. I'll have regret about the fact that I never sought to conquer my temper sooner than I did.

Many things like this. And if I take God's word seriously, I can overcome some of that regret. Maybe there are a lot of things in our past life we have regret about.

I think all of us have. We've done a lot of stupid things, foolish things in our past life. But our aim should be, at least in the days to come, to reduce the amount of regret in our life.

I remember when I was a young Christian, I read a poem written by A.B. Simpson, who was a great man of God who founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance over a hundred years ago. And in that poem he said that, I don't have any time for trifling in this life. That means I don't have any time to waste in idle pursuits.

Because that's not the way my Master went before me. Every hour must count for God. Every power I have must count for God.

That's the way I felt when I was 19 years old, when I was converted. That's the way I feel today when I'm 62, 43 years later. Every hour must count for God.

Every bit of my power must be for God, not to impress men. It's worthless. The opinions of men, I've always said, is fit for the garbage bin.

Good opinions, bad opinions. What people think about you, say about you, write about you, throw it in the garbage bin. It's not important what people think about your work.

It's not important. What does the Holy Spirit tell you? Do you have a clear conscience about what you do? Are you doing this according to the best of your understanding, according to the teaching of God's Word? Don't worry if nobody understands you. In fact, anyone who follows Jesus wholeheartedly is going to

follow a path of misunderstanding most of the time.

But he won't have any regret in the final day. I want to read a verse in Romans chapter 11 to try and understand what it is. What is it referred to when it speaks about gold, silver and precious stones as opposed to wood, hay and straw? This is a contrast.

Gold, silver and precious stones on one side, we saw that just now, which can endure the fire. And wood, hay and straw on the other side, which will not endure the fire. He's talking about Christians, the way they live, the way they work.

You can have a huge structure called God's work. But it may be made of wood. The converts may be shallow.

The fellowship between them may be pathetically poor. There was a non-Christian person in one of the villages in India. I only heard the story.

It's not in one of our churches. Who was converted through a visiting evangelist. He was a non-Christian.

In his village there was only one church. He accepted the Lord. He was born again.

And then he asked the evangelist this question. He said, now that I'm converted, do I have to join the church in this village where everybody knows they fight with each other? What reply do you give to such a question? Do you have to tell him, well, you have to join that church. It's pathetic.

This is the condition of a lot of churches. It's wood. It's hay.

It's straw. It's not what God intended it to be. It may have 200 members.

So what? I'd rather have a church with 5 members. Where they love one another. Jesus never said, all men will know you are my disciples when you grow in number.

That's not in my Bible. All men will know you are my disciples when you love one another. What's that? Love has got nothing to do with quantity.

It's quality. It's not that we are a huge mega church and therefore we try to impact the nation. Those are all human concepts.

It's like, it's the principles of IBM and Coca-Cola, trying to impress the world and take over everything. Christian church doesn't work like that. Jesus spoke about salt.

How much salt do you put in a plate of food? Very little. But as soon as you taste it, you know whether there's salt in it or not. If it has got quality.

Jesus always spoke about quality. Love. Quality.

Salt. He said if the salt has lost its quality, it's fit for nothing. Throw it outside.

He spoke about light. And he said, don't let the light begin to become dim. How much space in a room does a bulb occupy? Oh, so not even 1% of the space in a room.

But it lights up the room. And Jesus said, you're the light of the world. It's not numbers.

Jesus said, you're always going to be small. The way to life is narrow. Few there be that find it.

He never spoke about numbers. At the end of his earthly life, he had 11 people to offer up to his father. Father, he said, I've finished the work you gave me to do.

Here are the ones I've taught your ways. And 11 people, that's all. But I want them to be one.

And with those 11 people, he turned the world upside down. Because those 11 people did not love money. Those 11 people did not love themselves.

Those 11 people died to themselves and followed Jesus. They had no interest in anything of their own or anything in this world. You know, when I began to see the work Jesus did in those 11 people, this was my prayer.

I said, Lord, if I spend my entire life to produce 11 people like that, I'm ready to die. Do you understand that? Jesus is ready to go. Paul said to Timothy, the things that you've heard from me, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others.

Throughout the scriptures, the emphasis is on faithful men quality. Paul turned around once. Paul spoke once about his co-workers.

And he said, everybody's seeking their own among his co-workers, except Timothy. There's a man who seeks only the things that are Christ's. It was like that in the first century.

