

Living the Christ-Life in Your Family First

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the necessity of embodying the Christ-life within our families to effectively share the gospel with others.

Duration: 1:36:00

Scripture: Exodus 25:8, Matthew 13:58, Mark 6:5-6, Ephesians 5:22-33, Ephesians 6:13

Topics: "Family"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the gospel working in our own homes before sharing it with others. He uses the analogy of a faulty DVD player to illustrate the point that we should not give something that is not working properly to someone we love. The speaker also highlights the responsibility of parents, particularly fathers, in raising children in the ways of the Lord. He references Ephesians 6:1-3, which instructs children to obey and honor their parents, and encourages parents to teach their children these values. The sermon concludes with a mention of Malachi 4:6, which speaks about the restoration of the hearts of fathers and children in the last days.

Transcript

So dear brothers and sisters from different parts of the world, when we read the Bible, we can read it with our mind and study it like a book of theology or we can try to see the heart of God as we read. And that's what I've been trying to do more and more in the early days when I was first converted 60 years ago. I read it, studying it like a book, but as I've grown older and I've discovered that the Bible has been given to us so that we can look into God's heart.

That's what will change your life. Otherwise you just get some doctrines and maybe find some comfort in times of trouble, etc. But if you can look into God's heart, you will come into fellowship with this wonderful Father in heaven, whose care for us is so intense that he was even willing to send his son to earth just so that he could have you and me to be his children.

The more I think about that, very often it makes me weep. Father, you love me so much and you followed after me in the days when I wandered away from you and brought me back to yourself. I never want to lose sight of the heart of God.

I want to invite all of you, dear brothers and sisters, to ask the Holy Spirit to show you the heart of your heavenly Father, to show you the heart of Jesus Christ. And our subject today is concerning the family.

We must manifest the Christ life first in our own home because we cannot give to others what does not work in our own home.

I've used this example many times. If you have a DVD player which is not working properly in your own home, it doesn't fast forward, doesn't play properly, it scrapes. Would you give that as a gift to somebody you love? No.

You wouldn't even give that as a gift to a stranger. Would you give that as a gift at a wedding? Never. We would never give to someone something that is not working in our own home.

Now my next question is, do you seek to give the gospel, a gospel which has not worked in your own home, to other people? A gospel that's failing in your own home. How can you give that as a gift to somebody else? And a gospel is millions and millions times more valuable than a DVD player. You wouldn't give a DVD player or some electronic gadget which is not working in your home.

How much more we need to think in terms of giving the gospel, a gospel that works in our own home. If you were to look into the heart of God, it's in the home where God wants to begin his work. First of all in our own heart and the next in our home and then in the church and then the world.

But it all begins with the individual and then in the home. So let me begin with the verse in Exodus in chapter 25 and verse 8. You're familiar with this. In the wilderness when Israel came out of Egypt and they came to the Mount Sinai, God told them, God told Moses, tell my people to construct a sanctuary for me, a holy building.

The purpose so that I can dwell among them. That was God's will. He wants to dwell among us and that is the purpose why he asked them to construct a sanctuary.

Now take that verse and apply it to your own home life. God wants to do the same thing. He says, I want my people, read it like this, Exodus 25 8. Will you build a home, a family, husband, wife and children so that I, the Lord, can live in your home.

Take that verse and say, Lord, I want to build a home which where you can come and live. And if you go back to the beginning of the Bible, that's exactly how God, you know, planned it when he made Adam and Eve. But before I go there, I want to show you something in the New Testament.

We speak much about the New Covenant. There are things we experience in the New Covenant which people could never experience in the Old Covenant. Let me give you two examples.

One is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When it talks about Old Testament people being anointed or filled, it was always the Holy Spirit upon them. He never came inside them.

The first time the Holy Spirit dwelt in a man on the earth was when Jesus walked on this earth. Even John the Baptist had only the Holy Spirit upon him. John 7 verse 37 to 39 indicates that the Holy Spirit was not given to dwell within man, to come from his innermost being until Jesus was glorified.

Very clear. And then, after the day of Pentecost, we could all have the Holy Spirit within, to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, there's only one place in the whole Bible where we have a command to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

There are many references to it in the Acts of the Apostles, but only one place where we have a command which says, be filled with the Holy Spirit. One of the most important commandments. You must be filled.

Only God can fill you, but you have to make yourself available so he can fill you. And that is in Ephesians 5 and verse 18. Okay, that's not possible in the Old Testament, Old Covenant.

The second thing that was not possible in the Old Covenant was to resist the devil and make him flee from us. If you read the entire Old Testament, you never read one person confronting Satan. Satan appears in Genesis chapter 3 and overcomes Adam and Eve.

After that, we don't see him, except in a vision in Zechariah chapter 3. But otherwise, actually, we don't find any person, not even John the Baptist, confronting Satan because they could not confront Satan in the Old Covenant. He was too strong for them. He appears in the book of Job up in the heavens, and God permits him to bring havoc into Job's property, etc., and even in his family.

The first person, as I said, who was filled with the Holy Spirit was Jesus, and the first person to confront Satan and defeat him was also Jesus. And he's the head of the church. And now, God wants the church, just like Jesus, that was the first body of Christ, the church is the new body of Christ, must also be like Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, and confront Satan and drive him away.

Like it says in James 4, 7, submit to God, resist the devil, he will flee from you. So, those are the two things, distinctive, among many other things, these are two distinctive features of the New Covenant. And that resisting the devil is mentioned in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 10 to 12.

Stand firm against the schemes of the devil and put on the full armor of God, having done everything, that means having overcome everything, Ephesians 6, 13, stand firm. So, this is what I wanted to point out to you. If you turn with your Bible, you see two verses, Ephesians 5, 18, be filled with the Holy Spirit, a New Covenant blessing.

Ephesians 6, verse 10 to 13, stand firm against the schemes of the devil and overcome him. And now, I want you to notice something very interesting, between these two very important statements, be filled with the Holy Spirit on one hand and stand against the devil and resist him, do you know what is comes in between? Family life, husbands, wives, chapter 5, verse 22 to 33, children, parents, chapter 6, verse 1 to 4, servants and masters, many homes have servants and masters, chapter 6, verse 5 to 8, 5 to 9. So, why is this section on the family put between these two very important verses? Because two things, one, you cannot live this family life without being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's why the only place I told you in the entire Bible where it says be filled with the Holy Spirit, be filled with the Holy Spirit and then it says, now wives, be subject to your husbands, now husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

How can you ever do that without being filled with the Holy Spirit? Fathers, bring up your children in this wicked world in a godly way, how can you do that without the fullness of the Holy Spirit? So, be filled with the Spirit. A lot of people say you're filled with the Spirit, you'll speak in tongues, that is one of the gifts of the Spirit. But here it says be filled with the Holy Spirit and husbands and wives, this is how you should live together.

