

Let Wisdom Guide your Love

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of love guided by wisdom in various aspects of life, including church responsibilities, discipline, and decision-making. It highlights the need for faithful and wise actions, drawing examples from the Bible such as the prodigal son story and apostolic teachings. The speaker encourages seeking God's wisdom, discerning between love and foolishness, and being prepared for the Lord's return.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:12, Hebrews 12:6, Revelation 3:19, Romans 13:1

Topics: "Love and Wisdom", "Faithful Decision-Making"

Description

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Transcript

His master will put him in charge of his household. There are children in his household. There are young people.

Older people. And two elders cannot take care of all the people. So there are different brothers and sisters all need to take some responsibility.

Even if you don't have a title saying I am elder or Sunday school teacher. You know how in a family even the older children will help with the younger children. It's not only the father and mother who does everything.

So many young girls will help their mother with the cooking. And then they improve and they are given some responsibility in the kitchen also. The young boys will go to the market and buy something.

In your home you are given responsibility very quickly. Even small children. I see my six year old grandchild taking responsibility for his younger brother and sister.

So all of us must recognize God is giving me some responsibility in the church. That six year old child is not a father but he is helping in some way with the smaller children. He doesn't have any title.

But he helps. So you may not have a title. But you must say God has put me in the church to be a help.

I was talking yesterday about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You know God doesn't give everybody tongues, he doesn't give everybody prophecy and he doesn't give everybody healing. But why should we only seek for these big gifts? Let me show you a list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 28.

This is a big list. First apostles. Those are people who plant churches and appoint elders.

And teach doctrine. Second prophets. Those are people who have the ability to speak the word of God in a sharp way that goes to people's hearts.

Then third, teachers. Those who can explain the word of God. Then miracles, number four.

And in number four, it's not one, all the rest is number four. So read that, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers. Then miracles, then healings, helps, administration, various kinds of tongues.

So maybe you can say miracles is number four and the rest is number five. Because this is then miracles, number four. Then all the others.

And see the things mentioned all together. Healing, helps, administration, tongues. Now out of those four, people seek for healing and tongues.

But here it says about helps. That means those who can help in small small things in the church. Why not seek for a gift like that? Everybody can seek that gift.

So when we think of faithfulness. Say Lord, let me seek for the gift you want me to fulfill in the church. And then I was talking also yesterday evening about this flask being full of oil.

And I was saying that that is being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now how do I know that I am filled with the Holy Spirit? Those who want to study the Bible, I want to tell you there is a very simple principle of Bible study. In the New Testament, there are many historical sections.

Acts of the apostles is full of history. Gospels also, there is a lot of history of what Jesus did. You must never try to get a doctrine from some history section of the New Testament.

That can be very dangerous. For example, we read in the history section, Jesus healed everybody. Some people take that doctrine and say, no believer must be sick, everybody must be healed.

But there is no church in the world where everybody is healed. Healed of every sickness. So, if you take a doctrine from historical section, Jesus healed everybody and make that a doctrine, you will get a wrong doctrine.

Those, why did Jesus heal everybody? We read in Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. Acts 2.22 That these were God's attesting his ministry with those miracles and signs. That means God was trying to prove to people, this is my son.

But in God's wisdom, he has not decided to heal everybody. This is an important subject because many of us think, we don't have the gift of healing, why don't we have the gift of healing? I will tell you honestly, I prayed in my earlier days for many times for the gift of healing. And I told the Lord, I will never take one paisa from anybody for healing the sick.

I will not even bring those healing people in front of the mic to make them testify. I will quietly heal them and tell them to tell nobody, just like Jesus. Give it to me, I will never seek my honor, I will only give you the glory.

But he never gave it to me. Sometimes as an elder brother, like all elder brothers can pray for the sick, I prayed for sick people, some people are healed. But I prayed for others and they are not healed.

I don't have that gift. My gift is to teach God's word. To plant churches.

