

Last Days Hypocritical Christians

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into 2 Timothy chapter 3, highlighting the characteristics of people in the last days who have a form of godliness but lack true spiritual depth. It emphasizes the importance of avoiding individuals with negative traits like pride, gossiping, lack of self-control, and lovers of pleasure over lovers of God. The message urges believers to pursue spiritual growth, discernment, and gratitude while steering clear of ungodly influences.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:1, Romans 12:18, Proverbs 11:13, Galatians 5:22, 1 Timothy 5:6, 2 Timothy 3:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:22, Proverbs 6:16, 1 Corinthians 10:12

Topics: "Spiritual Discernment", "Avoiding Ungodly Influences"

Description

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Transcript

I want to turn with you to 2nd Timothy, this morning, to chapter 3. 2nd Timothy and chapter 3. This is Paul's last letter, as far as we know, that he wrote. And he had a great burden for Timothy because Timothy was the only one among all his co-workers who had the same spirit that Paul had. And Paul had a great burden that when he left this earth, there should be another generation of at least a few people who had the same motive, spirit, life, ministry that he had.

Nobody could duplicate Paul. I mean, when God calls an apostle like Paul, you cannot replace him because it's God's unique choice. But you could follow him to some extent and Timothy followed him more than anybody else.

That shows something of Timothy's discernment that he realized that the best life I can live is to follow the life of a man like Paul, whom God has provided for me as a spiritual father. I may not have Paul's ministry, but at least I can follow his life. And because Paul wrote that, follow me as I follow Christ.

And so Paul was particularly concerned to write to such people who had the same spirit and who had a longing to make sure that they got the best. And he warns him about something. I mean, Paul did not know the future.

He did not know when Jesus Christ would return. Jesus said when he was on earth as a man, he himself did not know the date of his second coming. So there's nobody who knows the exact date of Jesus' second coming.

And a lot of people talk about it in the world and the Internet is full of people who predict when Christ will come. And any sensible Christian will call it all nonsense. Paul did not know.

You know, Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4, he said, we who are alive will be caught up. 1 Thessalonians 4. That means he expected to be alive when Christ came. That's why he says we.

He doesn't say those who are alive. He says we who are alive will be caught up. But that was written about 12, 13 years before he died.

1 Thessalonians 4, verse 15. But by the time he, 13 years later, when he writes 2 Timothy, he knows he's not going to be caught up because God showed him very clearly. We read in 2 Timothy 4, verse 6, the time of my departure is at hand and I finished my course.

So now I'm just waiting for the final day of judgment. I will not be caught up. So he knew the Lord had shown him some way when he was in prison.

Okay, Paul, you're not going to be alive till I come. You're going to die. But he did not know whether Timothy would be alive till Christ's coming.

Because, you know, many of those people in the first century, Paul died around 60, 70, 80 or something. And many people who expected that before the end of 100 years, Christ would come. Paul did not know.

If Jesus did not know, Paul certainly did not know. So he thought Timothy may be alive till the Lord's coming. So he warned Timothy.

And of course, that warning applies to all of us today because we believe we are also in the last days now. He said, Timothy, remember this in 2 Timothy 3.1. Realize it. Understand this very clearly.

That in the last days, difficult times will come. And he's not talking about persecution. The Living Bible makes it very clear.

It will be very difficult to be a Christian. Now there are many ways in which it is difficult to be a Christian because there are a lot of jobs today where it's difficult to be a Christian because you have to tell lies or cheat. A lot of salesmen and accountants and all that have to cheat and tell lies in many jobs.

I'm not saying it's impossible. There are people who live upright lives in all those places and sometimes they lose their job because they are upright. But it's going to be very difficult to be a Christian because of those reasons.

But that's not what he's talking about. He's not talking about it's going to be difficult to be a Christian. There will be much more persecution.

I mean, hardly anybody has experienced persecution like Paul. He got 195 stripes on his back, stoned to death in prison so many times and people trying to kill him all the time. So that is not what he's talking about.

I don't know if Timothy ever got suffered as much as Paul. But he says it's going to be difficult to be a Christian in the last days because, listen to this, because verse 5, the people around you who claim to be Christians in your church, verse 5, will have a form of godliness but not the power. The form means the dress, like I spoke earlier about the dress of humility, but not real humility.

It's a fake. It's a counterfeit. And there he speaks about a dress of godliness.

What is a dress of godliness? That means they will speak the right language. They won't be non-Christians. They'll be Christians who say we are evangelical Christians.

We are fundamental in our doctrines. We believe in the Trinity. We believe in being born again.

We believe in water baptism. We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We believe in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We are waiting for the Lord's coming and all that. That is a form of godliness. But it will only be a form.