It's been like that throughout the history of Christendom. Everybody wants to do something for the Lord to ease their conscience. Not too much.

But here it says in Romans chapter 11 in verse 36. From him, through him, and to him are all things. From God, through God, and to God.

Just think of those three expressions. From God, through God, and to God are all things. Now when you look at the world, everything on this earth is not from God, or through God, or to God at all.

So what does he mean that all things are from him, and through him, and to him? It means all things of eternal value. All things that are going to remain forever. All things that are going to go through the fire and come out untouched.

Anything that's going to remain unscathed by the fire has got to originate in God. It must be from him. If it's some bright idea that came out of your brain, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but it won't last for eternity.

It won't go through the fire. It may be a brilliant idea, but it's wood, hay, straw. If you want something to last for eternity, it must begin with God.

It must be from him. It must be something that the Holy Spirit originated. A thought that originated from the Holy Spirit.

And you'll never know it, unless you study the scriptures. Unless you wait upon God. A lot of people get bright ideas in their head and they think it's from God.

I'm amazed at the number of people who claim to prophesy. So many people I've seen who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and begin to prophesy in meetings and say, Thus said the Lord. I'll tell you

honestly, I'm scared to use that expression.

The Lord told Jeremiah once, I never sent these people. And yet they claim to speak from me. Jeremiah 23.

How quickly people take the name of the Lord. The Jews had a greater fear, because one of their commandments said, Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. They were very scared to say, Thus said the Lord.

The false prophets did it all the time. I think of when Paul was writing 1 Corinthians 7. You know about virgins and marriage and all that. He says, when he comes to certain things, he says, Verse 25.

Concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord. But I give an opinion. This is the great apostle Paul.

Who went up to the third heaven. Who wrote scripture. Who raised the dead.

Who was perhaps one of the mightiest servants of God that ever walked this earth. He says, I don't know the Lord's opinion. I'm giving my opinion.

That's humility. And at the end of the chapter, he says in verse 40. After all that he's written.

He says, I think. I have the spirit of God. Paul was at the age of 60.

Was not like these young upstarts who get up and say, Thus said the Lord. And go on and on and on and on. And Paul says.

I'm not so sure. I think. I'm speaking in the spirit of God.

I would any day listen to such a man. And all these young upstarts who say, Thus said the Lord. I have no respect for them.

They just say anything that comes into their mind and say, Thus said the Lord. It's a lot of garbage. Fit for the garbage bin.

This is scripture. Written by a humble man. Who acknowledged his limitation.

And said, I think. I have the spirit of God. See, when a man reverences God.

He's not so quick to claim. Divine origin for his words. He recognizes that he is a flesh.

In which dwells nothing good. And how he can easily be deceived. And he recognizes that.

Everything of eternal value has to originate from him. Everything of eternal value must be done through him. And everything of eternal value must end in him.

To him. From him. Through him.

To him. That's gold. Silver.

Precious stones. From me. Through me.

To me. That's wood. Hay.

And straw. It's that simple. What do I mean by from me, through me, to me? From me means, well.

I've got a bright idea. To do something for God. Maybe I got the idea from the Coca-Cola company.

Management techniques. Why is it Jesus did not give his gospel to an advertising agency? Why did he give it to eleven illiterate fishermen? Is that a sensible thing to do? Why didn't he send them to Bible school? Why, Gamaliel was running a Bible school in Jerusalem. Jesus never went there to pick anybody.

God's ways are not our ways. You know, in the Old Testament we read of Moses. That God gave him a pattern to build a tabernacle.

Now, two things I want to say about it. One is, any Philistine could have made a tabernacle exactly like that. If he got a hold of the book of Exodus.

Because all the details are there. The height, the thickness, the material, the number. Everything is there.

You know, you can produce a tabernacle like that today. Down to the last little pin. You can produce a tabernacle exactly like that.

Because all the details are there. But there's one thing you won't be able to reproduce. And the Philistines would not be able also.

And you know what that is? The fire that rested in the most holy place. That was from heaven. And that was the distinctive feature of the tabernacle.

Not the pattern. A lot of people among Christians are taken up with the pattern, pattern, pattern. New Testament pattern.

What's the New Testament pattern? Brother, it's New Testament fire. That's more important than New Testament pattern. That's the first thing I want to say.

And the second thing is, that tabernacle was such a simple structure. Just a few poles and a little animal skin spread on top of it. And a plain white sheet.

Not even a colored sheet. A plain white sheet on four sides. Very unimpressive.