Be filled with the Spirit and fathers and children, this is how you should bring up your children. Do you see that as a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit? And secondly, why is this section on the warfare with the devil comes immediately after the section on the Christian home? Because there is absolutely nothing that

the devil attacks as much as the Christian home. Because he knows if he has succeeded in destroying the home, he's destroyed the church.

Look at the number of pastors whose ministry have been ruined because their home was destroyed, their children became wayward, the pastor falls into adultery, the pastor divorces his wife, marries somebody else. Don't you see that happening all over? This is the work of the devil. And there you see the Holy Spirit has put this section on the Christian home just immediately after being filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately before the attack of Satan and resisting Satan.

Now, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can resist the devil in all the attacks he makes against the Christian home. We can overcome. Wives can live in godly submission.

Husbands can love their wives as Christ loved the church and pursue that goal, even if it doesn't reach perfection on this earth. Fathers can bring up all their children in a godly way. It's possible the devil may attack your children, but he will not succeed.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Believe God's promise. That's why he's put the Christian home section right after being filled with the Holy Spirit and telling you that you can resist the devil.

And it says in Ephesians 6, 13, having overcome everything, you can stand. Husbands and wives can stand and say, we've overcome the devil in our home. Fathers and children can stand and say, we've overcome the devil in our home.

That is our goal, dear brothers and sisters, and I trust that as you listen to the word today, you will understand a little more of what that means. So I want you to turn with me now to Genesis and chapter 1 and chapter 2, where the Christian home begins. So, you know, once when the Pharisees came to Jesus and said, is divorce permitted? That's in Matthew 19.

I don't want to take time going there now. Look at it sometime. Why did Moses command divorce? And Jesus said, Moses never commanded divorce.

He permitted divorce. Very easy to twist Scripture. The Pharisees twisted it.

If they didn't like their wives, they're just saying Moses commanded it. Moses never commanded it. Even today, divorce is not commanded.

So, you know, because some people say, oh, Jesus permitted in case of adultery, you can divorce your wife. No, he did not command it. You can forgive your wife, even if she divorces your husband, even if he divorces.

That is a higher way. But if you are a weak believer, permitted. So I'm just showing you how people twist Scripture.

But Jesus said, when they asked him that question, how was it in the beginning? He said, in the beginning, God did not make two women and ask Adam to choose only one. So the solution to the question the Pharisees asked was always, go back to the beginning. In everything, go back to the beginning, and you'll understand God's plan.

You'll see God's heart. So when you think of the home, the Christian home, go back to the beginning, and you'll see what God's plan was for the marriage. Subsequent to that, sin has spoiled so many things.

Go back to the beginning. And in the beginning, let me first show you something very interesting. For five days, it says God did different things, recreating, that's remaking that fallen earth, which is corrupt.

And each day, at the end of the day, he said it is good. Five times, he said it was good. It was good.

Except for the second day, all the other days, he said it was good. It was good. It was good.

And I think the second day, he didn't say it because that was the day when the heavens were separated and the devil was up there in the second heaven, cast out of the third heaven. But other days, it says it was good, good, good, good, good. And then, on the sixth day, you know what God says? It is not good.

Have you noticed that? Five days, or five times, because one day he said it twice. Five times, it is good, it is good, it is good, it is good. And then suddenly, on the sixth day, he says it is not good.

Have you noticed that? It says here, in Genesis 2:18, after making Adam, he said it is not good for this man to be alone. After saying it was good five times. And so he made Eve.

And he brought Eve to Adam and united them. That is the first marriage God conducted. And then he says in Genesis 1:31, it was very good.

Do you see that development? Five times, not good, not good, not good, not, sorry, sorry, five times, good, good, good, good, good, then not good. And once a married couple comes on the scene, very good. That is how it should be in your marriage.

That even if it was not good, it becomes very good. Even if things were good before you were married, it should become very good after your marriage. Now let us search our own hearts.

Is that true in your experience? I have been married for 52 years. And my wife and I have been very happily married. And I can honestly say it is very good.

It was good when I was single. It is very good after marriage. We are not perfect.

We were not perfect when we got married. We are not perfect even today. We are pressing on to perfection.

We have not become like Jesus completely, but we are on the way. But one thing, it is very good. So I want all of you to aim for that.

Do not ever say it will not be good in my marriage. Say it is going to be very good. It is going to go very well with my children.

Speak the word of faith. That is what Jesus said. Go back to the beginning, he told the Pharisees.

You are talking about divorce. That is something God permitted because of sin. Go back to the beginning.

He never permitted divorce for Adam and Eve. In the same way, whatever condition you may see Christian families in today, or even the families of preachers and pastors, God says go back to the beginning. How was it then? He made a not good situation into a very good.

So if you feel that your home is like in a not good situation, Genesis 2:18, not good for whatever reason. There it is one reason. In your case, it may be another reason.

God can turn it into very good. Let us begin with that faith. See, if you do not have faith when you come to the Lord, if you think God is a helpless person, your problem is too big and he can never help you, God cannot do anything for you.

You are tying the hands of God. You know one of the saddest verses that are found in the Gospels is the verse in Matthew chapter 13 where it says Jesus could not do many mighty works there, not because he did not want to, but it says there because they are unbelief. Matthew 13 and it is the last verse I think there.

Yes, Matthew 13 and verse 58, the last verse. He did not do many miracles there, not because he did not want to. In Mark chapter 6, he could not do it, it says, because of their unbelief.

I want to ask you, some of you may be having difficulties in your married life, will it be written about you that God wanted you to have a very good marriage, but he could not do it because you would not believe? Not because he could not, but because you would not believe or because you said, oh our situation is so wretched. Which situation is so wretched that God cannot solve it? One of the lessons I learned from the miracles that Jesus did, I never find him facing a situation where he tells people, I do not know what to do. Do you ever find Jesus saying that? Are 5,000 men and many women and children hungry without food? The Lord has a solution for that.

Is the storm about to sink the boat in the Lake of Galilee? He has a solution for that. Has the wine run out at a wedding in Cana? He has a solution for that. As Lazarus died, he has a solution for that.

What do you learn from all the miracles that Jesus did? I learned one lesson. Nothing is impossible with God. No problem is too great for God to handle.

That is the message I get from all the miracles that Jesus did. Nobody ever came to him with a problem where Jesus had to scratch his head and say, I do not know what to do about that. Never.

Every single problem people came to him with, he had a solution. Whether it was a woman caught in adultery or a five times divorced Samaritan woman, whom nobody cared for, whom people hated perhaps, Jesus redeemed her. He could solve any problem.

And what problem is there today in the 21st century that Jesus cannot solve? Nothing. Have faith. Once when a man brought his son to Jesus and said, I brought him to your disciples, they could not help him.