You know, when Jesus spoke about a wolf in sheep's clothing, the sheep's clothing is the doctrine. Absolutely correct. But inside that doctrine is a wolf.

A person whose nature is wanting to bite at others, grab at other sheep, look for the little lambs and exploit them. There are Christians like that. There are pastors like that.

There are preachers like that. Any pastor who tries to get money from poor people in his church, he's a wolf. I have no hesitation in saying he's a wolf.

But he's got the right doctrine. And it's more dangerous when he has the right doctrine. And he's interested in, you know, if a wolf comes into a fold, he's not coming there to bless the sheep.

He's coming there to bite and take what he can from the sheep. Bite off some of their flesh and eat up some of the sheep. And any person, whether he calls himself a pastor, preacher, archbishop or whatever it is, if he comes to take advantage of you, to get something from you for himself, maybe bring you under his authority so that you just blindly listen to him and you don't have any direct connection with Christ, he's a wolf.

Be careful. The form of godliness is there tremendously in these days. In every denomination, we talk about nominal Christians as those who don't claim to be born again.

You see, that's different from churches like Brethren and Pentecostal and CFC and etc. where we stand against nominal Christianity. But I'll tell you, there's as much of the form of godliness in all these churches, including CFC churches, as there is anywhere else.

Because as time goes on, people tend to be taken up with the external, the doctrine, more than the inner life. And the moment you find in your thinking, your inner devotion to Jesus becomes secondary to your external testimony before men, you've already started drifting. That's a very good test to test yourself in.

I mean, I test myself in that all the time. Because I'm living in a corrupt world, just like, you know, why do we take a shower? Why do we bathe? Because you smell otherwise. In a hot country, you perspire.

So every day you cleanse yourself, you use soap and get rid of it. We must do something like that every day in our Christian life as well. What do I need to get rid of? I need to ask myself, has my inner devotion to Jesus Christ been replaced by a desire to impress other people that I'm spiritual? Then you're stinking.

That's a stink. Then you need to have a bath and come back to the place where the stink of wanting to impress other people has been cleansed away. I hope you will learn something today that the thing that makes you stink or me stink or anyone is when we want to desire to impress other people in our church or other Christians that I'm a spiritual person or that I'm a humble person or that I'm a holy person.

That's an absolute stink. And so then I've already started backsliding. But if I can be free from that and I say my inner devotion to Christ is what I want to preserve, that I am fervently in love with Jesus Christ.

Because the first commandment is love your Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. And I want to check myself to see if I really love the Lord in the midst of a world where people don't love him. That is the form of godliness.

And when you see people like that and you sense this guy is pretending. It says here in verse 5, avoid such men. It doesn't just say that, okay, be careful.

It says avoid them. Because you'll get the infection from them. If you spend too much time with them, you will get the infection from them no matter how careful you are.

If you hang around always with people who got infectious leprosy, you'll get it. There are infectious diseases that you can easily get. We won't move around too closely with someone.

We won't let our children move around too closely with someone who's got AIDS. Very infectious. A small cut on your finger and you can get it through that person.

So why are we so careful about infectious diseases, but not careful about spiritual infection that we can get from people who only have a form of godliness? I want to obey the scripture. It says avoid such people. People ask me, Brother Zach, why can't you fellowship with all the believers? I say because the Bible says I must avoid certain people.

Paul had earlier told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, look at this. He says, if you want to be, 2 Timothy 2 verse 21, last part. If you want to be a vessel, sanctified, useful to the master, and prepared for every good work, you know what you should do? There are a couple of things you should do.

And I think all of us should have a desire to be a vessel, useful to the Lord for every good work. Then here are some instructions. First of all, verse 21, cleanse yourself from impurity.

From all wickedness, it says in verse 19. Cleanse yourself and then you'll be a vessel for honor. Now there's a cleansing that God does, that is my past life.

I can't cleanse myself from my past sins. Because all my righteous deeds are like filthy rags. My past sins, only the blood of Jesus can cleanse me.

But my present life, I can cleanse myself. There are many verses that speak about cleansing myself. Here's one of them.

2 Corinthians 7.1 says, we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We cleanse ourselves. 1 John 3.3 says, we purify ourselves as Christ is pure.

These are three of the important verses. 2 Corinthians 7.1, 1 John 3.3, and here in 2 Timothy 2.21, where it speaks about we cleansing ourselves. There are two sides to cleansing.

One is what God does, that is my past life, which I cannot cleanse myself. And the other is my present walk, my inner attitudes. God is not going to do that.

If you don't want to do it yourself, of course, I need God's power to do it. It's through the help of the Holy Spirit that I cleanse myself. But I have to do my part.

In other words, I have to judge myself and say, Lord, I see something in me. I want the power of the Holy Spirit to get rid of that. And if I cleanse myself like that, and I also do something else, verse 22, I run away from youthful lusts.