So, the Lord told me this. If in Bangalore, I give you a genuine gift of healing, and everybody you pray for is healed, you will not have rest in your house for 24 hours a day. Seven days a week.

Always people will be knocking at your door. And your church, there will not be place for all the thousands of people who come. And you will not have the time to make disciples.

And Jesus told me, I did not come to the earth to heal the sick, I came to make disciples. Jesus said, not come to me, I will heal you. He said, come to me and deny yourself and die to yourself.

Then I said, Lord, I will not ask you for that again. I see that you came to earth not to heal the sick, not to make people rich, but to make disciples. You did not even come only to forgive sins.

You came to make disciples. You did not come to take people to heaven. You came to make disciples.

So, I said, Lord, I do not want to go around India looking for people who want to go to heaven. I want to look for people who want to follow Jesus on earth before going to heaven. And if I find only 11 people like that, like you found only 11, I am happy.

But praise the Lord, I found more than 11. Who are not interested in going to heaven, but who are interested in following Jesus on earth before going to heaven. And as for myself, I know that if I have the healing gift, that will hinder this ministry.

Just like you, supposing you got two important things to do in a day, which will you do first? The one which is more important. And if that takes so much of your time, you will have to ignore the other thing. Supposing your child is sick, and his pant is torn.

The pant has to be stitched and the child has to be taken to the hospital. Where will you go first, to the tailor or to the hospital? I am not saying you should not stitch your pant. But your child is sick, that is more important.

Sickness is only like a torn pant. Sin is like a serious sickness. So when a person has got sin and sickness, it's like a child being sick and a pant being torn.

And I know which I will concentrate on. And there are so many children sick with sin. All the torn pants can wait.

Let me heal the sick children. That is what you will also do in your house. That is exactly what I do.

But many people haven't seen it yet. But many people haven't seen it yet. I hope you understand this illustration.

I hope you understand this illustration. So that is why God does not give us so much gift of healing. Little bit we see here and there.

But he does give us the gift of making disciples. To be ready for the coming of the Lord. So as I said, don't look at the historical sections of the New Testament and get a doctrine out of it.

For example, it says in Acts 2.45 That they sold all their property. And again in Acts 4.34 4.34 Anybody who had a house sold it and gave it to the poor. Has anybody preached that doctrine? They did it.

Okay, if somebody wants to sell his house and give it to the poor, that is his choice. God won't stop him. But you can't take these verses in Acts 2.45 and make it a doctrine.

But you can't take these verses in Acts 2.45 and make it a doctrine. Similarly, in Acts 2.4 It says they all spoke in tongues. But some people have made that a doctrine.

But same chapter, verse 45, it says everybody sold all that they had. That is not a doctrine. So you see how people are not consistent, many pre-teachers.

So, remember this, don't get a doctrine from Acts of the Apostles. Paul circumcised Timothy. That is in the Acts of the Apostles.

Paul circumcised Timothy. Is that a doctrine? Paul fought with Barnabas, is that a doctrine? Paul shaved his head in the temple, is that a doctrine? Paul shaved his head in the temple, is that a doctrine? It is very dangerous to get a doctrine from Acts of the Apostles. We must get a doctrine from the teachings of Jesus and the epistles.

That is a very simple principle that will save you from wrong doctrine. It is among the Pentecostals. I believe in speaking in tongues, I believe in healing.

But I don't believe any of these things are as important as being saved from sin. Jesus did not come to teach us speaking in tongues or to heal the sick. Jesus himself never spoke in tongues.

But he was free from sin. I want to follow Jesus. So, we were seeing in Acts 25 about this flask full of oil.

Matthew 25. How do I know that my heart is filled with the Holy Spirit? As I have studied the scriptures, to get the answer, and not to get the answer from the Acts of the Apostles, but to get it from the epistles, I will show you two verses. First of all, Romans 5 verse 5. This is a mark of a spirit-filled man.

It says here, in the last part, the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. That is how I know I am filled with the Holy Spirit. Anywhere I look in my heart, it is love.