If you can do anything, please help us. And Jesus said, do not say if I can do, if you. He put the if back on him.

That man came to Jesus and said, if you can help us. And Jesus put that if back on him and said, if you can believe, all things are possible. And his son was delivered.

But he did not have that, did not have much faith. And he said, oh Lord, I do not have much faith. Please help my unbelief.

Even that is good enough to come to the Lord and say, Lord, I do not have much faith, but I have a little bit. Help my unbelief. You can experience a miracle.

And boy, we live in a day when there is a tremendous need for miracles in our homes, in husband-wife relationships, parents-children relationships. So what do we see here? This was God's purpose that they

should be joined together. And that was a plan God had when he said that it is not good for man to be alone, Genesis 2.18. I will make him a helper.

I want you to see something powerful in these words. Don't skip over these words very quickly. What did the Lord say? I want to make Adam a helper.

What is the wife supposed to be to the husband? A helper, not a slave. Don't treat your wife like a slave who's just got to obey your orders. Don't expect to be a king lording it over slaves.

That's not the way a wife is to be. A wife is to be a helper. At the same time, a wife is not to be the Lord over the husband.

God didn't say, let me make a Lord for Adam. Let me make a helper. And like someone has said, God took a rib from Adam's side.

He did not take a bone from Adam's head for the woman to rule over the man. He did not take a bone from Adam's feet for the man to rule over the woman. But he took a rib from Adam's side.

It must have been the left side, near his heart, so that the man would keep his wife always near his heart, close to him, recognize that she's one with him. Let me make a helper. And those of you who know the Bible, do you find anyone else in the New Testament who's called a helper? You remember in John 14, when Jesus said, just before he went up to heaven at the Last Supper, he said, if you love me, John 14, 15, you keep my commandments.

But what high standard those commandments in the Sermon on the Mount were. And he was saying, I know it's difficult to keep those commandments, but John 14, 16, I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper. The King James Version says comforter.

The NASB says helper. He's called a help. The Holy Spirit is called a helper.

Jesus gave that name to the Holy Spirit. Interesting that God gave that name to Eve. A wife is supposed to be to her husband, a helper like the Holy Spirit is to us.

Now see how the Holy Spirit helps us. The Holy Spirit helps us in a very hidden way. He doesn't publicly show himself.

We don't see the Holy Spirit, but he's behind the scenes, always helping us. I believe he's helping me right now when I speak. I wouldn't dare to speak without the help of the Holy Spirit.

I always, whenever I go to speak, I say, Lord, I'm like a branch in a tree. If the sap does not flow from the tree to the branch, there'll be no fruit. So I'm dependent on the Holy Spirit, but you don't see the Holy Spirit.

He's a hidden helper, but without his help, I can't do the job. And a husband must recognize that without his wife as a hidden helper, he can't do the job either. And the wife must also recognize that I don't need prominence.

The Holy Spirit doesn't seek prominence. The wife should say, why should I seek prominence when the Holy Spirit doesn't seek prominence? I want to be a hidden helper to my husband, just like the Holy Spirit is a hidden helper to man. Yeah, it's wonderful to compare scripture with scripture.

The other beautiful thing I see here is that God placed, God had prepared everything for Adam and Eve before he created them, united them. It's wonderful to recognize that you must believe that if God united you in marriage, and if you're married, there are many wonderful things God has prepared for you. You must have that faith.

I'm not talking about a lot of money and wealth, and it's not like that. When my wife and I got married, we were so poor, very, very poor for the first few years of our married life. We didn't even have money to rent a building to live in.

We were very poor. I'd given up all my earnings from what I'd earned in the Navy for God's work, and we were trusting the Lord for our needs. But God took care of us.

We were poor, but we were happy. God provides everything, and what we see here in the case of Adam and Eve was he provided them a beautiful garden, and I think there was a message in that. That Garden of Eden must have been the most beautiful garden this world has ever seen.

Flowers and trees and the animals are all kind and good, no wild animals, and such a beautiful surrounding, a beautiful garden, and as it were, the Lord was saying to Adam and Eve, Adam, Eve, I want your marriage to be like this garden. I want your relationship with each other to be like this beautiful garden where people can come and smell the beautiful scent of the flowers and see the beautiful fruit, and they can partake of the fruit. What a wonderful thing it is if a marriage can be like that.

That is God's original plan for marriage. Your marriage must be like a garden that other people can come and enjoy the scent and the scenery, and spiritually speaking, and the fruit from your life. That is God's purpose.

But instead of becoming a garden, because they disobeyed God, it became a wilderness. The relationship between Adam and Eve became a wilderness. It started with a simple disobedience to God.

God had told them, don't eat from that one tree, but there were a hundred thousand trees there. Was it so difficult to avoid one tree? But the devil took them to that tree. The devil will always seek to lead you to something that will destroy your relationship with God and destroy your relationship with your marriage partner.

Remember that. There may be ten thousand things you can do, but those things may be good things. The devil will lead you to the one thing which will cause a problem.

Think of all the good things husbands and wives do for each other, but the devil will remind you of the one thing that your wife did not do, or your husband did not do, and make you concentrate on that so that he can bring a distance between you and your partner. That's how the devil is learned from the Garden of Eden. He's looking for the one thing that will lead you away from each other, and that's what happened.

Eve was foolish. She obeyed the devil and was immediately separated from God, and then she gave the fruit to her husband. Now, you know, when I first read Genesis 3, I thought Adam was wandering somewhere else in the garden until I read Genesis chapter 3, verse 6, and saw that Adam was standing right next to her.

They were both standing together facing this forbidden tree, and when the devil spoke to Eve, Adam was listening. Why was he dumb? Why didn't he tell his wife, hey, we shouldn't be listening to this. Let's get

away from here.

We don't want to listen to this serpent. Why didn't he take his place as the head of the home? And that's what I often ask. Why doesn't a husband take the place as the head of the home when he sees something coming into his home through his wife or his children, which he knows is dishonoring to God? Why doesn't he take a stand against some filthy movie which is being watched on the television, or a book which is unfit for a Christian to read, or a magazine that is unfit for a Christian to have in his home? Why does he allow it to come in? Why does he stand like Adam, quiet? Adam was made to be the head of the home.

He failed, and many husbands have failed in exactly the same way. Job is said to be the most perfect man on earth in his time. God said there was nobody like him on earth.

He told the devil that, and his wife was not so spiritually minded like he was. Job accepted all the tragedy that came in the beginning, but his wife could not. And we read in Genesis chapter, sorry, Job chapter 2, the wife came to Job and said, why don't you curse God and die? Or in other words, why don't you curse God and commit suicide? And Job said, you're speaking like a foolish woman.

