

Humility, Submission and Contentment

by Zac Poonen

The secret to the Christian life is humility, submission, and contentment, as demonstrated by Jesus' example of humbling himself and becoming a man, a slave, and a criminal.

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Scripture: Philippians 2:5

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Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following the example of Jesus in humility, submission to authority, and contentment. It highlights the dangers of pride, rebellion against authority, and discontent, which are characteristics of the devil. The speaker urges listeners to seek to honor God above all else, to live simply, and to avoid debt and comparison with others. The goal is to build the body of Christ by overcoming Satan through Christ-like attitudes and actions.

Transcript

We are thinking of our human body as an example of how the body of Christ is built and that's why the Lord has used the expression, the body. Many of you meet in local churches that you attend and you need to ask yourself is that church at least working towards becoming a body or is it just perpetually a congregation centered around one man who runs the church? Who runs the show? And very often in many churches it's he and his son or somebody who runs the show. In many places.

Is that a body? What about all the people who sit there? I mean there are many parts of our body which don't have a gift as spectacular as say the eyes or the tongue but they are very necessary and even if a small part of your body is injured it affects the whole body. Even if you get a cut on a hand, it's not that the rest of the body ignores it. The whole body is concerned about it.

If there is an infection, sometimes the whole body is lying in bed because there is an infection in one small part or one little bone is broken and the whole body is affected. This is how the body of Christ should be. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians in chapter 12.

You see this is a chapter where the first half deals with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the second half deals with the body. They go together. Unfortunately in many churches there is a lot of emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It is very necessary. I began to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit when I was 23 years old. Two years after my baptism.

I especially prayed that God would give me the gift of prophecy. Prophecy means to speak to people, to encourage and build them up and that's how God gave it to me. If you don't have it, it's probably because you're not seeking it.

God doesn't give a gift to people who don't value it or maybe you didn't receive it because you're seeking it for your own honor. To promote yourself and God doesn't give a gift to people who want to promote themselves. See everything in this body, every part of this body is interested in the plans that the brain has.

The brain is the head of the body. If your aim is to submit to Jesus Christ in every area and to promote Christ and that He should be exalted, I want to tell you something. There is no limit to what God can do through you however weak you may be.

In 1 Corinthians 12 it speaks about a body where no one can say to another, I don't need you. Listen to this. Or no one should feel inferior saying, oh I don't have a gift so I'm useless.

Just listen to this, verse 14. The body is not one member but many. And if the foot should say, he first deals with those who have a feeling of inferiority.

And I have noticed in Christianity there are a lot of people and I'm sure there are a lot of people sitting here who feel very inferior because they don't have a spectacular gift or they're not always prominent, they're not up in the pulpit. So they feel inferior to others and when you feel inferior to others you withdraw and you don't do anything. So it's first speaking to such people, the Holy Spirit.

If the foot, see the foot is way down at the bottom and mostly covered up, in our case covered up with shoes and socks, nobody sees our feet. And it's the lowest part of the body. And we can think of believers who are the lowest in terms of gift.

The context here is gifts, not value to God. Is your foot not valuable to you? You wouldn't be able to move around without your feet. Every other part of your body can be good and if you don't have feet, how will you move? It may be the lowest part of your body, it's very important.

It's one of the things that the Lord teaches us in the body of Christ, there are some people whom you may despise as not so smart and not so clever, not as gifted as you, but they're very valuable and the body will not move without them. So if the foot says, oh I'm not a hand, I'm not doing spectacular things like taking the food from the plate and all that and therefore I'm not a part of the body, verse 15, is it because of that it's not a part of the body? No, part of the ear says, I'm not an eye, an eye is so important to see and guide people where to go, my ear doesn't do any guidance. So I wish I were an eye, you know sometimes there are people whose gift is such they wish they had somebody else's gift.

This is the ear saying, I wish I were an eye. Do you ever envy another person's gift? When you look at a person with a very spectacular gift, particularly preaching, do you say, boy I wish I could preach like that? Why do you wish that you preach like that? Just ask yourself. It's probably not to build up the body, it's probably for you to get some honor yourself, that you can be honored and you can stand up there and be a prominent person and respected.

God doesn't give gifts to such people. There are people with gifts who have abused it. You know how the devil became the devil? Do you know the devil has got amazing supernatural gifts? Look at all the things he does through witchcraft.

Witchcraft is 100% of Satan and a lot of black magic. So Satan, it shows what tremendous power he has. Not greater than God, not greater than Christ, and there's no power of Satan that the church cannot rebuke and bind, but he does have power.

And the question is, who gave him that power? He didn't manufacture it himself, he's a created being. Don't ever forget that Satan is a created being. He has power, but the power was given him by God.

And then the question comes to us, why didn't God take away those gifts when he fell away? See, he was created as the highest of the angels. I don't have time to show you those verses. When you get time, you read two chapters, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, you read about Satan. Both of them in the middle of that chapter, you'll see about Satan. He was the highest of the angels, created by God long before Adam was created, and he was the one who led the angels in the worship of God.

And after a while, he began to think, why should they worship God? I'd like people to worship me. I'd like to be someone who's like God. And even though he was the highest, in his heart came a pride because of his, you read that in Ezekiel 28, he was proud because he was the most beautiful of all of God's creation.

He was the cleverest. He had three things more than everybody else. Beauty, wisdom, and position.