There is no small corner of my heart which has hatred, or some small corner with jealousy, or some unforgiving spirit. No. Then you are not filled with the Spirit.

The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Not 90%, but 100%. Every part of my heart is filled with love.

Love for Jesus Christ. Love for Jesus Christ. Full of love for Christ, and love for others, for my brothers and sisters, and for my enemies.

Then I know I am filled with the Holy Spirit. I don't wish any evil, even for my enemies. If you can be like that, you don't wish any evil for your mother-in-law.

You love her. You may not agree with her. We are not told to agree with everybody.

In fact, I don't agree with most Christians. Because I agree with the Bible. Many Christians don't agree with the Bible.

So, this is the way to check whether you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Ask yourself right now. Is your flask full of oil? Do you love Jesus with all your heart? Is He the one you love most on this earth? Can you say, Lord, if I have you, I don't need anything else on this earth.

And can you say that you really seek to love your brothers and sisters? Love doesn't mean you have to go and help them or give them money or do many things for them. You may not have time to visit their houses. You may not have money to give them.

But you love them. Can't poor people love others? Sure. Love is not what we do.

It is an attitude in our heart. Did Jesus love His enemies? Yes. But did He go visiting all the houses of the Pharisees regularly? No.

He didn't even have time to go visit one of those houses. If somebody invited Him, He would go. That's all.

But He did not show His love by going and visiting everybody's home and saying, I love you, I love you. For example, if somebody has done harm to you, you must forgive him. But forgiving does not mean you have to go and visit his house.

The Bible says, pursue peace with all men. But if there is a quarrelsome type of man, how do you pursue peace with him? I'll tell you. By never visiting his house.

Why I don't go to his house? Because I have to pursue peace with all men. If I go to his house, there will be a quarrel. Not from my side, from his side.

So I want to pursue peace with him. So when I go by his house, I just leave it and go. Because if I enter, there will be a quarrel.

So we need to be wise. Faithful and wise, Jesus said. Love is like the petrol in the car.

But love must not be the driver in the seat. Who must be the driver in the car? Wisdom. That is the balance.

The petrol tank is full of love, so that we can go fast. But if you have foolishness as a driver, in love he will do a lot of foolish things. Love must be in the petrol tank and the wisdom must be the driver of the car.

So, when the car is going by some troublesome person's house, a foolish love may say, stop and go to his house. You must love him. Wisdom will say, no, I won't stop there.

There will be more trouble if I go there. Jesus said, be harmless as doves. But be wise as serpents.

We must be wise as serpents, otherwise we are not obeying Jesus Christ. That is why I say, let your love be guided by wisdom. Lot of problems have come with people who show love in a foolish way.

I will give you one example. You know the story of the prodigal son that he finally ended up eating almost what the pigs were eating. Supposing you were living in the next house and you see this poor boy eating what the pigs are eating and you keep on giving him three meals a day.

I love him, I love him. What would have happened? Tell me. He would never have gone back to his father's house.

Why? Because you are showing this foolish love to him. You would have hindered God's purpose. God is disciplining him but you are spoiling the discipline by comforting him.

But a wise man will say, I like to help poor people but let me find out what situation this is. And I will go to him and say, you must go back to your father's house. I am not going to help you to stay here.

That's the wisdom but many people don't have that. A lot of people who hinder God's work by a foolish love. That is one example and there are many other things also we can think of like that where we think we have got a good heart but we don't see God for wisdom.

Sometimes we do a good thing but that is not the best thing. Supposing you are offered a good job and a better job, which will you take? Definitely you will reject the good job and take the better job. So it's a good thing to help this poor boy to give him some food.

But the better thing is not give him food, tell him to go home. There is plenty of food in his house. But many people don't do that.

I'll give you one example from the Corinthian's church. There was a man in Corinth who was living in sin. He was committing adultery and you know supposing you were in the Corinth's church you could have said Jesus forgave the adulterous woman, let us forgive him.