He took a home and said, that's a foolish thing to say. Would you say that if someone in your home suggested something which is contrary to God's will? Say it in a loving way. Darling, that's not a good thing to say.

We don't want to disobey God here. That's what Adam should have said. Eve, we shouldn't be listening to that.

Let's move away. What a different story it would have been. He did not take his place as the head of the family.

You see that right at the beginning. All the chaos in the world came because of that. If he had stopped her there.

And from Eve's point also, we can see a failure. When the devil came talking to her, all she had to say was, hey, listen, God's given me a head. He's right standing right next to me.

Let me just consult him and then I'll get back to you. Story might have been different. Do you take decisions on your own without consulting each other? No wonder the devil gets a headway.

It could be husband not consulting the wife or the wife not consulting the husband. Because she's to be your helper. You know, I see that God is in an ideal marriage or in many marriages, the husband and wife have different viewpoints, which is a good thing.

And I'll tell you why it's a good thing. If a husband is standing on the north side of a house and takes a picture of the house from the north side, and the wife is standing on the south side of the same house and takes a picture of the house from the south side, then the pictures look completely different. Because the front of the house looks very different from the back of the house.

But to get a full picture of the house, you put both pictures together. That's the advantage of husband and wife having different viewpoints, not to have conflict with each other. No, one is a helper.

And so when the husband says, hey, let me see the picture you took of the house and says, hey, this is completely different from mine. But it's the backside. So I get a full picture of the house.

And so it is. God makes us different from one another so that we can help one another. So that's one of the important things that we need to see here.

What do we need to do in a marriage to make a garden into a wilderness if your marriage is supposed to be like a garden? Shall I tell you how to make it into a wilderness? Turn with me to Proverbs chapter 24. Proverbs and chapter 24 and verse 30. Proverbs 24, 30 says, I passed by the field of the lazy person.

A lazy person is a person who does nothing. And by the vineyard of the man without common sense. And it was completely like a wilderness, overgrown with thistles, covered with nettles.

The stone wall was broken down. And I looked at it, he says, and I reflected on it and I received instruction. What did that man do to make his garden into a wilderness? In one word, nothing.

He just slept. It says a little sleep, a little slumber and spiritual poverty will come to you in no time. So what do you need to do to make a garden, a beautiful garden into wilderness? Nothing.

You don't have to do anything. You don't have to go sowing weeds and thistles. If you don't believe me, look at any garden which is beautiful.

Leave it alone for two or three years. It'll become a wilderness because the tendency in nature is towards the wilderness. But if you leave a wilderness alone, it won't become a garden.

If you go by somebody's house and you see a beautiful garden with beautiful flowers and beautiful fruit trees, you can be pretty sure that that man worked hard day and night, that that couple worked hard day and night to make that garden. And if you see a beautiful marriage anywhere, like a garden, you can be pretty sure that that couple worked hard to produce that beautiful marriage. And if you see a family with beautiful children growing up, you can be pretty sure that that father and mother worked hard to bring up those beautiful children.

Otherwise, their home would have been like a wilderness. So that's the first lesson we need to learn. You don't have to do anything to make your home in a wilderness.

Just neglect it. Just neglect fellowship with each other. Don't take time with each other.

Don't pray together. Don't read the word of God. Just do nothing.

Your home will become a wilderness. If you want a good garden, learn a lesson from all the gardens you have seen anywhere in the world. It is always the result of a lot of hard work that people have put in.

And that's how a beautiful family also is built. The second thing I want to say, how you can make a garden into a wilderness is in Genesis 3 itself. In Genesis 3, once the fellowship with God had been broken, what is the next thing that happens? When God comes and asks Adam, what happened? Did you eat from the tree? He immediately points his finger at his wife and says, Lord, it's not me.

She's the guilty one. She's the source of all the problems. She's the cause of all the problems.

And God says, Eve, what did you do? She also has got the same, she came from Adam, so she's got the same habit. It's not me. It's that serpent.

See, this habit of blaming others, blaming each other, started in the Garden of Eden. It's very difficult for a person to acknowledge his own failure. Adam, see, Eve did not shove the fruit down Adam's mouth.

Adam could have said, I'm sorry, Lord. I was tempted and I ate it. So what if your wife gave it? That's not the point.

You opened your mouth, Adam, and you ate it. Take the blame. Don't blame your wife.

It's true that the wife gave it. And so very often you find in husband-wife relationships, some tension comes and immediately this pointing finger of Adam comes up. And this spirit of accusation, she did it, you did this, or you did this.

You know how husbands and wives can sometimes talk about things that happened 15 years ago. You remember 15 years ago you did this? Or you remember 20 years ago you did this? You remember before our marriage you did this? You could make your garden into a wilderness. You got to get rid of that pointing finger.

That's wilderness in the Garden of Eden. Let me show you a beautiful verse about this in Isaiah chapter 58. In Isaiah 58, the Lord says here, He tells us here how He can make your life, Isaiah 58 11, in the middle it says, you will be like a watered garden.

It's a promise, Isaiah 58 11. And like a spring of water that where the waters keep coming up all the time, a beautiful garden, your marriage can be like a beautiful garden with a spring of water always refreshing it day and night. Claim that promise in Isaiah 58 11.

But among other conditions, here is one condition. When you call upon me, the Lord says, saying Lord give me this garden, Isaiah 58 verse 9, this is the condition. And you will cry and the Lord says, I will say here I am.

I will answer you if you stop pointing the finger at each other. See what the Lord says? I will answer you when you stop pointing the finger at each other, Isaiah 58 verse 9. And then I will make your life like a watered garden. Can you at least from today onwards, my dear brothers and sisters, stop this habit which began with our forefather Adam of pointing the finger at each other.

Your marriage can be like a beautiful garden, but the choice is up to you. And then you can say, well, let my partner start. Really? Who's going to be the leader here now? Who's going to be more Christlike? I often ask this question.

When a husband and wife have a conflict, a tension, and that can happen in any marriage, particularly in the early years. And if it's not resolved in the early years, it can go on even after their marriage, married for 20, 30 years. But when a husband and wife have a conflict or a tension or a misunderstanding, who should take the first step in restoring that fellowship? Husband or the wife? In heathen cultures, the rule is always the wife must humble herself and ask forgiveness because the husband is the king.

He's the Lord. But what about a Christian? When a Christian husband and wife have a tension or a conflict or a misunderstanding, who should take the first step? We take our example from God, not from heathen culture. So let's ask this question and get an answer to this.

When God and man had a conflict due to sin, who took the first step to restore that relationship? You know the answer. It was God who sent his son. No man invited him to send his son.

God took that first step and it was such a big step of humbling himself down to the dust in order to restore that relationship. Let me say that again. When God and man had a tension and though the fault was 100% man's and zero God's, yet God took that first step to the extreme point of humbling himself to the dust in order to restore that relationship.