And when you have beauty more than others, or you have cleverness, intelligence more than others, or you have a position in society or in the church more than others, you are in great danger. I'm not saying you should give it up. You don't have to make yourself ugly or give up your position or you can't give up your intelligence.

But you don't have to give them up. But you have to humbly recognize, these are not something I manufactured. Did you manufacture your beauty? Did you manufacture your intelligence? Even if your position, if you worked hard to attain that position, you could have been born as a retarded, mentally challenged child.

What position would you have then? It's because of God's grace and goodness to you that you have beauty, intelligence, and position. And Satan, we don't know his original name. We think it is Lucifer, but that's not really, his name is not mentioned anywhere in scripture, by the way.

Lucifer is just a Latin expression in Isaiah 14, but we don't know his name. But whatever it is, God doesn't want us to know what his name was before. So let's call him Lucifer.

He became proud as soon as pride came into his heart. He gathered other angels who were also having the same spirit. There were a few.

In Revelation 12, it says one third of the angels, there were millions and millions of angels God had created. And one third of them, you read that in Revelation 12, the dragon pulled down one third of the stars. There's a picture of the angels in heaven, the devil pulled down with him.

He wasn't the devil then, he was the head of the angels. He gathered these people in a sort of rebellion against God and said, I want to be like God. I want to go up.

That is how sin came in this universe. Remember, Jesus Christ came to restore what was ruined by the devil. 1 John 3 verse 8 says, He came to destroy the works of the devil.

And we need to understand how the devil became the devil if we are to cooperate with Jesus in destroying the works of the devil. Because the church today, it says the gates of hell will not prevail against the church. So we need to understand how Satan operates if the local body must function properly.

If you're building a local body in your locality, even if it's a small group, you need to know how to overcome Satan and one of the techniques of warfare is to know what are the strategies of the enemy. What are the strong points of the enemy? What are the weak points of the enemy? Well, here are the strong points of the enemy. Pride.

Number one is pride. Pride came into the heart of an angel and in a moment he became the devil. And I want to say to you, when pride comes into your heart, no matter how gifted you are, in one moment you can be like the devil.

It doesn't take you long. It doesn't take you six months. In one moment he lost the presence of God.

And he was cast out along with all the other angels who now are the demons and they are forever rejected by God and the Bible says God created hell for these angels. Can you read that in Matthew 25? Hell was created for these angels and in Revelation chapter 20 you read that finally the devil and all these demons will be cast into hell. There was no hell in the beginning when God created the heaven and earth.

In Genesis 1.1 it says heaven and earth. There was no hell. When did hell come? Between verse 1 and 2 of Genesis you read the angel fell.

It's not mentioned in Genesis because the Bible is written for man. So the history of the fall of the angels is in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. The reason I'm mentioning that is because the church is the body of Christ to fulfill the ministry of Christ.

He came to destroy the works of the devil. He defeated Satan on the cross. That's why we are not afraid of Satan.

That's why any believer whose conscience is clear and who believes that Jesus defeated Satan on the cross can cast out a demon. And the reason why sometimes God doesn't give that grace to some believers is because if they cast out a demon they become so proud of it that they destroy themselves and become like the devil themselves. So to save them from becoming like the devil he doesn't give them that ability.

But if you can remain humble any believer can cast out a demon. But casting out a demon is not the main thing. I was telling you yesterday how the devil does a lot of confusion and when two are united together they can bind the activities of Satan.

So we need to understand how Satan operates. He's proud and the other thing you see in Satan was a spirit of rebellion against authority. So pride is one.

Rebellion against authority is the other thing we see that made that angel into a devil. Why am I saying this? Because these are the strong points of Satan. Pride, rebellion against authority.

God was the only authority above him and he said no I'm not going to submit. And the third thing was discontent. Pride, rebellion against authority and discontent.

And discontent means I'm not satisfied with the position God has given me. Now he was the highest person in the universe and you'd think if there was anybody who should be satisfied it's him. But even though he had the highest position in the universe he was not satisfied.

So why am I mentioning these three things? Pride, rebellion against authority and discontent. Jesus came down to earth to destroy the works of the devil. So he did the opposite of these.

The devil wanted to go up, Jesus came down. You know how Jesus came down? Turn with me to Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2. Every member in the body is important. I showed you that from 1 Corinthians 12.

Don't ever compare yourself with somebody else. Think oh I'm inferior. First of all let me show you this verse in case you don't remember it.

I told you 1 John 3.8. You must know that very clearly that the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. That's very very important for you to remember that verse. There were two reasons why the Son of God was manifested.

One is 1 John 3.5 to take away our sins and the other is to destroy the works of the devil. So I told you these three things that the devil's characteristics are pride, don't ever forget them, pride, rebellion against authority and discontent. Wherever you see that, you see that in a home, you see that in a church, you see that in society, it is Satan.

Okay let's look at how Jesus overcame this. First of all pride. Philippians and chapter 2 we read verse 5. Have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus.

Now see how he overcame this. Though he was existed in the form of God, he was God, the second person of the Trinity from all eternity. There was no need for him to come down to this earth.

He could have said this wretched human race rebelled against us, let's just destroy them and finish with them. That's not the spirit of Christ. He doesn't give up on anybody.

You know it says he does not blow out the smoking wax, he doesn't break the bruised reed, he fixes it. The broken reed, he says I don't want to break it, I'll fix it. And the fire that is dying out, he says let me blow it up to a flame.