And who's the one who's building it? Moses. The man who was trained in the academies of Egypt and knew how to build pyramids. Which were the wonders of the world in those days.

And which even today, architects wonder how in the world those people managed to build those pyramids in Egypt. Moses lived in those times. And I believe that if God had given the pattern of the... If God had called Moses at the age of 40, when he thought he was fit to lead God's people.

And had given him the pattern of the tabernacle, to build the tabernacle as God's dwelling place, Moses would have said, Lord, just leave it to me. I can do a much better thing than you're telling me. I've been trained in the academies of Egypt.

What are you telling me about tabernacles? Just leave it to me. I'll design the whole thing and I'll make a fantastic structure. And he would have.

The only thing that had been missing is the glory of God. God wouldn't have come down upon it in fire. That's exactly what Christians are doing today.

Grand things. Plans, programs. According to human wisdom.

Not according to scripture. I find today's charismatic Christians are pathetically ignorant of scripture. It's a very sad thing because that can lead them into all types of excesses, which are not found anywhere in the Bible.

It can lead them to preach a gospel, which is not found in the Bible. The Lord taught me scripture for about 15 years before he baptized me in the Holy Spirit. I'm very thankful.

It prevented me from going off on a tangent. It's very important to have the fire of the Spirit and the guidance of the word of God. But by the time Moses was 80, God had broken him so thoroughly.

And you know, it's the message of brokenness. That is not found in Christendom today. In any group.

It's a rare message. And yet it is the most important message that every Christian group needs today. Moses at 40 could hammer one Egyptian and kill him.

How long would he have taken killing Egyptians one by one before he delivered Israel from Egypt? It would have taken ages. But by the time he was 80, he was an old man. He was not able to kill anyone.

But we read that when he lifted up his rod in the power of God, the entire Egyptian army was buried under the Red Sea. That's what a broken man can do. He accomplishes a lot more than a strong man.

God doesn't want strong people. He wants broken people. And because Moses was broken at the age of 80, he did not modify the pattern of the tabernacle even slightly.

If you read Exodus chapter 39 and 40, it says exactly as the Lord commanded Moses, he did it 18 times. That's what it means to do something from God. Only a broken man will do exactly as God tells him.

A strong man will modify God's plans. Because he's got bright ideas. He's an intellectual.

He's learned management techniques. The only thing missing in his work will be the glory of God. The only thing missing in his ministry will be the anointing of God.

He'll have clever ideas. Oh yeah, sure. We've got a lot of clever people in the church.

So, if our work does not originate from him, it's not going to last the eternal fires. I want you to look at Jesus' own example. Have you read these amazing words in John's Gospel chapter 5? John's Gospel chapter 5, verse 19.

Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself unless it is something he sees the father doing. Whatever the father does, these things the son also does in like manner. That's the way Jesus lived and served.

And that's the way you and I are supposed to live and serve. To see, to understand how the father wants something done and to do it that way. To do it because the Lord prompts me to do it.

I believe one of the things that has hindered and ruined the testimony of Christ in India is that 90% of Christian workers. I'm talking from my little limited experience. I don't know about all the Christian workers in India, but 90% of the ones I have met should never have been in Christian work.

They went into Christian work not because God called them. They went into Christian work because they thought it is a good idea or because they didn't get any other job or it is a good means of earning a living. It is not from God, but they call themselves pastor or reverend or right reverend, etc.

But their calling is not from God. And therefore, the Lord's name is dishonored. Such people would have done a great service to God if they had never stepped out into Christian work.

If they had gone and done some secular job. God's work can only be done by those whom He has called. It says here that Jesus never did anything unless the Father told Him to.

He sent Him the next week after Adam died. Get the job done quickly. I would have.

You know what that has taught me? That God's ways are not my ways. That my clever brain will do stupid things in God's work. That all your management techniques don't work in God's kingdom.

That God's kingdom is not based on the techniques of the corporate world. It has been good for me to learn that. Because it has helped me to wait upon God.

To submit my clever ideas to the teaching of God's word and do it the way God has shown in His word. If I want fruit that lasts for eternity, it must be from Him. Ok.

After Jesus came to earth, at the age of 12 He knew the Bible better than anybody else in all of Israel. Why did He spend the next 18 years making stools and benches and wasting time with all that when the world was dying in sin? Don't we hear messages like that? Oh, the world is dying in sin. Why are you sitting there doing nothing for the rest of the world? Come on, get out and do something.