There is no point in standing, trying to conquer a temptation which is too much for you. Do you know that Jesus didn't just teach us to overcome evil, He also taught us to pray, Lord, lead me not into temptation that is too strong for me. If I find a temptation too strong for me, I should run away.

If you find there is some girl in your office, who is a temptation to you, avoid her as much as possible. Sometimes in an office you cannot avoid these seductive women. But avoid her as much as possible and don't let her get too friendly with you.

Don't try to be popular with seductive women. Run away, avoid, and you'll keep yourself pure, and you'll be a vessel that God can use. I really believe there are many, many brothers and sisters who are not keeping themselves pure, and that is why God cannot use them.

That is why the church suffers. Because there is such a lack of powerful ministry from brothers and sisters. I'm constantly grieved by that.

We should have had lots of mighty anointed men in CFC, in all our churches in these 40 years. I find very few. We should have had many mighty anointed women who bless and encourage the other younger sisters to be godly.

Not who jump on you, where you should go to. Not somebody who jumps on you with advice, where you see her and you want to run away. No, one who you see a godliness, where you want to go and say, I want something that you have.

We need brothers and sisters like that. And those are people who will flee from youthful lusts. And Timothy was probably 45 years old.

He's not 20 years old. At 45, the Bible says, resist the devil. If you see the devil coming in front of you, don't run away.

Resist him in Jesus' name. But if you see a tempting woman come in front of you, run away. That's what the Bible says.

Run away from Goliath, but run away from Bathsheba. She's stronger than Goliath. And that woman is stronger than the devil to knock you down.

Because you resist the devil, he will run away from you. But you don't resist that woman, she'll knock you down. Flee.

It's not just run. Flee is the type of way you run if a lion is chasing you. Flee from youthful lusts.

And don't just run alone. It's a beautiful verse, verse 22. First of all, you run away from all these things that cause temptation.

From links on your phone or computer. Run away from it. People have asked me, what should I do, brother, when I'm sitting in front of a computer and I'm tempted to go to some polluted link or dirty link or I've got a phone in my hand.

And what should I do? I say, turn it off and run away from there. Run away from sitting in front of the computer. If you've got a phone, turn it off.

And go and try and find some fellowship. Go for a walk at least. Go somewhere out in the open where you're in the midst of people where you won't be tempted.

Or go and seek fellowship with somebody. If you obey this practical advice to flee, you're resisting, resisting, and you find your resistance is weakening, you're about to fall, run away. I tell you, you will come to a victorious life because God sees your desire to run away from there.

You say, Lord, this is too much for me. This temptation is too much for me. I'm not going to try and stand here in concrete.

I'm going to obey your word. I'm going to pursue righteousness faith. I'm going to look for someone who's got a pure heart, verse 22.

And I want to fellowship with him. If I can't find somebody immediately, I'll just go out for a walk in the open. But I'm not going to sit here and try to resist something which is too much for me.

If you're serious about it, you will really overcome. So in the last days, it's going to be very difficult to be a Christian. And it describes here the type of people there will be in the last days in 2 Timothy 3, who will have a form of godliness.

Remember all these verses, verse 2, 3, and 4, are not talking about unbelievers. No. All these verses, 2, 3, and 4, may refer to the characteristics of unbelievers, but here it's referring to believers, so-called believers, who have a form of right doctrine, and the right language, and appear spiritual, and say the right things.

But, you can see that God can see that they are lovers of themselves. Number one. They don't really love you.

They love themselves. And they're only trying to show you how spiritual they are. You see, anybody who's trying to show you how spiritual he is, he's a lover of himself.

And apply that to yourself. If you are a person who's trying to show other people how spiritual you are, you don't love that person. You love yourself.

Think of a father who's trying to teach his son mathematics. If he's just trying to show off to his son how clever I am, he's not going to be a good teacher. He's just trying to show off what a clever mathematician I am.

That poor child will learn nothing. A good father will not try to show off to his child I know more than you. The child already knows you know more than him.

But that's not what you want to show off to your child. You want to help that child who's struggling with some arithmetic problem. Help him to answer that problem in his maths paper which he doesn't know how to solve.

And don't try to show off how good you are in that subject. So that's a good father. That's a good person.

Even a good elder brother who's helping his younger brother will not try to show off hey you're in second standard, I'm in tenth standard. That's not the thing. Help him to understand if you're really a spiritual person look in front of you as if you're a great man of God and he's a nobody.

And one way you can find that out is this when you're talking to people supposing somebody comes to visit your home whoever it is, maybe a younger person and you do all the talking there are some people like that they imagine themselves to be a spiritual they are the proudest and most carnal people they are. I've heard complaints like that. I go to visit that brother and he does all the talking and I sit there like a dumb person listening to him.