That's the spirit of Christ. You see somebody slipping up and I say I don't want him to fall down, let me lift him up. That's the spirit of Christ.

So he came down and it says though he was God, he humbled himself and became a man. Step one. God to man.

Do you know what a tremendous step down that is? I mean if you became a dog in order to help other dogs, that itself would be a great thing. But this is much more, God becoming a man. Can you think of

that? Sometimes we don't think of how wonderful that is.

To come right down to this level to help us. To become like a worm. Imagine a man becoming a worm in order to help other worms.

Would you do that? Would you love a worm so much because you see some other worms irritating that or some other animal irritating that worm? And you say I've got to go down and help that worm. I find that snake is troubling that worm so I'll just become a worm to help that worm. I don't think any of us have that type of love.

That's a little picture of how God became man. You know I need to emphasize that because sometimes we forget it. We think so much of ourselves and we think so little of Jesus becoming like us.

We just take it for granted, oh of course he became like us. God became man. That itself was more than enough.

Now remember this is the opposite of the devil. The devil was a created being who wanted to be like God and Jesus overcame that by becoming man. God becoming man, the opposite of a created being who wanted to be like God.

You overcome Satan by having the opposite qualities of what he has. So his quality is pride. You cannot overcome him if you don't humble yourself.

The reason why so many believers are defeated by Christ in their life, in their family life and in their church is because they have the same quality as the devil. They are proud. If you are proud just forget about fighting the devil.

Just go and do something else. The devil will overpower you completely because you got the same quality as him. The only person the devil is scared of is not the one who knows the Bible.

You think he was scared of the Pharisees? They knew the Bible cover to cover. He was not scared of them. Jesus knew the Bible cover to cover but he had a humility.

That's why the devil was scared of him. Everywhere Jesus went the devils were all stirred up. Oh he's come here, he's come here.

You know you got to be like that. I took that challenge. I said Lord I want to be like you and if I go somewhere all the devils should be stirred up and say oh he's coming here, he's coming here be careful.

He's the devil scared of you. If he's not, I want to say this very respectfully, you're a useless Christian. You're useless to God.

If the devil is not scared of you because you got the same quality as him. Proud. How many Christians there are who are proud of their ability or their accomplishments or their gifts? It's a grief to God.

They're on the side of the enemy. Imagine saying you belong to Jesus Christ and fighting on the side of the enemy. That's what it means to be proud.

Jesus humbled himself and became a man. Second step, as a man, verse 7, he became a slave. Now becoming a man itself, supposing he had come as a king, God became the emperor of the earth, that itself

would have been a tremendous step down.

But that was not enough. He came to earth and he became not a servant, it says a slave. Do you know the difference between a servant and a slave? We don't have slaves nowadays, but in the olden days there were slaves.

Slaves were sold in the market just like you sell chairs and furniture. You go to a store and you buy a table or a chair and in the olden days you go to a store and you buy a slave. Now you don't, you can do anything with that chair if you like.

You bring that chair home, you can paint it black or blue or yellow or break it or destroy it or throw it away. People treat a slave like that. You don't pay anything to your chair every month for sitting on it.

It's free. You don't pay anything to a slave. We haven't understood this.

There is still slavery in some parts of the world. But that's what a slave is. It's different from a servant.

A servant can work 9 to 5, collect his wages and go home, but not a slave. A slave is like property that's yours forever. If you kill a slave, nobody questions you.

That's not murder. It's like if you break your chair at home, nobody's going to question you. This was the right of a slave.

And Jesus became a slave, not a servant, a slave. He became a man, so that's humility. Then he became a slave, which is a further step of humility.

Because he was determined to destroy the works of the devil, remember? The exact opposite of the devil. As much as the devil wanted to go up, Jesus came down. And the third step.

Now you think slave is the lowest. Hang on. There's something even lower than a slave.

And that is a criminal. The Romans did not crucify their slaves. They crucified criminals.

You say, you criminal, you're worse than a slave. You don't deserve to even live. We won't just kill you.

We'll put you on a cross and make you a display to the rest of the world to see what a wicked, useless, good-for-nothing person you are. And Jesus said, I'll take that place. So see the steps.

God became man. Man became a slave. He became a criminal.

Humility, humility, humility. That's why you probably heard me say, if you've heard my messages, there are three secrets to the Christian life. You want to write them down? Humility, humility.

What was the third one? It's all here in Philippians 2. God became man. Man became slave and slave and the criminal. Now, if you have understood this, I tell you the devil will have no power over you.

He'll have no power over your home if you're the head of your home. And if you're an elder in a church, you'll have no power over your church. I have learned the secret.

I learned it from Jesus. And so, the question comes, how can I always remain in humility? It's very easy to be humble when you're a three-month-old child. All of us, once upon a time, we were three-month-old

children.

You had no problem with pride then. Even if somebody came to you and said, oh, what a lovely baby you are. He didn't puff you up.

You were just the same. Isn't that wonderful that somebody admires you so much and he doesn't puff you up? But as you grow older, somebody says something good about you, puffs you up immediately. That's why Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like little children.

Primary quality. Children are not very strong and capable. That's not the primary quality of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus, why did He pick up a child? A child is so humble, it doesn't have high thoughts about itself. It's the primary quality of the kingdom of heaven. Who are the most like the kingdom of heaven here? The youngest children, the babies.