Why did God take the first step? Because he was more spiritual than man. So in a husband and wife conflict, who should take the first step? The one who is more spiritual, not the one who is wrong. If God had said to man, well, he'd made a mistake, let him take the first step, there would be no restoration of relationship.

But the nature of God is so eager to fellowship with man that he didn't may say that was his fault, so let him take the first step. No, that's the language of fallen man. The language of a loving God is let me take that first step.

Let me humble myself. Think how different many of our marriages would be if we followed the example of God instead of the example of the devil who's called the accuser of the brethren. See Satan, the Bible says in Revelation 12 that Satan is waiting to accuse God's children every day.

It says day and night he's accusing God's children. In other words, he's waiting, he's looking, he's got his agents, millions of demons all over the world looking to find some mistake that some believer does and immediately says, God, see that guy there? He claims to be your child. See how he's speaking.

See what he's doing. Look at him watching pornography there when nobody's watching him and he claims to be a born again child of God. God, are you seeing that? He's the accuser.

He's the accuser of the brethren. My dear brother, sister, husband, and wife, don't join hands with the devil and accuse your marriage partner. Finish with it today.

Tell the devil, Satan, I'm never going to hold your hand again to accuse my marriage partner. I'll never do it. I was ignorant and foolish all these years, but I'm not going to do it anymore.

Christ has come into my life and I'm going to manifest the life of Christ in me. Christ did not have pointing fingers at anybody. On the cross, his arms were stretched out and his hands were nailed to the cross.

He had no finger that he could point at anybody. He stretched out his hands and as it were to say, I want you to bring you both together. That's the difference between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Satan, which is the same spirit that Adam and Eve had.

So that's how a guardian becomes a wilderness and that's how we can eliminate that. I want to show you another verse for husbands and wives in 1 Peter chapter 3. Some wonderful verses about husband-wife relationships in scripture. You know, one interesting thing in the old covenant, the husband-wife relationship and parent-child relationship was not important.

Job didn't have a good relationship with his wife because his wife was not a spiritual person at all. The only thing that we read about Moses was having conflict with his wife. And Samuel, his children were wayward, just like Eli's children were wayward, Samuel's children were wayward.

David had many wives. His children were wayward. Some murdered each other.

We don't have a good family picture in the Old Testament. Even that very good family of Noah, we find his son goes and exposes his nakedness. In the Old Testament, family relationship is not important.

The great men of God did not have a great family. Moses, Samuel, even Noah. Noah had to curse Ham's descendants, his own son's descendants.

But when it comes to the new covenant, the Lord says in 1 Timothy 3, a man cannot be an elder unless he's the husband of one wife, has got a good family, has brought up his children in a good way. It's so important. Now, if those were the qualifications of the Old Testament, Moses and David could not have been leaders.

Samuel could not have been a leader because their children were all wayward. And yet some of the greatest men, Moses, David, Samuel, they were great leaders. But in the new covenant, for example, if Samuel or Moses or David were living today, I would never dream of making him an elder in one of our churches.

Impossible. I see your children are wayward. How can you be an elder in our church? But in the new covenant, this is a very important requirement.

It was not required in the old covenant. It's very important to see. Husband-wife relationship is very important.

So let me turn you to 1 Peter chapter 3. Here it talks about a wife whose husband is not converted. Or even if he's converted, he's disobedient to the Word of God. Do any of you wives have a husband who is unconverted or disobedient to God's Word, even though he claims to be a Christian, he's a hypocrite? Okay, here's the verse exactly for you, sister.

1 Peter 3. You wives, be submissive to your own husbands, even to those who are disobedient to the Word. What is the purpose? So that you can win them for the Lord without one word by your behavior. You see the picture here? A husband who's disobedient to the Word of God is like a man who's been captured by the devil.

Anyone who's disobedient to the Word of God is in the hands of the devil. So here is a husband who's in the hands of the devil. And the devil's a very strong person.

A husband disobedient to the Word. That's written in verse 3. And who's the one who delivers this husband from this lion called Satan? A meek, submissive woman. Amazing! Because it says she can win her husband.

That means deliver him from the clutches of Satan. This meek, submissive, helpless woman can deliver her husband from the clutches of the lion Satan by her conduct. Without speaking one word.

Without preaching. Amazing way of bringing people to Christ. Take that as a promise, sister.

Don't keep blaming your husband. You say, Lord, I want 1 Peter 3 to be fulfilled in my life. I confront the devil, not with the might of the world, but with the spirit of submission that Jesus had to the Heavenly Father.

And I'm going to bring my husband to Christ. All right? There's a word for husbands also here. Maybe it's the other way around.

Maybe your wife is not very spiritual like Job's wife. God has a word for everyone. 1 Peter 3 verse 7. You husbands, in the same way, that means in the same spirit, live with your wives in an understanding way.

As someone who is weaker, what should a spiritually minded husband know about his wife? One thing primarily. She is a weaker vessel. She's not as strong as me.

Well, physically, we know that the man is usually stronger than the woman. But here it says more than that. She's a weaker vessel.

That's why she easily cries and men don't cry so easily. Don't look down on her. Understand that she's a weaker vessel.

If you despise your wife because she's weaker, well, you're not going to win her. You're not going to build a godly home. Now, it says here that if you don't recognize that she's a weaker vessel and you don't recognize that God has made you an equal heir of the grace of life.

Read 1 Peter 3 verse 7. God has made husband and wife to sit on equal level thrones. Joint heir. Joint heir means your throne as king and queen of the house are the same level.

The wife's throne is not one foot below the husband's. No. Joint heir means both thrones are at the same level.

The king and the queen are at the same level. Recognize that. Recognize your wife as the queen of the house equal to you as the king of the house.

And also recognize that she's a weaker vessel. If you do, if you don't do that, it says here, your prayers will not be heard by God. The prayers of many Christian men, born-again men, are not heard by God because of one reason among others.

He does not treat his wife as an equal heir. He does not recognize all the time that she is weaker to me, weaker than me. Prayers are not heard.

Do you want your prayers to be heard? Treat your wife as your equal. And always recognize that she's a weaker vessel. It's a wonderful thing to be united like this.

Let me show you a promise in Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is a book which many Christians don't read, but there's some amazing verses in it. Let me show you one of them.

It's in Ecclesiastes chapter 4, and it says here in verse 10 to 12, three things that a husband and wife can do when they are together. First of all, Ecclesiastes 4.10, if one falls, the other can lift him up. It's a wonderful thing.

When you're fighting against the devil, we can help one another if there are two. Two are better than one, it says. Secondly, they can keep each other on fire for the Lord.

They can keep each other warm spiritually, verse 11. And number 12, sorry, verse 12, if the devil comes against them, two can resist him. And this two, it says in verse 12, will become three.