What do you think Jesus would have done if somebody went and told Him in the carpenter shop when He was 20 years old? What are you wasting your time making stools and benches? The world is dying in sin. He would have said, you do what you like. I'm going to do what my father tells me.

And spends the next 10 years making stools and benches while the world is dying in sin. He wouldn't be stirred by all these missionary messages that we hear today. The only thing that moved Him was the Father's will.

Missionary messages that we hear today are sales pitches put forward by good salesmen following the principles of the business world. And look at the quality of Christianity they have produced today. You know, Jesus didn't do anything unless He saw the Father doing it.

And at the end of three and a half years when He's finished His ministry, He says in John 17, Father, I've finished the work You gave Me to do. I'm coming back. But Lord, what about the need in Africa? What about the need in India? What about the need in Japan? You haven't gone to any of these places yet? I did not come here to go to all these places, the Lord would say.

I traveled in the little country of Palestine, maybe a couple of hundred miles at the most in length, what Jesus traveled. Spent all His life there, just three and a half years. I finished the work the Father gave Me to do and I'm going to go.

And that was the greatest work that any man ever did on the face of this earth. It wasn't quantity. He didn't live a hundred years.

He lived only 33 and a half. You know, it's not length of life. I remember reading the biography of David Brainerd who was a young American missionary to the Red Indians in the 1700s who brought lots of Red Indians to Christ.

He died when he was 29. And in just a few years, six or seven years of a devoted, passionate life, he did more than other people have done in 300 years. He prayed much.

He wasn't sitting making plans with his brains. He learned to wait on the Lord. He learned to listen to the Holy Spirit.

Everything we do must originate in Him. Otherwise it's worthless. Jesus once visited the home of Mary and Martha and we see there Martha going into the kitchen and working very hard.

Was she doing a good thing? She certainly was because she was working unselfishly, sacrificially, producing food for the Lord and His disciples. What's wrong in that? What's wrong in producing food for the Lord and His disciples? That's the very best thing you can ever do. But when she came before the Lord, the Lord said to her, Martha, you are worried about many things.

They are not important. Mary has chosen the good part. That won't be taken away from her.

What was the good part which Mary chose? Sitting at His feet and listening. Is that the most important part? I want to give you my own testimony. For 40 years the Lord has kept on reminding me.

40 years. Remember one thing is needful. To listen to me.

If you listen to me and do my work, you will accomplish a lot more in your life than if you just rush around like Martha doing something or the other for me. Please remember this my brothers and sisters. That the most important thing is not even to serve the Lord unselfishly and sacrificially like Martha, but to listen to what the Lord has to say.

And then to do what He says. In other words our work originates from Him. Prayer is also like that you know.

I believe that true prayer, true prayer does not originate in a man's heart. It originates with God. God putting a burden in my heart and my praying that burden back to God in faith.

And the circle is complete. Such prayers are always answered. But a prayer which just originates in my heart or in my bright clever brain, it is not from God.

It says the Holy Spirit makes us pray because we don't know how to pray. We don't know what to pray for. We pray for all types of stupid things.

But the Holy Spirit knows the mind of the Father. And if we are in tune with the Holy Spirit, we will pray according to the mind of the Father. Such prayers will always be answered.

It is easy to have faith for such things. God will supply all our need according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus, but He won't supply all that we want. You know the difference between wants and needs?

Everything that we do, our prayer, our activity and everything must be from Him.

And that's why we must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. And that's why we must be filled with the Holy Spirit not once, but constantly. Constantly.

Must live under that waterfall. Every day. We must have a clear conscience to live under that waterfall.

We must have a humble, broken spirit to live under that waterfall. Otherwise we can't. And we won't listen.

At least one day will be wasted if we live one day without that power. One week, one year. Lot of people are wasting a lot of their time from Him.

Jesus said in John 5 verse 30, I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge. He heard.

That's why Jesus would frequently go away to a place alone where He could listen to what the Father had to say to Him. That's a habit which today's Christians don't have. Listening.

We talk too much. We listen very little. Even people who say they pray, most of their prayer is talking, not listening.

To me, prayer is like a communication, communicating with God with a telephone. A telephone has got an earpiece and a mouthpiece. And it's very rude to do all the talking yourself.

Particularly, if the person at the other end of the line is a ten times more godly man than you are. You'd have to be pretty conceited to do all the talking yourself. You can.