If there's a baby here, that's the closest to the kingdom of heaven in this room. And whoever is humble like that baby, even if you're fifty years old, you're the closest to the kingdom of heaven. Never forget that.

Everything else is of the kingdom of the devil, of the world. And this is the reason why the devil gets so much power in our life and in our church and in our home. Because we allow something of that same quality within us.

Okay, we can think more about that later. What's the second thing I mentioned? Do you remember? I forgot. Rebellion against authority.

Satan said, I'm not going to submit to God. That's the second characteristic of Satan. And if you've got anything of that in you, the devil's got power over you.

Because that's his quality. Jesus submitted, which is the opposite of rebellion, is submission. And let me show you that in Luke's gospel, chapter 2. Why am I mentioning all this? Because, let's ask ourselves, why is the church called the body of Jesus Christ? Which was the first body of Christ? That's the one that was born in the stable in Bethlehem.

That's the first body of Christ. And for thirty-three and a half years, that body lived on earth and manifested the nature of God. Blessed people.

Never ran after money. Never ran after honor. Kept itself sexually pure.

This is Jesus. Served others. Did God's will.

Denied himself every day. And whatever the price, decided to obey God. This is the first body of Christ.

And at the end of thirty-three and a half years, he looked up to heaven and said, Father, I finished my course. Now, I'm coming up to heaven, and I'm going to send the Holy Spirit in a few days, forty days later, or fifty days after his resurrection, and I'm going to baptize or immerse a hundred and twenty people and forge them into a body which will be the new body of Christ on earth. So just like that body was born in Bethlehem in a stable, in an upper room in Jerusalem, another body was born, the body of Christ, a spiritual body.

Today, Christ has got two bodies. One is a physical body up there in heaven, and the other is a spiritual body which began on the day of Pentecost and which has continued through the centuries. And if you are meeting with other believers in your locality, whether you know it or not, you are seeking to be an expression of the body of Christ exactly like that first body that was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and that lived in Nazareth and went around doing good, anointed with the Holy Spirit.

You're supposed to be following in those footsteps. If you're not following in those footsteps, you're a failure. You're not functioning as a body of Christ.

You're functioning as a lone individual with a lot of characteristics of Satan inside you but claiming to be a Christian. We have to destroy the works of the devil in our own heart first before we can destroy it around us. How can you secretly have fellowship with Satan? So the second is rebellion against authority.

In Luke chapter 2, we read about Jesus. When He was twelve years old, He was in the temple discussing with the scholars there and when His earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, found Him, He went back with them. And it says in verse 51, Luke 2, 51, He went down with Joseph and Mary and came to Nazareth.

He was twelve years old. And He continued in subjection to them till the age of thirty. I think Joseph died sometime during that period.

But He was continuing in subjection to His earthly parents. Joseph was not really His father. God was His father.

Mary was actually His mother. So He submitted to Joseph and Mary. Why? Now this is a very, very important question all of us must understand.

Did He submit to them because they were better than Him? No. He was much better than them. Did He submit to them because they were wiser than Him? No.

He was wiser than them. Did He submit to them because they knew more of the Bible than Him? No. He knew more of the Bible than them at the age of twelve.

In what way were Joseph and Mary superior to Jesus Christ at the age of twelve? The answer, in no way. Then why did He submit? Only one reason. His father said, submit to them.

You know, we feel, I can only submit to somebody who is superior to me. That's the spirit of the devil. Did you know that? Why does the Bible tell us to submit to authority? Even if that authority is pretty dumb.

Now in your, for example, some people work in an office where their boss is a bit dumb. He's not as clever as you are. But why do you submit to him? Because otherwise you lose your job, you lose your money.

Now Jesus was not doing it because He was going to lose any money. He submitted to inferior authority. Very important to understand this.

He submitted to inferior authority because that father told Him to. Fine. And it involved self-denial to submit to such authority.

It's not easy. If the authority tells you to do what you like to do, there's no submission there. You know, you tell your children, come on, eat that chocolate.

It's not much of a problem for that child to submit there. But you tell your child to do something which he doesn't want to do, that's where you test its submission. And I've used an example to illustrate the submission of Jesus when He was twelve years old.

Picture Jesus like other children of the age of twelve playing together with a bat and a ball, something which is the equivalent of baseball over there in those days, whatever it was called. In India we call it cricket. I don't know what they call it in Nazareth in the first century.

All games are with a bat and a ball and here Jesus is playing around with others. And your time for fielding is over and here comes time for you to bat. And it's time for Jesus' turn to bat.

And at that moment, His mom calls Him from the house and says, hey Jesus, come here, I've got some work for you. What do most children say at that time? Wait mom, just five minutes, which means forty-five minutes, I'll come. You know what Jesus did? It was His turn to bat.

He dropped His bat and went. And all the other boys must have teased Him, hey, you're mama's boy, why are you running away? But He went and His mom said, I want you to go to the well and get some water for me, for my cooking. He went.

You think that was easy? You think that's easy for a twelve year old boy? You try that with your twelve year old. That is submission. To do what one wants to do something else, but because there's an authority God has placed over me, in His case His mother, He says, okay, I'll go.

And when He goes to the well, He doesn't bring half a bucket of water. He waits till the bucket is, you know, He'll pull the bucket up from the well and pour it and pull it again and pour it and fill up the bucket and bring it back. Every work that Jesus did was a finished work.