Ok, he made a mistake, let us forgive him. And you can get a reputation as a very kind brother. But you read in 1 Corinthians 5 what the apostle Paul did.

He said, there is such, verse 1, such immorality among you that even the heathen people don't have. And verse 2, you are not mourning because of all this. You are not removing that fellow from your church.

You say, Paul, what are you talking about? Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery. You are saying that you must remove him from your church. No, no, no, we don't want to remove anybody from the church.

And see what Paul says. In the name of Jesus when you come together, verse 4, even though I am not there, I am with you in spirit in the power of Jesus Christ. And I am going to do something.

As an apostle, I have authority. I am delivering, verse 5, that person to Satan so that Satan will destroy his flesh so that he can be saved. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want to commit him to Satan.

So that Satan will destroy his flesh so that he can be saved. Supposing you heard of some apostle or elder being so strict. And say, oh, this man doesn't have any love.

Yeah, he doesn't have foolish love. See, the other Corinthians would say, okay, brother, we all fall. Don't worry, you committed adultery.

It's all right. He'll keep on living in sin and you'll send him to hell. But Paul wanted to save his soul.

So he said, I am handing him over to Satan so that Satan will make him sick. Maybe he'll get boils all over his body. Maybe he'll get cancer.

Maybe some terrible sickness will come upon him. Then he will repent. Maybe he'll get AIDS.

Then he will repent. That's what I want. I don't want this soft, foolish love.

I want to save him from his sin so that he can go to heaven. So it says, I'm handing him over to Satan so that the sickness will drive him to Christ and he'll be saved. So verse 13, remove that wicked man from your church.

I've sometimes had to do that, put some people out of the church. Or tell an elder to step down. Some people don't understand that.

They think that is being very strict. But see what is the result of this. Because Paul was so strict, and the Corinthian elders and the believers there accepted it.

You know what they did? They put him out of the church. And nobody went and visited him. Supposing people had gone to visit him and said, oh brother we are so sorry that Paul has put you out of the church.

There are some foolish believers like that. Somebody is put out of the church for sin. And they want to get some honor themselves.

They'll go to him and say, oh brother we feel so sorry for you. They are the agents of Satan. But these Corinthians were wise.

They said, Paul has got more wisdom than us. We will not visit him. I don't know how many months that fellow had to be alone.

He saw how dark it was for him without fellowship. And he discovered that he is getting sick also. That brought him to repentance.

See, 2 Corinthians chapter 2 2 Corinthians 2 is written about two years after 1 Corinthians. Or maybe one year later. But during that one year, this man was put out.

Nobody visited him. And he repented. He turned.

But these Corinthians now would still not visit him. They said, he is a sinner, put him out. So, Paul had to write another letter.

He says in 2 Corinthians 2 He says, verse 4 It is with great affliction and great anguish of heart. Verse 4 With many tears that I wrote to you. That I wrote to you the previous letter.

My first Corinthians letter where I spoke so strongly. Even though it was strong. I wrote it with lot of sorrow and anguish and tears.

They couldn't see the tears in the letter but Paul says that's how I wrote it. And then he says verse 6 It is enough that you have punished him so much. What is the punishment? They never went and visited him for one year.

He says that's enough. Now he has repented. Now you should go and forgive him and comfort him.

Otherwise he will be overwhelmed with sorrow and he will give up the Christian life. So, he said go to his house now, he has repented and confirm your love to him. Verse 8 So you see that is the balance in the Christian life that the apostle had.

He was wise. Where should we discipline a person? And when he is really repented where should we comfort him and bring him back? That is the true Christian church. That type of apostle is very rare to see in the world today.

There are a few here and there. But this is the apostolic pattern. So, to have our flask full of oil means a love that is governed by wisdom.

We must never get out of love. Always it must be a wise love. Think of the love of a father.

A good father loves his children. The book of Proverbs says if you love your child you must discipline him. You will discipline him and save his soul from hell.

See Revelation chapter 3. No one loves us more than Jesus Christ. So when we talk about love, Jesus is our example. How does Jesus love us? If I were to ask most people how do you know Jesus loves you? I think all of you will say, He died for me on the cross.