That man may be humble and listen to you. But you won't learn anything. And if God is at the other end of the line, don't you think you should be listening a little more than talking? I don't follow the books of prayer.

There are multitudes of books of prayer. I don't follow all of them. My prayer is listening.

90% of the time. I talk very little. He already knows my needs.

But I listen. And I seek to listen all the time. Lord, what are you trying to teach me? I want to encourage all of you, my brothers and sisters, develop the habit of listening.

From Him are all things of eternal value. You'll accomplish a lot more if you listen like Mary and then act. Okay, secondly, it says, through Him.

Romans 11. That means, not only must what I do originate from God, it must be done in God's power. There's a lot of things which we can do with human power.

God endowed Adam with tremendous abilities. Do you know that God, do you know that Adam gave a name to all the animals on the earth? Have you read that? Do you think you could do that? I don't know how many thousands there are. Animals, insects, all these crawling things.

I think by the time I came to the 60,355th insect or animal, I'd forget all the other names I gave before. It's really a miracle that that man could give a different name to all the animals. It's just a little example of the tremendous potential that God put in the human mind.

There is tremendous potential and power in the human soul. That's just one example of it. And when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge, they decided to develop that power, so that they did not need God.

You know that's the, that was the sin in the garden of Eden. Have you ever thought what's wrong with knowing good and evil? Is that a bad thing? How many of you believe that knowing the difference between good and evil is a bad thing? You ask anybody in the world, they all say it's a very good thing to know, to do evil is wrong, that everybody agrees, but to know the difference between good and evil, don't we want our children to know the difference between good and evil? Why did God say, if you eat of that tree of knowledge of good and evil, you'll die? One would think you should live, not die. What's the meaning of it? The meaning is this, that if I want all that knowledge of good and evil resident within myself, I don't need God anymore.

I've got all the information myself. I can live on my own. But God said you'll die that way.

But, if you are willing to go to the tree of life, and the tree of life is a life of dependence upon God, it's a life of faith, the righteous shall live by faith, that's the tree of life. And faith means a life of dependence on God, where each time, I want to know whether it's right or wrong, I have to go to God. I have to depend on the Holy Spirit.

That's another way of living, depending on the Holy Spirit. But if I develop this human power which God has given me within my soul, I can do a lot of things. Think of what Hitler could accomplish with his powerful preaching.

Think of what great political leaders who are atheists or godless men. They've succeeded in getting such a tremendous following. That's not Holy Spirit.

It's human soul power. Think of rock musicians. They can sway millions.

They can stir people with their music. Is that God's power? No. It's human soul power.

And we know in rock music, the devil sort of latches on to that pretty quickly. The thing I want you to know is, you can use that soul power in Christianity too. And a lot of people are using it.

Manipulating people psychologically and calling it Holy Spirit power. It's not Holy Spirit power. Gimmicks.

Psychological gimmicks being paraded as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You want to change that? Yeah, as I was saying, psychological gimmicks being paraded as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now, there are the genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

But if you're not a person with discernment, you can easily be fooled with some psychological gimmick, which is not a gift of the Holy Spirit. It's human soul power. We see a lot of it in India with people who do yoga.

They can move, bend spoons and all without touching it. By human soul power, mental power, supernatural power. Maybe they got a little help from the devil too.

But it's not Holy Spirit power. Don't think that everything supernatural is from God. 2 Thessalonians 2 says there are going to be a lot of false signs and wonders in the last days.

And one way to find out is, I'll come to that in a moment, is whether this glorifies a man or whether it glorifies Christ. There's one quick way to find out. Through God, only that which is done through the power of the Holy Spirit will last for eternity.

Everything else will be burnt up in that fire in the final day. I don't want any of my work to be burnt up in the final day. I want everything I've done to be according to the will of God, according to what He has revealed in Scripture, according to the example I see in Jesus.

I want everything that I do to be genuine power of the Holy Spirit. I don't want anything which is not from God in my life. I don't want to do anything which is not through the energizing power of the Holy Spirit in my service for God.

And that's why we need to be constantly dependent, constantly seeking for the anointing of God upon our life. It's easy to, you know, when we feel, when we are not baptized in the Holy Spirit and we feel dry and we begin to seek God. You know, this is what I've seen with so many believers.

Before they are baptized in the Holy Spirit, they seek God, they are hungry, they fast, they pray, and they seek God. God meets with them. And for a few weeks, they are in heaven.

And then they come down to earth. And they begin to backslide. Now they don't seek God anymore, like the old days, because they've got it.