When He sat on the cross saying, it is finished, that was a principle that applied to His entire life. It is finished. He never did a half finished job in His life.

If His mom told Him to bring a bucket of water, He'd bring a full bucket of water. If His mom told Him to sweep the room, He'd sweep every corner of it. If He as a carpenter when He was twenty years old had to make a table for somebody, it wouldn't be sort of shaking on its legs, it would be really a good table.

He wouldn't cheat on the type of wood He used. Submission. All people who don't understand this principle can never overcome Satan.

I'm just trying to tell you why Satan has such power over the lives of so many believers. I never want to have, I never want Satan to have any power over my life. I want Jesus Christ to have complete power over my life.

I'm sure all of you want to, but if you want to, this is the price you have to pay. First, humility. Go down, down, down, down, down, take the lowest place.

Like Jesus, the last day of His earthly life, what was He doing? He was not chairman or director of some company. You know what He was on the last day of His life? The washer of people's feet. How many of you would like that title? That after many years of serving God you finally get the title, washer of people's feet? That's not what people are looking for in Christendom today.

They want to be senior pastor, chief pastor, what all titles, reverend, right reverend, wrong reverend, all types of titles. Doctor, reverend doctor. Who wants to be washer of people's feet? No wonder such reverends and right reverends don't have power over Satan.

Satan just sits and laughs at the whole lot of them. Pastor, senior pastor, he doesn't care for any of them. The one he's scared of is the one who's washing people's feet.

Whose only interest in life is to go down below others, to serve others and do everything he does in that spirit. That's what the Lord has shown me. What the Lord has shown me is when you preach to people, be one who washes their feet, don't preach to impress people.

Many years ago when I was a young preacher in my twenties, the Lord asked me, do you want to impress people or do you want to help them? I said, Lord, I want to help them. And the Lord said, stop trying to impress them. Because I was young and I was trying to impress people with my preaching.

And the Lord said, stop it. I said, ok Lord. It was a battle.

Because whenever you preach you want to impress. Every young preacher wants to impress. And I had to fight it.

I've had to fight it for years and say, Lord, I will not try to impress anybody. I'm not interested in that. I want to help people.

Those of you who preach God's Word, take this advice. Your life and your ministry will be completely different. You'll deliver people from the power of Satan.

Submit to God's authority. Jesus, everything he did was a finished work. So, he submitted to authority and when the Father allowed him to be humiliated by others, he submitted to the authority of the Father.

He wouldn't rebel against that. And people spat on him. Why didn't he threaten them and say, hey, you know, one day I'm going to come and judge you fellas? No.

He says, when he suffered, he did not threaten. He had the power to threaten, but he wouldn't threaten. Read this verse in 1 Peter, Chapter 2. I'm telling you how to function as a body of Christ that can overcome the power of Satan.

1 Peter, Chapter 2. Follow the example of the first body of Christ. Beautiful example. 1 Peter, Chapter 2. Verse 21.

Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example to follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21. Leaving you, who are now the earthly body of Christ, an example to follow in his steps. If you are a 12 year old, follow in his steps.

How he obeyed his mummy and daddy. That's why it's very important as parents to teach our children obedience, more than teaching them the alphabet and mathematics. Teach them obedience to parents.

Teach them to respect dad and mom. If you don't teach your children obedience and respect for parents and respect for older people, please consider yourself a failure as a parent. Humble yourself.

No matter how much of the Bible you know and how important a Christian you think you are, I would suggest you go and fall on your face before God and say, Lord, I've got such little knowledge of the Bible, but I've been a failure in teaching my children obedience. Children, obey your parents. This is the first commandment with promise.

And the promise is it will go well with you and you'll live long on the earth. Do you want it to go well with your children and live long on the earth? I'll tell you what. More than everything else you teach them.

Teach them obedience. Teach them respect for parents and for older people. We're living in a day where a generation is growing up that's got no respect for older people.

Just go and watch how the young people are today. So different from what they were a hundred years ago. There's absolutely no respect, even the way they speak to people.

It's very different. In the olden days they would even call a person Mr. So-and-so, Mr. So-and-so with a title, but it's also casual now, first name. It's a loss of respect completely.

And who is to blame? I would say this generation of parents, 100%. It's the spirit of the devil that's overflowing all over the earth. Beware of that.

Spirit of rebellion against authority. Never tolerate rebellion against authority in your children. Because if you allow that, you're permitting the spirit of the devil to come more and more in there.

How you handle that, you've got to ask God for wisdom. It's not always easy. But recognize it.

My child has got the spirit of the devil there to rebel against authority. It's not a demon possessing him, but he's influenced from outside. Jesus was tempted from outside, and your child is being tempted by the devil to rebel against authority.

And he's got Adam's nature in him that cooperates with Satan, and we've got to really drive it out. That's why we need to discipline our children. It's to save that child from the devil, to save that child from hell.

So because this is the second manifestation of the devil, rebel against authority, and that authority begins first of all at home. Long before a child obeys the authority of the police on the roads or obeys the authority of a boss in the office, he's got an authority at home for many years, and that's his parents. And then you go to school, there's a teacher there.

Why do we find so many teachers fed up and resigning from their jobs and say, I can't teach these children? Because their children are full of rebelling against authority. They rebel against their parents at home, their parents don't bother about it. They go to school and rebel against the authority of the teachers.