How does two become three? Jesus comes in the middle. That's an amazing verse, and that is what God can do for you, dear brothers and sisters in your home. Now I want to move on to say a few words about children, parents and children.

It's primarily the father's responsibility to bring up the children in the ways of the Lord. That's very clear. It says in Ephesians in chapter 6, it talks about children and parents.

Children, obey your parents, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment, the promise, Ephesians 6.3, that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth. So I have a question to all parents.

Do you want it to go well with your children? Verse 3, Ephesians 6.3. Secondly, do you want them to live long on the earth? I'm sure you'll answer yes to both questions. Then here is what you should do. Teach your children, verse 2, to honor their father and mother.

Teach them, verse 1, to obey their parents. Don't ever take disobedience lightly, even from a two-year-old. I believe children can understand the meaning of the word no, even when they are one-year-old.

They can understand when they are one-year-old, and they recognize it. They may not know any language, but when you are going to do something and you say no, the tone of your voice and the word no, they understand it. And you know what they'll do? I've seen this happen with my grandchildren when they're one-year-old.

Next time they go near that forbidden thing, they look around to see if you're watching. That's how we know they got the message. I'm not supposed to touch this.

That's how I learned that even a one-year-old can understand the word no. Teach them obedience before you teach them anything else. Teach them to respect parents and to respect all older people.

It's one of the very sad things we see in developed countries nowadays. They call it developed, developed materially, but very often backwards spiritually. Young people have no respect for older people.

In the olden days, they used to call them sir or uncle. Now they just call them hi, and they call them by their first names with no respect. It's not just that.

Their whole attitude is one of disrespect. It's an indication of a world that's drifted away from God. Children who are never taught by their parents to respect older people.

I pray it'll never be true of any of your children. It'll go well with them if you teach them to respect parents and older children, sorry, and older people. The other very important thing that you need to teach your children is never to tell a lie.

These are the two things I was very strict with my own four sons. To obey and respect parents, and if ever they spoke disrespectfully, to immediately stop everything, go and ask forgiveness from the person you spoke disrespectfully to, then continue your work. Immediate apology.

Yes, I demanded it, and I would never tolerate their telling a lie. All children tell lies. It says in Psalm 58, from the birth onwards they tell lies.

So that's part of their nature. It's got it from Adam, and we have to teach them to finish with that habit, to speak the truth. So those are the two most important things we must teach them, and I want to show you a verse in Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, and the last two verses of the Old Testament.

The last two verses of the Old Testament deal with father-son relationship, and it says here that I'm going to send Elijah before the great terrible day of the Lord. Speaking about the second coming of Christ, and the prophet Elijah spoken of here is the body of Christ, the one man, the new man Christ, the church is called the body of Christ represented here by Elijah the prophet. And what is this last days Elijah the prophet, or the last days body of Christ, the church going to proclaim and teach? That the hearts, verse Malachi 4, 6, the last verse of the Old Testament, the hearts of the fathers must be restored to the children, and then the hearts of the children will be restored to the fathers, otherwise God will come and smite with a curse.

You see how important it is in the last days, he's speaking about just before verse 5, the great and terrible day of the Lord, before the final day of judgment, is the calling of fathers to be friends with their children, and to restore, and to restore that relationship. If there's a strain between you and your children for any reason, fathers must take the first step to restore that. It says here fathers must take the initiative, and then the children to the fathers.

So, to discipline our children is a very wise thing. The Bible says in Hebrews in chapter 12, turn with me for a moment here, we know that God is the most perfect father in the universe. And it says here that God punishes us sometimes, it is a discipline.

I've experienced the discipline of God many times in my life, in all the 60 years I've been a believer, whenever I slipped up somewhere, sometimes just for speaking one rude word, or one angry word somewhere, the Lord's disciplining me, saying I want you to be perfect in your speech. Why does God do that? There are times when I've been lying in bed with a fever, and I said, Lord, why this fever? What are you trying to teach me? Are you disciplining me for something? Help me to know, and the Lord will point out something that happened the previous week, very small little thing, some rude word I spoke somewhere, and I have to go and apologize. I want to set it right, and I say, thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord, for alerting me so that I can become a little more Christ-like, and if I needed to get a fever to learn that, I'm all for it. And it says here in Hebrews 12, verse 7, it is for discipline that you endure, and when God disciplines you, he's dealing with you as with sons. For which son is there whom his father does not discipline? Look at the question, which son is there whom his father does not discipline? Unfortunately, we have to say today there are many children whom the parents don't discipline.

Now, if the father is supposed to do it, but what if the father does not do it? He's too lazy, or he's not spiritually minded, then the mother has to do it. It's usually the father who goes to work and earns the living for the family, but what if the father is paralyzed? He's lying at home, then the mother has to do what the father normally does in other homes. So, if the father fails to discipline the child, the father fails to teach God's word to the children, the mother must do it.

So, it says here, when our earthly fathers, verse 9, earthly fathers disciplined us, and we respected them. So, the Bible teaches that fathers must discipline their children, and there are various ways in which we can discipline. If it is very serious and they're a little small, we may need to give them a tap to the rod or something, but there are other ways of disciplining them by not allowing them to go and play games that day, or asking them to sit down and do some type of work during their playtime, disciplining them in some

way.

There are many various ways. It doesn't always have to be with a spanking, always. It could be withholding certain privileges from them.

There are ways of disciplining to show them that we are displeased with their disobedience or their disrespect. It's very important, and fathers also, it says in Ephesians 6, must not only discipline them. There are two things.

Fathers, Ephesians 6, bring up your children in discipline and instruction of the Lord. That's the second thing fathers have to do, to teach the word of God to their children. From early age, to take a picture story Bible and read it to the children, and tell them the stories of the Bible and the lessons we can learn, spiritual lessons.

That should be our goal for all of our children. It's what I did with my own sons before they all left home the age of 17 or 18 to go to college. I wanted them to know the Bible.

I wanted them to be born again, and I wanted them to be baptized, and they all were. Born again, baptized, and really knew quite a bit of the scriptures. The principles of scripture, not just the stories in the Bible, but that will only come if you work with them, and work with them from the time they are one.

Pray with them. You got to pray for your child, even when it's in the mother's womb. Start praying and pray regularly, and we must never stop praying for our children.

We pray. I mean, our children are all married. We pray for them even now.

We pray for our grandchildren now. Very important. Prayer accomplishes many things.

Pray for them when they are sick. If any of your children are sick, father or mother, lay your hands on that child, and in Jesus' name, you said, Lord, you said they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Here I'm laying hands on my child.

Heal this child of this fever or whatever it is, and it's a wonderful thing for children there to learn faith as they see father and mother praying for them, teaching them the scriptures, praying for them. In this evil world is very, very important to teach our children scriptural truths, godly values, and how to relate to one another, how to avoid conflict, how to learn to forgive one another. Forgiveness is one of the important things that we must learn in every family, and let me conclude with that.