But he gives me good food so I visit his home. What's that? That's not Christianity. If you're really such a person is a lover of himself.

Avoid such people. All these people listed here from verse 2 to 4 at the end of it it says in verse 5 Avoid them, avoid them, avoid them. Avoid a person who's got all the right doctrines but he's just trying to show you how spiritual he is.

Run away from such a person. Don't visit his home. That's my advice.

He will not help you to godliness. He's only trying to impress you with how spiritual he is or how hospitable he is or some such garbage like that. He's not trying to draw you to Jesus Christ.

He's only trying to draw you to himself. All these people are people who draw people to themselves. And remember that verse I quoted the other day in John chapter 10 All who came before me are thieves and robbers.

That has two meanings. That means everyone who came before me in time was a thief and a robber. He was the truth and the life Jesus Christ.

And the other meaning of before in English is come in front of me. Anyone who comes before me is a thief and a robber. So if you come before Jesus Christ in the sense of in front of Jesus Christ when you're talking to someone you're a thief and a robber.

You're preventing that person from seeing Jesus. He's seeing you. He admires you.

He's not drawn to the Lord. He's drawn to you. Beware of drawing people to yourself.

Such a man is a lover of himself. Don't let people admire you for your preaching or your singing or your Bible knowledge or your music or anything. Be one who says like John the Baptist I must decrease so that Christ must increase.

That is the only person who sincerely deep down in his heart in his contact with other believers wants to decrease in their eyes so that they'll be drawn to Christ. That is the only person who can know I'm not a lover of myself. So that's the first type of person we are warned against.

And then the second person mentioned here in verse 2 is a lover of money. Not one who has a lot of money. Many people sitting here have a lot of money.

I think most of the people sitting here have probably got 10 times what some of our CFC believers in the villages have. Your salary is 10 times what people in the villages have. Some people more than that.

So it's not a question of having money. It's not a question of owning a house. Many of you own your own houses.

It's a question of loving it. There are many people who have little who love money. There are many people who have much who love money.

And this is a lover of money who still has a form of godliness. And I tell you the Christian world is full of it. Most of these pastors you see on television they are the biggest lovers of money of all.

And I noticed another thing in Christian television both in the United States and here that most of these Christian television preachers are people who speak in tongues and claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Most of them, perhaps 90% of them. And they are the most covetous lovers of money on the face of the earth.

Because they are always asking for people's money. And they take those poor people's money and buy big cars. The Holy Spirit really, he should be more free from the love of money.

He should be more free from desiring money from other people. I'm surprised that so many believers can't see through this deception on Christian television from all these preachers. How is it you don't see it? How is it some of you want to go and listen to some other people than the inner life? You are more interested in head knowledge.

You want to be moved emotionally. They are not necessarily godly people. So we have to be very careful.

I find these are days of tremendous deception. We are mistaking a person's eloquence for anointing. I really believe one of the greatest needs in our day is to distinguish between eloquence and anointing.

Eloquence, many worldly people have. Many politicians have. There are some politicians I've heard who are amazingly eloquent.

They can hold your attention for a long time. They speak in such an interesting way. They can speak for two hours and you won't lose you won't be distracted.

It's not anointing. It's eloquence. It's a human gift.

And when such a person can become a Christian and a preacher he can preach without an anointing. An anointing will draw you to Jesus Christ. Not make you just impressed with that person.

An anointing will convict you of sin. Convict you of the need for righteousness and convict you of judgment. Because that's what the Holy Spirit does.

Eloquent people won't convict you of sin and righteousness and judgment. Lovers of money, be very very careful. Avoid such people.

I want to avoid such people. I want to avoid listening to such people on the internet or television. I want to know if this guy is a lover of money and a lover of himself.

I don't want to go anywhere near that person. I don't want to attend his meetings. I don't want to listen to him on television because he will not make me godly.

He will influence me in the wrong direction. And Paul said in the last days it's going to be difficult to be a Christian because people will not have the discernment to know that this guy is just a lover of himself, lover of money because he's got this form of godliness. The third person mentioned here is boastful.

One who I mean this is a crude way of trying to show off to others that also unfortunately there are Christians like that who say subtle things to show that they are superior to you. Beware of any person who says things to you claiming to be a testimony but the motive behind that testimony is not to help you to go that way but the motive is to show you see what a great man of God I am. Beware of such people who are saying things to you only to show off.

It says avoid such people. Avoid such people completely. He uses a number of words for pride.

So not only boastful but arrogant and that is a certain attitude and I'm sorry to say I've seen that in some elders and some preachers and arrogance in the way they speak to others. Not the spirit of a servant. I'm not talking about rebuking sin.