I would say that if you're a Christian and your children are rebelling against the authority of the teachers in school, you should hang your head in shame. Don't blame your children. Go and hang your head in shame before God and say, Lord, I've not brought up my children properly.

They don't respect the teachers. It's authority. It's at home, it's in the school, it's in the colleges, it's in the universities, it's in the factories.

Rebel against authority, rebel against authority. It's 100% the devil. Rebel against authority.

That's all the wars and all coming because of that. And Jesus didn't do it. It says here, He's left you an example to follow in His steps.

He committed no sin, 1 Peter 2:22. No deceit was found in His mouth. While He was being reviled, how dare they revile the Son of God? Call Him all kinds of names and slap Him and spit on Him. While He was being reviled, He did not revile in return.

He could have. I mean, don't we do that? When you're a non-Christian, you do it all the time. I hope you don't do it as a Christian when somebody reviles you, following the footsteps of Jesus who did not revile in return.

Supposing your marriage partner has no victory over sin and he or she reviles you, what do you do? Revile in return? You're opening the door for the devil to come right in. You're inviting, hey Satan, come right in here. And then you wonder why there's confusion in your home.

Well, you invited him in. He did not revile in return. Do you want to overcome the devil? Follow Jesus, who did not revile in return.

And when He was suffering, He did not utter any threats. He didn't say to them, do you know who I am? Do you know what's going to happen when I come back in glory? I'll finish you all off. No.

He uttered no threats. You and I don't have that power over others. He had power.

He said to Peter once, you know, I can speak one word to my father and 72,000 angels will come down here to help me. But I won't call them. One word, father, send the angels.

What power would those soldiers have had against 72,000 angels? We read in the Old Testament in the days of Nezekiah, one angel killed 185,000 soldiers. If you multiply that by 72,000, all the armies in the world would have been destroyed. But he wouldn't call one.

He could have called, like he's singing that song, he could have called 10,000 angels. But he didn't. He died alone for you and me.

It was submission to the authority of the father. Father, you want me to die? I'm accepting. So when the Roman soldiers came and said, he asked whom you are seeking? Jesus of Nazareth.

Yeah, I'm he. I'm Jesus of Nazareth. Let these other disciples go.

Take me. Why did he do that? Submission to authority. If God allows it, I accept it.

And he would not utter any threats. But what did he do? It says in verse 23, he kept entrusting himself to one who judges righteously. You can be sure there's one who judges righteously.

When you are suffering injustice, if you're being treated badly by your boss at work, or your husband is oppressing you, don't worry. There is one whom you can commit your cause to who will judge righteously one day. He will judge righteously.

He will not spare those who ill-treat his children. I'll tell you that. He may wait a long time to punish them, but nobody who has ill-treated a child of God will escape.

I'm absolutely sure of that. You don't have to defend yourself. You don't have to fight.

You don't have to threaten. You don't have to rebuke that person in the name of Jesus. Submit to authority.

If God allows you to be ill-treated for the sake of Christ, accept it. That's how you'll overcome Satan. The Bible says a woman who has, you know, it goes on from here to give an example of submission to authority in chapter 3. It's just a continuation of the same paragraph.

For example, he says in 1 Peter 3, you're a wife who's got a very un-understanding husband. Anybody hear like that? There are many women who've got un-understanding husbands. And there are many women who imagine that they've got un-understanding husbands, even though they've got very understanding husbands.

But this is a case of a person who really has an un-understanding husband, who doesn't even disobey God's word. What do you do in such a case? What's a woman supposed to do with a husband who doesn't obey God's word? Well, it says here, follow Jesus in the same way. Why does chapter 3 verse 1 begin with, in the same way? Because he's referring to Jesus.

How did Jesus submit to authority that ill-treated him? In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word of God, they don't come to the meeting, they don't come to the service, they have no interest in God, they have no interest in the Bible, submit to them, so that they can be one to Christ without your preaching one word. I've seen converted wives who have got unworried husbands, who are constantly preaching, preaching, preaching to their husbands, and I say, your husband will never get converted. He'll be sick and tired of your preaching.

That's not the way to win him. If you want to win him to Christ, don't preach to him. He'll be sick and tired of your preaching.

Love him, show your submission to him, and win him, as it says here, without one word. By your behavior, by your conduct, you can win him over. I remember one sister who got married to a husband who was either an unbeliever or not a serious believer, and as soon as she got married, he said, I want to take you to the movies.

And she said, I don't see movies. I'm a Christian, I'm a disciple of Jesus. You know, you've got to come with me.

So she obeyed this word and went with him, and sat in the movie theater for three hours with her eyes closed, not watching one thing. And every time there was some interesting scene on the screen, he would nudge her, and she was fast asleep, not fast asleep, but her eyes closed. Every time.

Hey, did you see that? Her eyes are closed. And he came back home and said, I'm fed up with you. I'll never take you to a movie again.

And she later on got converted. How did he win her? How did she win him? Was it by having a private home? We have a sister in our church who was from a non-Christian background. Her husband was a thorough non-Christian, didn't want to have anything to do with Christians, and she would come secretly to the meeting and was born again.

And her husband didn't know anything about it. And she wanted to be baptized, and he had to do it secretly, not at a regular church service at that time. And she came with all the decorations that

non-Christians, Hindus have.