One of the most important things we must teach and learn in our family, husbands and wives, forgive one another, and don't remind each other of the failures of the past. Teach our children to forgive each other, and teach them the importance of that. The Bible says in Matthew 5 16, if you do not forgive each other, they're false.

You don't forgive others, they're false. Your heavenly father will not forgive you your sin. I want to be forgiven, and there are two conditions for my sin to be forgiven.

One, I must first forgive other people. Then, 1 John 1 9, I must confess my sin to God, and he will forgive me. The blood of Jesus will cleanse me.

But if I go to the Lord and ask him to cleanse me with his blood, and there's somebody with whom I've had a conflict, the Lord says leave your offering there, stop praying, go and settle matters with that person, and then come and offer your offering. You read that in Matthew 5 verse 23-24. So, many people say when you sin, just confess your sin to the Lord, he'll forgive you.

Yes, that's number two, but before that, number one, if you haven't forgiven somebody, you cannot go to God and ask him to forgive you. You have number one is, go and ask forgiveness from all the people you've hurt. Call them up, write a letter, do something, forgive everyone, ask everyone's forgiveness and forgive them.

If you've hurt them, ask their forgiveness. If you've got somebody's hurt, you forgive them. Then go to the Lord, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you from all sin.

My dear brothers and sisters, to build a Christian family in this ungodly generation is a wonderful privilege. You are supposed to be a light for God in your country, in this generation. May God help each of you to be so.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we think of so many families represented here and you're listening in many parts of the world, and I see something of the longing of your heart, Heavenly Father, that in all these homes in different parts of the world, there should be a light shining for you in the midst of the darkness of this evil age. I pray that many will be gripped today to be a light for you in their own home first, and then to share that light with others around them.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. As often, it's so refreshing to hear those words.

What we will do now, I have a few questions prepared from the lesson that you spoke, and maybe we can take two, three minutes, Brother Zach, if you can answer. We'll see. We'll probably spend maybe 10-15 minutes all together.

Okay, so you ready, Brother Zach? Yes. Okay, so the first point you mentioned today was about the hard work, right? In a marriage, in order to become a God, you have to work hard, right? The moment you hear, work hard, right? I think, especially in America, we hear immediately people think, I can't work. Like, you know, they quote that verse, right? Our good works are like filthy rags.

Can you give us some practical examples of what do you mean by work hard within the marriage? Well, I believe Jesus was the most hard-working man that ever walked on this earth. He worked hard as a little boy, going to the well to draw water for his mother, and worked hard as a carpenter, I'm sure helping Joseph, and after Joseph died, earning money for the whole family. He had four younger brothers and two sisters, and that is our example.

And then as a full-time worker, Christian work, full-time worker for the father, there were times when it says, there was, they didn't have time even to sit down and eat. He was a very hard-working person. I don't see any laziness in Jesus.

So that is our great example, and we must never be afraid of it. In fact, one of the things that the Lord told Adam was, by the sweat of your brow, you will earn your bread. And that law has never changed.

It's by hard work that we are to earn our living, and Second Thessalonians 3 says that if a man's not willing to work hard, he should not eat anything. He should not be given, he should not earn a salary. He should

just starve to death.

That's what Second Thessalonians 3 says. So hard work is very important. That's not against the preaching of the Word.

And when you talk about faith, faith without works, James makes it very clear. Faith without, James Chapter 2, faith without works is dead. And he says, just James 2.26, like the body without the breath in it is dead.

See the example in James 2.26. The body without breath is dead. You can see a dead body there, ten fingers, ten toes, two eyes, two ears, but it's dead. The most important thing is missing, breath.

It says here, just like a body without breath is dead, even so a faith that does not produce works is dead. What type of faith is that? A faith which has got all the doctrines correct. A picture of a person who's got all the doctrines correct is a dead body.

He believes that God is a Trinity. He believes Jesus is the Son of God. He believes Jesus came to die for the sins of the world.

And he believes that Jesus rose again from the dead, has gone up to heaven, is coming back. All the fingers, toes, eyes, ears of doctrine are there. But there's no breath.

There's no obedience to the Word. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. What is the proof of our love for the Lord? We keep his commandments.

He told us not to get angry. We've got to work hard to get rid of our anger. He told us not to lust after women.

We've got to work hard to get rid of that. And he said we must love our enemies. We've got to work hard.

That's the proof of our faith. The proof of our faith is obedience. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And the same thing applies in marriage. We've got to work on our marriage. We believe and we want a good marriage.

And we've got to work on it. And one of the main areas we've got to work on is denying yourself. If any man would come after me, Jesus said, let him deny himself.

Let the woman deny herself. Let him take up his cross daily and follow me. That is the answer.

A husband and wife must both take the place being crucified with Christ. The husband must hang on the cross and say, I'm dead with Christ. The wife hangs on the cross and says, I'm dead with Christ.

And I'm going to live that life crucified with Christ every day. They'll have a glorious marriage. So that's what they've got to work on.

Thank you, Brother Zach. So the second point you mentioned is about blaming each other, right? We shouldn't be blaming each other. That was great from Adam and Eve.

But what if a husband thinks like, hey, in this particular case, my wife is 100% wrong. Or a wife says, in this particular case, my husband is 100% wrong. So he should come to me like that.

How do you respond to that? Okay. First of all, let me say that the only person who's 100% right in this universe is God. And anyone who thinks he's 100% right, he's acting like God.

I like the story I heard of a wife who said that my husband thinks there are only two people who are perfect. One is God and the other is he himself. Because they never make a mistake.

They never apologize. So it's not true. 99% of the fault may be with the other person.

That'll be 1% with you. And I'll give you an example. I remember when one brother, many, many years ago, backslid in our church.

And I said, I don't know why, and he left our church. And I said, Lord, I never had any problem with him. I never rebuked him.

I never did anything. And what happened? Why did he get offended? And you know what the Lord said to me? Listen carefully. The Lord said to me, from Hebrews 3, 13, the word of God says, encourage one another daily.

Did you try to encourage him? The Lord said, you're telling me the things you did not do. You did not hurt him. You did not rebuke him.

You did not offend him. You did not do anything. But what did you do positively? Did you obey the command which says, encourage one another daily? How many times did you go and encourage him? He said, I'm sorry, Lord.

I can't think of any time I did that. That was your failure. So sometimes our failure is not what we did, but what we did not do.

There are sins of commission and sins of omission. So think of this command, husbands and wives, all husbands and wives, listen. Hebrews 3, 13 says, encourage one another daily, every day.