When you rebuke sin you have to be very strong but there's a lot of difference between rebuking sin and supposing a person has made a mistake. Anybody can make a mistake. Even this leader can make a mistake.

I must distinguish between the way I correct a person for sin which is rebellion and the way I correct him for a mistake that he's made. Okay that mistake caused some problem and that often happens in the church when we work together when we are running a conference or doing so many things in the church we got to distinguish between rebellion and a mistake. Very in your sin but at other times he was very gentle with his own disciples.

Arrogance and then it speaks here about revilers. These are all people who have these characteristics but who have a form of godliness. Revilers are people who blaspheme, say things about God in a loose light way.

There are many people nowadays who crack jokes about the bible and about hell and about God and they think they are very funny. It's blasphemy to make fun of biblical things. It's blasphemy to make fun of spiritual things.

Marriage for example is a very holy thing God has created. It's wrong to make fun of it in such a way that people don't value the sanctity of marriage. There are many things which are very close to blasphemy.

You don't have to just curse God. There are many people who are burning in hell and it's terrible. I mean I've heard some things, even so called believers speak which are, I don't even want to mention them.

They make a joke about something that Jesus said. Be very very careful that we don't make fun of biblical things. Don't be a blasphemer, don't be a reviler and some of these people who do this, I've heard myself, are people who claim to be born again.

So we want a purity in our CFC churches where people don't have these qualities because you know we have a tremendous form of godliness in CFC. We preach some of the highest doctrines that are being preached in India and it's very easy to have that garment and behind that garment have all these qualities especially in the last days. Then it says disobedient to parents.

This is so fundamental. Even in the Old Testament it spoke about the seriousness of disobeying parents. But to have a form of godliness, you young people, especially you children, you are not at all godly if you disobey your parents.

Let me tell you that straight to your face. I'm not saying that you've got to obey your parents if they tell you to do something sinful. Many of you from non-Christian homes, if your parents tell you to bow down to an idol, you have to say sorry dad, mom, I can't do that because I respect you, I'll do it and I'll speak to them in a loving way.

I respect you, I love you, I'm thankful for you took care of me from the time I was born and cared for me and educated me, all that, but dad, mom, please don't ask me to bow to an idol because not because I don't respect you but because god is above you and I don't believe that god can be represented in the form of some brass statue or wooden statue. So please please respect my conviction. It doesn't mean I despise you, it doesn't mean I devalue you, it doesn't mean I'm ungrateful to you for all that you've done, but please don't ask me to do that.

There you have to stand against your parents in a very respectful way or if they ask you to marry someone who's an unbeliever say dad, mom, I love you so much, I respect you, I want to please you, but do you want to make my life unhappy? You want me to be unhappy all my life? Marry someone who's not going the same direction? I'm going in a certain direction and this person may be going in that direction. You put us together, we'll be having constant conflicts which may one day end in divorce. Do you want me to face that dad, mom? Please don't ask me to marry someone who's not got the same view as me in spiritual things.

It's very important. There we have to stand against the parents, but other things we have to be respectful and obedient. That means maybe you're tired and your parents ask you to do something.

Get up and do it. Don't just say dad, mom, I'm too tired, I can't do it. That's disobedience.

That's got nothing to do with spirituality. And if you're like that, I tell you, God will honor you. That when you're tired and exhausted or you urgently want to go and play a game or something and your mom asks you to do something, obey her.

Obeys your parents is one of the first things that we need to teach children. As long as you're at home, as long as you're dependent on them financially, you're living in their house and they're supporting you, you have to obey them. Once you obey them, but you don't have to obey them.

I honored my parents till the end of their life, but I didn't obey them once I left home. I let the Lord lead me. So, please remember this.

It's going to be one of the characteristics of the last days. Young people, avoid such people. Don't hang around with people who have got that spirit of disobedience.

Don't hang around with children in your school who are always criticizing the teacher. You may disagree with your teacher, but don't speak evil of her or him. That's not good Christianity.

You don't have to fight with those people who criticize the teacher. Just avoid them. You don't have to be some type of judge or prophet there.

No, no, no. Avoid is easy. He's not asking you to correct them.

No, don't correct them. Avoid them. And the other thing it says, and especially, you know, if you don't start with children when they are young, they will grow up.

There are so many cases I've seen of little children who act in a very rude, disobedient way to the parents and the parents take it lightly. Oh, it's only a little child. Yeah.

But little snakes grow up to become big snakes. Don't forget that. And little tigers grow up to become big tigers.

So, don't forget that. So, disobedience to parents is something that must start from the beginning. I believe the most important thing that we need to teach our children is obedience.