That's how I know He loves me. Give me a second reason. Then you may say some material things.

He gave me a job. He gave me a good wife or husband. He gave me a house.

I only had a scooter now I have a car. Jesus loves me. Yeah, that is also right.

Anything else? How does Jesus love me? You scratch your head. Now I'll tell you. Revelation 3 verse 19.

This is more important than Jesus giving you a car or a house or a job. I agree. First is that He loved me and died for my sins on the cross.

If you ask me a second proof. It is not He has given me a car or a house or a job. Or even a wife.

That is all true but there is something else that is second. As many as I love Revelation 3 verse 19. I rebuke and discipline.

Has Jesus ever rebuked you? Disciplined you? Then He loves you. He has never rebuked you? Never disciplined you? Then I don't know whether you are His child or not. I want to ask you a question.

When you read the Bible. Do you only get promises? The Lord comforts me today with this promise. Last week He comforted me with another promise.

And now everyday I am expecting a comfort from the Lord. Have you ever read the Bible where He rebuked you? Sometimes people write to me and say Brother Zack. Today is my birthday.

Can you give me a promise from the Bible? Nobody writes to me and says Brother Zack can you give me a rebuke from the Bible today? Today is my birthday. Today is my birthday. Can you give me a rebuke from the Bible? We don't like that.

But see what it says in Hebrews. Chapter 12. Hebrews 12.

Verse 5. Don't regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him. For it is those whom the Lord loves whom He disciplines. He scourges every son whom He receives.

It is for discipline that you endure. God deals with you as with sons. Verse 7. What son is there whom his father does not discipline? I want to say to all of you.

If your father and mother never disciplined you that is the proof they don't love you. Is your father and mother better than God? Everyone whom the God loves He disciplines it says. Your father does not love you more than God.

What son is there verse 7 whom his father does not discipline? I will tell you. The father who does not love his son that father will not discipline his son. I want to tell you young girls if your parents do not discipline you I can tell you in Jesus name they don't love you.

Discipline doesn't mean the rod Rod is only when children are small. After the age of 12 I didn't use the rod for my children. But there are other forms of discipline.

I would say you can't play today. Some privileges I will give the other children I can't give you because you are disciplined today. You go and sit in your room now for the next 2 hours.

There are many ways of disciplining. You have to come back home every day by such and such a time. I would never discipline them with food.

That means I won't say you won't get ice cream today. Don't discipline your children like that. Give the ice cream to the bad children also.

Food is not the way to discipline children. But other ways don't allow them to play or make them sit. So we must be wise but God loves us and disciplines us.

And now listen verse 8 very important verse If you are without discipline you are not real child of God you are an illegitimate child. So God's love is wise. Go back to the story of the prodigal son.

Everybody knows the love of the father when the son came back he went and embraced him. Everybody knows the love of the father when the son came back he went and embraced him. He made a big feast.

This is the mark of God's love. From the same story I will tell you another mark of God's love. The love of God is seen in that father that when the boy went away he never sent him any money orders after that.

He never sent him any food packets and if the father heard your son is so poor now he is with the pigs father would say let him suffer that is the love of God. Let him suffer let him eat what the pigs are eating. This is not human love this is God's love he knows they are suffering they must suffer why? Because he wants him to come back to the father.

That is the love that the apostle Paul had. This man is living in sin put him out of the church don't anybody visit him let him suffer for one year see Paul you are so hard no he is like that prodigal son's father let him suffer he will come back to the church that is love with wisdom when we don't grow in the Lord we don't have wisdom that is why it is good for younger people to listen to their elders in the church now you know for 37 years I have had experience with dealing with thousands of believers in our churches and I have