And she came for baptism and took off all those jewelry and marks and forehead and all, and put on a simple dress and baptized her. And after the baptism I said, no, no, no, put all that back on again, all those marks, otherwise when you go home your husband will kick you out of the house. So we don't want that to happen.

And I want to tell you something. Don't be offended by putting all this back because God sees you without it. Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks at your heart, and your heart is clean.

You're putting this on just so that you don't have a conflict at home. So don't get condemned about it. And she went back home and I said, manifest your Christ-like spirit by submission.

And she did that. Sometimes her husband wouldn't allow her to come, but gradually he discovered that something had happened to his wife. She was submissive and discovered that she had some contact with our church.

And then he told her, okay, that is one church. I'll allow you to go to Zachary's church and other churches. And he would bring her to our church service at 9.30 in the morning and go away.

He'd come back at 11.30 and pick her up. She didn't preach to him. He just saw something in her.

And then later on they adopted a child. They didn't have any children of their own. And he said to his wife, we want to dedicate that child in your church and I'll come with you.

Can you believe? And then he started coming. And there were times when she was out of town, he'd come along. I tell you, that is how we overcome Satan.

Jesus supports those who don't rebel against authority. What's the third characteristic of Satan? Do you remember? Pride, rebellion against authority and discontent. It's that spirit of discontent that the devil put into Eve.

God has put a boundary around you, Eve. Let me paraphrase Satan's words. God has put a boundary around you.

He's put that lovely tree outside that boundary. Are you happy? And don't you feel a little unhappy that one tree is outside your boundary? Don't you feel like reaching out and taking something from there? Do it. Now if God had told Eve, there's only one tree in the garden that you can eat and all the other 10,000 trees you can't eat, that would have been tough.

But it was so easy. Here are 10,000 trees with all that lovely fruit. Only that one tree is outside.

And Satan stirred up that discontent that he had when he was the highest of the angels and put it into Adam and Eve. And that's how sin came. When you're discontented with what God has given you.

There's a lot of that among Christians. They compare themselves with others and they say, Oh, that person's got that. I want that.

I want a house like that. I want a car like that. And I want these gadgets in my home that that person has.

And if I have to borrow, I'll borrow. If I get into credit card debt, it doesn't matter. But I want what that person has.

It's this discontent that leads a lot of Christians into debt. You know the Bible says in Romans 13 verse 8, Oh, no man anything. A lot of debt comes because of discontent.

So the devil gets far over you. Let me show you a verse in Ecclesiastes. I'm telling you how the body of Christ can overcome Satan.

That's my subject. Ecclesiastes in chapter 10. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 in verse 8. It says here, he who digs a pit may fall into it.

And the meaning is that if you dig a pit for somebody else, one day you'll fall into it yourself. Ecclesiastes chapter 10. If you all found it, if you haven't found where Ecclesiastes is, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Unless you're not a Christian. If you're a non-Christian, you're forgiven. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 in verse 8. And the last part of that verse says, A serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.

Think of that expression. A serpent will bite you if you break through a wall. That means God has put a boundary around you.

And in Eden there was a boundary around Garden of Eden. And there were, I don't know, 100,000 trees inside that boundary. One tree was outside.

And the devil forced Adam and Eve to be discontent. You know, you have so much already and you still are discontent. There are many poor people in the world who don't have 1% of what you have, who are content.

Many rich people are discontent. The children of many rich people are so discontent. Dad, I want this, I want that.

And foolish parents just give their children whatever they want and raise those children for the devil. You shouldn't give your children everything they want. You need to give your children everything they need.

Philippians 4.19 says, My God shall supply all your needs. He doesn't give us all that we want. Thank God.

He will destroy us. Be like God as a Father. Give your children what they need, not what they want.

Discontent. Don't raise your child to be a discontented child even though he has so much. Most of you, your children have far more than 90% of the world has or 95% of the world has, but they are discontent.

So you want to feed that even more? Maybe you are discontent yourself. All this credit card debt is discontent. We have taught people in our church never to be in debt.

As I said yesterday, in all our churches we have never been in debt. Never, never, never. I'm 76 years old.

I've never been in debt for 1 cent in my whole life. My wife and I were very poor when we got married. Extremely poor.

We could not even rent a house. We didn't have money to rent a house. We lived in one small corner of my dad's home because they didn't have money.

It's not ideal, but what to do when you don't have money? And what to do when you're not going to borrow money? I was a servant of the Lord and I said, I'm not going to borrow. This is the straightened, tightened circumstances God has allowed me. It was more difficult for my wife because it was my home, it was not hers.

But we accepted it and we went through that for 2 or 3 years. God allowed us to struggle financially. Those were the best years of our life because we learned to trust God.

We learned to live simply. Values that we have not lost even today after 48 years of marriage. Such a blessing it was that I sometimes told newly married couples, I wish God would give you 3 years of financial difficulty as a gift.

Boy! He'll teach you some values that will last you all through life. You'll have a very happy marriage. Money doesn't make you happy.

I've discovered this. No. We didn't have much, but we were happy.

We couldn't buy new clothes, we couldn't afford gadgets. It's okay. We survived.

The thought that came to me was, what does it mean to follow Jesus? I'm sure Jesus, if He was tempted like me, must have gone through difficult financial circumstances and He was not discontent. I can't imagine Jesus going to somebody and saying, hey, can you lend me some money? My father let me down. My heavenly father sort of let me down now.