Respect for parents, and if they respect parents, they will respect all older people. When you don't teach respect for parents, they will not respect older people also. And very often, let me say this to wives, the way you treat your husband may be what your child is seeing, which one day makes him disobedient to daddy.

He grows up like that. It happens. We've had a few cases like that in this church.

Of who young men who despise their father and they ended up despising the elders in the church. The only thing we could do with such people is put them out of the church and say, never come to CFC again. Where did it start with? I believe it started with the mother not respecting the husband.

The children learning that and the children don't respect their father and over a period of time, they don't even respect the elders. Some people think this is a small thing. It's not a small thing.

You know what they used to do in the Old Testament? You read in Deuteronomy? A father had to bring his disobedient son to the elders and say, this son of mine has been disobedient and arrogant. You know what the elders did to him? Stone him to death. That was the Old Testament law.

How seriously God took it. What did the guy do? He didn't kill anybody. He didn't commit adultery.

He was just arrogant and disobedient to his father. Some people think we act too strongly. No.

We don't stone anybody to death. We just put them out of the church. Because it's serious.

We don't want people in this church who have a form of godliness and don't respect their parents or don't respect older people. And then it speaks in verse 2 about those who are ungrateful. Now this doesn't look like a very serious crime, but it is.

It's good to go through all these things carefully and slowly and some of us read through this. I'm just trying to help you to read the Bible slowly like I often teach. Ungrateful.

Is that a sin? A lack of gratitude? I find this is another very common thing among children who are not grateful to their parents for all the sacrifices the parents have made for them. Learn to say thank you. I encourage people at least once a year on the birthday of your father and your mother write a thank you note to them.

I want to encourage all of you to do that. Even if your dad is 85 years old. Even if he's not a Christian.

Thank him for the things he did for you. I'm not asking you to do it every day. Can't you do it once a year? And if you've never done it so far, give him a surprise this year.

You never know he may be drawn to Jesus Christ just by that little act of gratitude. Express your gratitude. Express your gratitude to your father-in-law.

A couple of years after I got married to Annie and I saw what a wonderful wife she was for me because we were very poor and she was willing to live in the very simple way we lived. I wrote a letter to her father. I said, I'm very thankful for the way you brought up your daughter because that's been such a help for me now that she's my wife.

I'm sure that letter made his day. I didn't write him to make his day. I meant it 100% sincerely.

I didn't do it to make friends. This is what I have to do as a Christian. As a Christian, I have to be thankful when somebody's done something for me.

If somebody's trained up a girl in a very good way to do all types of lowly jobs and then I get her as a wife, don't you think I should thank that person? Sure. I felt it was my responsibility. Sometimes we take so many things in the world for granted.

Of course, I'm such an important person. I deserve all that. I'm not such an important person.

I don't deserve anything. I'll tell you what I deserve. I deserve hell.

Anybody who does anything for me, which is better than that, I must thank them and mean it from my heart. It doesn't matter if other people don't thank me for what I do. I'm not looking for that.

Learn the habit of gratitude. It says in the last days, there'll be a lot of ungrateful people. Avoid them.

Don't be listed in this category of people. Ingratitude is a sin. It's a sin.

It's just like lover of self, lover of money, arrogant, proud. We don't usually put ungrateful along with disobedience to parents and lovers of self. No, no, no.

But it is. It's just lumped in there along with that. So learn to be grateful for somebody who did something for you.

Even a cup of water. Like I've often said, Jesus would thank a person who gave him a cup of water. Jesus told his disciples, if somebody gives you a cup of water in my name, he won't lose his reward.

So I picture this in my mind that in the final day of judgment, Jesus calls up somebody who nobody knows about and says, hey, I remember 2,000 years ago you gave a glass of water to Peter when he was really thirsty and come by your town and nobody was there to give him even water. You gave it. And I want to give you a reward.

I can believe that. That he remembers a cup of water 2,000 years later. Something I learned from that is I say I want to thank people who helped me long, long ago.

I remember writing to somebody saying, brother, I remember 20 years ago I was in your town and I needed to go someplace. I couldn't get a cab and you took me in your car to that distance. I haven't forgotten it, brother.

I just want to thank you for that. I mean, I sent it as a New Year greeting but reminded him of this because I wanted him to know that I was thankful for what he did for me at a time when there was no other way to go from one place to another. Ungrateful.

I never in my life want to be listed under that category. List of ungrateful people. Zak Poonen.

Never. Lord, I never want to be in that list. Never, never, never.

Learn to be grateful for your husband and wife and at least once in a while express your gratitude to her. I know in the West they bring flowers and all. I never brought flowers to my wife.

I'll tell you that because I think it's an absolute waste of money. That's my opinion. Get something practical and useful.

You put those flowers up there, they disappear in 2-3 days. It's far better to get something that she can use for many days which will make her life a little easier. Maybe a vacuum cleaner instead of flowers.