What they sought, they got. Now they don't need to fast, they don't need to seek God, they don't need anything. They are relaxed, and that's when they go astray.

I've seen that so many times. We need to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to have a continuous hunger after God, a continuous dissatisfaction with our spiritual development, because we haven't yet become like Christ.

Seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit in our life and in our ministry. Seeking for a greater degree of anointing than we have ever experienced before. Then our life, then our work will last for eternity.

Not to be fooled by, not to use my human soul power to dominate other people. You know, I have soul power, and I have to crucify it when I serve God. Paul had soul power.

That's why he spoke so much about crucifying the flesh, if he was to serve God effectively. It's very easy, if you are a dominant type of person, to use that personality of yours to overpower somebody else with your teaching and your convictions. And many people are weak in their spirits and souls, and you can dominate them, and you think it's the power of the Holy Spirit.

It's not. It's just your soul power. But since very few people have discernment, they are not able to recognize it.

Through the years, this is one of the things I've sought to become sensitive to. Not only in my life, I have a responsibility in a number of churches. And when I listen to a man speak, I want to sense, is that his soul coming forth? Or is it his spirit? If he's a broken man, it will be the Holy Spirit working through him.

It's when the alabaster box is broken, that the house is filled with the odor of the ointment, not otherwise. Then lastly, there's a lot more to say on that, but lastly, to Him must be all things of eternal value. That means, what originates in God, we listen to Him, we're guided by Him, we seek the power of the Holy

Spirit to accomplish it, and the glory must be given to Him.

We must not draw people to ourselves. We must not draw attention to ourselves, in anything. One of the things we decided 27 years ago, when we started our work in India, it was just three or four families meeting in our house.

That's how it started. It's grown now to 30-40 churches in many countries. But, one of the things we decided, was that we would never send a report of our work anywhere.

We'd never send photographs of our work, or reports of our work. Everybody in India would do it, but we decided we wouldn't do it. We would never ask anybody for money.

We would never send reports or photographs of our work anywhere. We wouldn't even take an offering in our meetings. We just kept a box at the back, for those who wanted to put in a donation.

That's how we've done in all our 40 churches, over 20 years. Because, we see what a lot of human glory there is, in Christian work. The promotion of individuals, and people standing up on platforms like film stars, with the searchlight on them.

I can't imagine Jesus being like that. Jesus was a very ordinary man. He moved among people, ordinary people.

Here there's so much of glory to an individual, or to some great work, or some mega church, or some organization. I saw all this and I said, Lord, this is so far removed from what I see, in the acts of the Apostles. This is because people haven't read the Bible, that they follow all this.

If they only read the Bible, and saw what Jesus and the Apostles did, they'd never follow all this. But we live in a day of tremendous ignorance of Scripture. And so, everything is to man.

Okay? It lasts a long while, these wooden structures, structures of hay and straw. One day Christ will come, and the whole thing will be burnt up. So I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, make sure your work originates in listening to what God has to say to you.

And if you haven't developed that habit, start today. It's a habit to be developed. Somebody once asked a man of God, said, a young believer, said, I read in the Bible that my sheep hear my voice, Jesus said.

But he said, I don't seem to be able to hear his voice. So the man of God said, it's true, the sheep hear his voice, but the lambs have to learn what that voice sounds like. How do you recognize the voice of your husband, or your wife? Because you heard it so often.

You can recognize it on the other side of the wall. But you wouldn't be able to recognize the voice of someone you haven't heard frequently on the other side of the wall. But if there are 25 people speaking there, you can recognize your wife's voice there.

You should be able to recognize God's voice like that. In the midst of all the other voices in your mind. If you listen to it often enough.

And here's one place to listen to it very often. That's why I say, begin with the Bible. Study it thoroughly.

Let your work be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. And for the glory of God alone. Zero glory for self.

Zero. Everything for Jesus. Let's pray.

If the Lord has spoken to your heart this evening, and I believe He has this afternoon, then He expects a response. He never speaks without expecting a response. Today, if you will hear His voice heartened out of your heart, the Word says, respond to Him, my brother or sister.

Respond to what God spoke to you. In that specific area, be willing to give up cherished ideas that you have held for years perhaps. And submit to what God has spoken to you from His Word.

Respond to it. Say, Lord, I want to build something that lasts for eternity. Thank you, Father, for this evening, this afternoon.

We pray that You will bless what we have heard for the rest of our time together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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