I've got to come to you now for some money. Can you imagine, I don't know who is the richest person in the universe today, but whoever he is, maybe somebody, whoever is the richest person in the universe, in the world rather, richest person in the world. Supposing his son comes to me and says, hey, Zak, can you lend me some money? I say, are you coming to borrow money from me? Your dad is the richest person in the world and you're coming to me.

Your dad must have disinherited you, right? That's why you don't have anything. Can you imagine the richest person in the universe, his son coming and asking money from you? And what does it look like when we, whose, our father is the richest person in the universe, not the world, but the universe, and we have to borrow, we get into credit card debts. It's all discontent, discontent, discontent.

I have taught our people, never get into debt. Don't buy now and pay later. If you don't have the money, don't buy it.

If you want to overcome satan, be content with what God has given you. I'm telling you that after 48 years of married life, 76 years of life on earth, it's exactly what I've taught my children. I have four sons, none of them are in credit card debt, even though they've been many years working and have children.

I say, if you don't have something, don't do it. Don't buy it. That's it.

As I told you yesterday, a house loan and a car loan is not a debt because you have something there. If you die, the house is taken and the debt is paid. You're not in debt.

So, but other types of loans, you've got to avoid them. It's evidence of discontent. We have marriages in India.

In India, marriages are grand affairs where people spend a lot of money. And I've taught people, why do you want to spend such a lot of money and get into debt? I say, never get into debt to have a marriage function. People say, I haven't saved up enough for my wedding.

Why do you need to save up for your marriages? Your married life is okay, but for your wedding? Why can't you have a simple wedding? Why do you have to invite so many people and give them all a grand meal? Why can't you be content and say, I'm sorry, somebody else can give a grand wedding reception, but I'm not so rich. We had one brother in our church who accepted my exhortation and you know what his wedding reception was? I went to his wedding in the meeting hall and I conducted it and he said to people, folks, the wedding reception is just outside this hall, one coke, one tin of coke for everybody, as soon as you go out you can take it. I respect that young chap till today because he didn't have any money and he would not get into debt just to show others that he had a grand reception.

He was wise. We've had brothers in our church who were so poor, they took my exhortation when they got married. Their wedding reception was one glass of lemonade and a cookie.

That's it, for everyone. Okay, people laughed at them, what sort of wedding reception is that? But they obeyed God. They didn't get into debt.

I respect such people and I've seen some of them, how they've developed spiritually. And I've seen some of these others who got into debt when they wanted a grand wedding reception to impress others. And I see where they are spiritually today.

Okay, they got honor from people, but God didn't bear witness to them. And they don't have power over Satan. If you are discontent with your appointed lot and you're always comparing yourself, coveting what somebody else has, I'll tell you this, the devil will get far over you.

You'll never be able to overcome him. If your aim in life is just to have a grand life and a nice car and a big house and you don't bother about whether the devil's defeated in your home and your life, that's exactly what'll happen. You'll get all these things and the devil will ruin you and ruin your children and you'll never be useful to God, no matter how many conferences like this you attend.

Overcome Satan. Jesus was never discontent with his lot in life. We are the body of Christ.

Let's follow in his footsteps. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and to free you from the opinions of your friends and others who have low standards. It's one of the greatest battles I've had to fight.

I say, Lord, I'm not going to be influenced by the opinions of other Christians who don't have the values of Scripture. Scripture says, Oh, no man anything, I don't want to be in debt. That's it.

I will live simply, will sacrifice, deny ourselves and make sure that you are honored in our life. I'll tell you one wonderful promise. God says, Those who honor me, I will honor.

I've seen God do that in my life for many years and I want him to do that to the end of my life. I say, Lord, I only want to honor you. I don't want to please a single human being on the face of this earth.

I'm not in competition with anybody. I'm not here to show that I'm better than anybody or richer than anybody or in any way superior to anyone. I'm willing to be the last, but I want to honor you.

Take that stand and I believe God will use you to build the body of Christ in your locality. Ask yourself why you are so lonely as a Christian. Why are you so lonely? You think you're a very wholehearted Christian, but God says you're not honoring me.

If you were honoring me, I'd have honored you long ago, but you're seeking your own interests. You want to promote yourself. You're proud of what you are.

You have so much Bible knowledge and you understand so many things. You even talk about new covenant language, but God is not honoring you. Something is fundamentally wrong.

Repent, go before God and say, Lord, I want things to be different after this conference. I don't want to go back to the same person I was when I came here. I want to build the body of Christ and I say, Lord, say, Lord, whatever the price, I want to honor you.

I don't want anything of the devil's characteristic in my life. You know, for example, when you are unmerciful to somebody, somebody hurt you and you don't forgive them. You know that's a characteristic of the devil because you feel that nobody has the right to hurt you.

Who said nobody's got the right to hurt you? Did Jesus live on earth like that? You're discontent because somebody hurt you and you're so unmerciful. You know, there's only one place in the universe where there's no mercy. That's hell.

Hell is the only place in the universe where there's no mercy. And when you don't have mercy towards someone, you have to say, there's a little bit of hell right inside my heart. And I fear that some of you have got a little bit of hell right inside your heart.

Get rid of it today. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, please help us, help us to honor you in our life.

To be a true representation of the body of Christ that can overcome Satan. We pray in Jesus' name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/qtHK-EeZiP4.mp4>

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