Now, God bless all those people who express their gratitude to flowers in the West. I'm not against them, but it's not the type of thing I believe in. I believe in practical help.

I mean, if you have a wife who likes to smell flowers all the time, please go ahead and get that. No objection to it. But what I mean is something that she really appreciates and values, not something which is worthless.

So, we express our gratitude in different ways. And then it speaks about unholy. I think this is talking about impurity in some way, where little, little things.

We've spoken much about impurity. You know, the Bible speaks about the pleasures of sin. And there are many things in the world today which are impure.

If you go to the internet, many of you do, I want to say it's loaded with impurity. Even you're looking for some site and there's some dirty picture on the column on the right. You're not interested in that, but it

comes up there when you're looking for something important for something else.

That's how careful we have to be. It wasn't like that years ago, because you went looking for something, for a book or something in the library, you won't find some dirty picture on the right side of that book. But now it has become like that.

The internet is like a book. You look for something and there's a dirty picture on the right. You've got to just avoid it.

You've got to be very, very careful these days. And people who are careless like that, the last days, they will end up with a form of godliness and destroy themselves. Pray this prayer, Lord, lead me not into temptation.

Very, very important for our time. Then it speaks about those who are unloving, those who don't have natural affection. It's very common nowadays.

Mothers who abort their children are all people who don't have natural affection. I'm not talking about a case where the doctors advise that the mother's life can be saved only by removing the child. Unfortunately, there are cases like that, but I'm thinking about people who say no, we don't want to have children right now.

We hear of cases of people who say I want to build a house first and then we'll have children. God may sometimes punish such people by never having children. If you're interested in a house, go ahead, build as many houses as you want.

See, without natural affection, God has created women, when they get married, to have a natural affection and a desire to have children. But we live in a world where they say no, no, no, we've got to make money first. Money is more important.

Well, I tell you, I've never seen such a person becoming spiritual. They may sit in CFC and speak the right language. You've got to be careful about those who lack natural affection.

Irreconcilable. That's the other thing mentioned here in verse 3. Those are people who will never yield. No matter how much you try to convince them, they will not yield.

They're irreconcilable. They will not, you offended them in some way, they just don't want to be friends with you anymore. Don't be like that.

Jesus was insulted and hurt and spat upon and forgave them. Don't be categorized as those who, we must be eager to pursue peace with all men. Of course, be careful about those who want to be reconciled but to carry on the quarrel.

No. But otherwise, from our side, the Bible says, as much as it lies in you, be at peace with all men. Romans chapter 12.

That must be our attitude. And when somebody wants to come and have a fight with you, just stop the conversation. Say, listen, let's talk about something else.

I don't want to pursue that subject. Malicious gossips. Do you know the word in the Greek language from which this is translated? It's a word called diabolos.

Diabolos means devilish. The word for gossip, person who gossips in the Greek language is devil. A gossip, a gossiper is a devil.

I hope you remember that all your life. Diabolos. Diabolical is the English word for demonic, devilish.

And that's the word used here for a person who gossips or speaks about a whole lot of things. They don't have any control over their tongue. Yeah, I've seen good believers who just don't have control over their tongue.

It's as bad as not having control over dirty thoughts. It's like a person constantly going to pornography. What to do, brother? I'm addicted to it.

There are gossips like that. They hear some type of bad news about somebody and they spread it. I remember years ago reading an article by Tozer.

It's a wonderful article. Look it up somewhere sometime on the internet called five spiritual vows. Five spiritual vows that every Christian should take.

And one of them was this. He said if you hear something bad about somebody don't go and tell others about it. Tell the elders of the church if they can sort out that problem, yes.

But don't talk about it to somebody else. But have you seen in your heart a desire to immediately go and tell somebody Hey, did you hear what happened to this person or what this person did? I'm just telling it to you. What a lie.

I'm just telling it to you. Go and tell a thousand people. Say I'm just telling it to you.

That person is going to spread it further. We don't spread good news like that. Hey, do you know that guy got a promotion? His salary got doubled.

That's not the type of thing we spread. It's usually something evil that shows that our nature hasn't changed. This gossiping, gossiping, loving to say something bad about somebody else, loving to show others how good I am compared to that person who behaved like this.

That's essentially the reason why gossips speak. Gossipers speak to show, I hope you can see that I'm not so bad as that person I'm talking about. And there are many gossipers in CFC.

And the Bible says avoid such people. Gossips, we have had gossips who were removed from eldership because they gossiped. So it's a very serious thing.

Avoid such people completely. Without self-control. Self-control is a fruit of the spirit.

It says we must avoid people who don't have control over their tongue, over their life. See the word for without self-control in the original language is from the word you get impotent. Impotent is a word used sexually for a man who does not have the ability to have children.