seen some young people who think they are very clever and they have more love and wisdom than even their elders and they can't understand why an elder brother is strict that is the strictness in the love of God so there are two sides to the love of that father one is when he goes away and he is suffering the father says let him suffer let him suffer suffer suffer till he turns and comes back the other is when he comes back welcome him gladly encourage him otherwise he will get discouraged we see both in Paul in 1 Corinthians and in 2 Corinthians so who is the faithful and wise faithfulness is to love that is not enough wise see the other thing is not only healing in our country our country is a poor country we know and there are many needy people who can come to the church so if you start giving money to every needy person who comes to the church first of all there will be no money left in the offerings anymore to have a conference because we are helping all the poor people and the other thing is those poor people will not be helped because they you know when people hear that in a church they are giving money to the poor people all the people will come there in the beginning the first 5-6 months when CFC started 37 years ago we also made that mistake no by 6 months but we found that helping people with money was not helping them to become spiritual so we had to acquire wisdom so we decided we will never help a person with money until we have first proved that he is really a brother or a sister and so we said we would like to observe a person for at least 2 years and give him no money and if he has proved that he is really a brother and sister in the church then we will help him financially no I don't have a verse for that but that is how we came to that conclusion through practice that is love with wisdom and once I remember there was one new person who came to our church in Bangalore and he was going asking some of the rich brothers for money I didn't know about it then I heard that he is going to different people asking for money so I went to him I said see if I hear that you are doing this again I will announce your name from the pulpit and I will warn everybody about you so he went away from the church he only wanted money he had no fear of God so I tell people when you come to the church the best is that you fear God second best is you fear me if you don't fear God then you must fear me that's all if you fear God you don't have to fear me that is like little children there is no use telling your 3 year old fear God you don't know about God you better fear me the daddy one day you will grow up you will learn to fear God till then you fear me that's enough that is how all of you fathers have brought up your children the same way in the church also there are some 3 year old spiritual babies who don't have any fear of God then they must fear the elder brother that's all that is love with wisdom so I want to be ready for the coming of the Lord I want to be faithful to do my part in the body of Christ you must also be faithful with your ministry and when you are young and in a situation you don't you have lot of love but you don't have wisdom what should you do go to somebody who has wisdom and say brother in this situation what should I do there is nothing wrong in humbling yourself and saying I don't know please give me some wisdom because that man may have gone through hundred experiences like that he has some wisdom he can tell you about the dangers of going in a certain direction so we must have humility in order to get wisdom the humility to go to somebody and say brother can you please give me some advice brother I am having this problem with my father-in-law or mother-in-law this type of brother is sitting in our church and creating a problem what to do there was one case in another church where one man troublesome person came to the church so the elder said see why don't you go to some other church we don't want you to come here and cause trouble no he said I am going to come here and I am going to get up in the meeting and I am going to speak so that elder asked me what shall I do I said what will you do if some non-christian hindu people or muslims or some come and create problem in your church you have to go to the police what else so go and report this man to the police just because he calls himself a christian he is a troublemaker I am not afraid of that if somebody steals your scooter there is nothing wrong in reporting to the police if somebody steals your scooter there is nothing wrong in reporting to the police there is nothing wrong in it Romans 13 says God has appointed all these authorities

to preserve law and order in society you read Romans 13 the policemen are servants of God it says so I go to one of these servants of God who is a policeman and says there is a problem in our church and so that man stopped coming after that they didn't do anything we just told him this is the order you can't come here again so he stopped problem was solved because he had no fear of God no fear of the elders third step is please fear the police what to do? but in the church we don't allow people to come and just do what they like and play the fool God is a God of order we don't want confusion in the church so some people ask is it love to go to a police? yes, that is love for all the other people who are suffering because of this man we don't love just this man we love the whole church I don't care what people think about me I say I want to protect the church I am not living here for my reputation I have to answer to God one day so I am just giving you some examples how wisdom must guide our love that's great heavenly father there are so many situations in our life where we need such a lot of wisdom help us not to be foolish in our love we lack wisdom so you said if anyone lacks wisdom let him ask God you said you will give us abundantly help us all to have wisdom in our love that our flasks will be full of wise love I pray in Jesus name

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