He's impotent. Now most men would be thoroughly ashamed if they are impotent and they cannot have children. But that's the word used here.

If you don't have self-control over your tongue, your eyes, you are impotent. Remember that. You should be as ashamed of it as your total inability to have children even though you're married.

You rejoice in the fact that you're not impotent, that you're very potent sexually. Well, then also rejoice in the fact that you have self-control over your eyes and your tongue. That is the meaning of without self-control.

It's exactly the same. So put these in the same category and you'll see how evil it is. How you would be ashamed to be impotent sexually and be equally ashamed that you're without self-control.

Well, I want to rush through this. You can meditate on yourself. It says about brutal.

That means very hard and haters of good and treacherous. Treacherous means they're not loyal to one another. They betray one another.

Reckless. Reckless means they, you know there's a saying in English that you look before you leap. Before you leap, jump.

Reckless means careless in the way they go into something without realizing where is it going to take me to. Careless. They don't think seriously about what if I go and take this job? Where am I going to end up? Am I going to end up without any fellowship for years and years and years and just make a lot of money? Reckless in the way they take a decision.

Take a decision without considering spiritual factors. Only money and how much I'll gain. There are many people who do this.

They're reckless. Conceited. See again.

Already there are words like boastful, arrogant and again conceited. See how the Holy Spirit emphasizes pride, pride, pride in different ways. And finally, I don't have time to meditate on all of this.

Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. When I love pleasure and comfort and ease, it is an opposite to loving God. That's what I see here.

Lover of ease. Now there's pleasure that is clean and good. Like having a good meal.

The pleasure in that or going for a picnic or enjoying a vacation. That type of pleasure is good. But it's referring to pleasure that is sinful or that which just makes me lazy.

It's alright for little children to play video games but if you're an adult and you get the pleasure out of video games all the time, you're retarded. You're a kid. You're a child.

If that's what you're interested in, you should be more serious about studying the Bible. I mean video games are alright for little children below the age of 12. I think once you get to 12, you should have grown out of it.

Otherwise you're like a dwarf. You know that's what it really, some of these things talk about being a dwarf. Not really grown.

It speaks in verse 6 about weak women who wait down with sins and let down by various impulses. Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. That means a dwarf.

I mean some of you would not be very happy if when you're 30 years old, you were just about 3 feet high. How would you feel if you're just 3 feet high, 1 meter high and you're 30 years old? That's what he's talking

about. People who are spiritually at that level.

I mean just like you'd be so sad. Lord, what is wrong with me? I mean everybody else is at least more than 5 feet and I'm 3 feet, I'm 30 years old. That's the way you should feel if you've been so long in the church and you've heard so much and you still only have a form of godliness and you don't have the power.

You know if we compare ourselves in this physical realm, we see how serious it is. These type of things. And the Bible says avoid such people.

And I believe the reason why many of us have not grown as much as we should have is because we have not taken these things seriously. And especially in the last days it's going to be difficult to be a Christian because there are a lot of people who are going to claim to be Christians who have all these qualities. Why has the Holy Spirit taken pains to write so many individual bad qualities? Is it just for me to read through in 2 minutes and go to the next verse? You think I wasted time for one hour going through this in detail? It's because probably some of you have never in your entire life even though you've been a believer for 30 years gone through these verses in detail because you say, I know all that.

Really? Ever learning verse 7 always learning and never able to come to spiritual knowledge of the truth. Let that not be said about any of us. My brothers and sisters, I'm not saying all this to condemn any of you in the church like we sing.

I'll always be in the church because I've never heard a discouraging word. I believe that any godly person who gets up here to speak will not speak a discouraging word. It will be a challenging word.

It will be a convicting word. It will be an uplifting word. It will show you your true condition.

It will be a true scan of your heart but it will never be a discouraging word. It will not be to push you down but a word from heaven saying, my son, my daughter come up higher. And I hope you've heard it like that today.

The Lord Jesus saying to you my son, my daughter come up higher. Don't be one who keeps on having knowledge of the truth but not coming to a spiritual understanding. Let's bow before God.

Our Heavenly Father thank you for being so specific and detailed and all the trouble the Holy Spirit has taken to mention one after the other. A big list of different things that we can have and yet pretend to be godly. Please have mercy on us and give us light.

First of all, if we have any of these qualities ourselves to cleanse ourselves, purify ourselves and secondly to have the discernment where I see other people having it, not to judge them but to avoid them. We're not here to judge anybody but you've commanded us to avoid peace. And we don't care who we offend, who gets offended with us.

We want to please you more than anything else. Help us to be men and women like that we pray. Everyone here, we pray that you raise up an army of godly men and women in CFC in the coming days.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

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