I'm not saying you must give a message to each other. No, you can encourage each other just by your behavior, just by smiling at one another and being good to one another. But you must seek to encourage one another because there's enough discouragement in the world.

So that is what we can do to one another. And so we cannot say that you never made any mistake. To the husband who says, the fault is all with my wife.

I would ask the husband, did you encourage her? Did you try to encourage her regularly? Oh, no, you didn't. You didn't do that. In other words, you did not commit any wrong, but you omitted to do something very important.

So sins of omission, which you forget to do, we don't call sins, but they are sins. It says very clearly in the last verse of James chapter 4, James 4, in the last verse, it says, when you know what is the right thing to do, which is to encourage one another, and you don't do it, it is sin. Very clear in James 4, the last verse, you omitted to do something that is sin.

So never say the fault is all hers. Yeah, that was fault was hers or his, but see yourself. But so many days I never did anything to encourage her.

Okay. Okay. Can you share that illustration about the clapping hands? It really helped me in my marriage.

Okay. Do you mind sharing that? Sure. See, when you think about clash or disagreement between a husband and wife, I illustrate it like this.

It's a clash. It's a conflict. This is husband and wife.

So if one of them, either husband or wife, say, I'm going to die to myself, however much the other person wants to have a conflict, there's no sound. Or if the other person says, I will die to myself, no sound. The clash comes because both want to stand up for their rights.

If one of them is willing to die to himself or herself, there is no sound at all. And if both are willing to die to themselves, then it'll be fellowship. That's wonderful.

So dying to self is the secret. I heard a funny story of a man who lived in a house where the next door neighbor, every morning at 6.30, he would start yelling at his wife. Right.

It was almost like an alarm clock, 6.30 in the morning, the yelling would start and he'd say, ah, it has started. And one day, it was absolute silence at 6.30 in the morning. After years of hearing a clash at 6.30 in the morning, he said, what happened? As the husband got converted.

So he went to the house and discovered the husband had died. Ah, that's why there was no clash this morning. Apply that spiritually.

When one person chooses to die to self, there will be no clash. So don't blame the other person, always. That's awesome.

Thank you, Brother Zach. How about this one? So the husband is supposed to love his wife, that's a commandment to him. And the wife is asked to submit to the husband.

But what if my wife doesn't submit to me, why should I love her? At the same day, the wife says, my husband doesn't love me, why should I submit to him? How do we answer that? Well, as I said, we go to God and say, God could have said, man doesn't love me, why in the world should I go down and try and save him? He doesn't listen to me. Whatever I say, he disobeys. My question is, do you want to be like the devil or do you want to be like God? That is the ultimate question.

The devil is not interested in saving any man. He wants all of them to land up in his lap in hell for eternity. He says, let them go their useless way.

But God says, no, I don't want them to go in their useless way. So what if they don't submit to me? I will go down and love them and see. Think of many of you who are listening today.

Now I find my own experience. We were all rebels against God once and today we are joyfully submitting to him. He's not punishing us to make us submit to him.

We are joyfully submitting to him. How did it come? It came because God humbled himself and came down to our level and lifted us up. So that is the answer in all these situations.

There is a way to bring redemption if we go down and take the low place and we're willing to humble ourselves. You know, because when we humble ourselves, God comes on our side and gives us grace. To any of you husbands and wives who are finding a difficult situation in your home, do you want God to come and support you? Here's the secret.

God gives us grace, which means support to the humble. He resists the proud. It's proud people who are always stubborn and stand for their rights.

Humble people are willing to give up their rights. And I look at it like the 1 Peter 5 verse, God gives grace to the humble, but he resists the proud. Now I've pictured it like this.

If I'm proud and I stand up for my rights, God will come in front of me and keep pushing me back. But the moment I humble myself, God will come behind me and push me forward. Now my question is, do you want God to come in front of you and push you back? Or do you want him to come behind you and push you forward in your spiritual life to make you more godly and loving and holy in your home? So don't say my wife doesn't submit to me.

Don't say my husband doesn't love me. You do what you're supposed to do. And like I said, in 1 Peter 3, it says the submissive wife wins her husband without a word.

And there are many cases of husbands who loved their rebellious wives and brought them to Christ. So if you do your part, you can be sure of one thing. God will get behind you and support you.

So let's ask this question. You've got a partner who is not converted. Question.

Does God want your partner to be converted or to become spiritual? Answer is yes. But that partner of yours is not cooperating with God. How can you cooperate with God? You say, Lord, I'll humble myself before you and you give me grace.

That means you support me. Grace is God's power. And if Almighty God supports you, tell me, even the devil cannot stand against you.

And whatever the devil may do in your partner or in your home, one day God will break it down. The same thing with your children. Your children are stubborn and rebellious.

Get God on your side. God will break down that rebellion in your children. So whether it's husband or wife or children, this is the answer.

Humble yourself and get the grace of God on your side. Amen. One last question about marriage.

Then I have one more for the children. So many husbands and wives, when they go through difficult times, they have this thoughts in their mind like, did I make a mistake? Maybe I didn't follow God's will in this particular marriage. Maybe I should have married someone else.

What's your advice to such couples? Don't ever think I should have married somebody else. You know the saying in English, the grass on the other side of the fence looks greener till you go there and you discover all the weeds over there. So that other person, you think you would have been happier if you had married.

God saved you from that. It would have been more miserable. God allowed you to marry someone.

And even if it was a choice you made on your own without seeking God's will, you have to believe the sovereignty of God controls all those things. We don't have to look back in regret. Looking back in regret will never, never help you.

Even the world has a saying, don't cry over spilt milk. Because if you were carrying some milk in a jar and a jug and some of it's spilt, if you spend your time crying there, more will get spilt and the milk you have in your jar will get spoiled. So don't cry over spilt milk.

Use whatever there is. So don't ever look back and ask question, should I have done this? Should I not have done that? Every one of us has regrets concerning the foolish, stupid things we did in our past life. I have, certainly.

But I thank God that it's gone. It's cleansed in the blood of Christ and I'm not going to do that again. But if I sit in regret over the past all the time, meditating on that, I'll do mess up even more in the future.

So we must not sit in regret over the past. We must say, Lord, I acknowledge I failed. I've told parents whose children are wayward, go to the Lord and say, Lord, we failed in bringing up our children in a godly way.

Forgive us. But I'm not going to spend all my life regretting that. Lord, I confess my sin.

Forgive me. Now, Lord, work with my children and bring them to Christ and God will do it for you. But if you sit with regret, you'll never get anywhere.

So don't ever look back in the past over regretting anything about any mistake that you made. God can help you. Any blunder that you made, God can overcome that.

And I'll give you the greatest example of that. Did God want Adam and Eve to fail? Definitely not. You cannot say that God created them to fail.

He did not want them to disobey him. But they did disobey him. And what was the result? The result was Jesus came and manifested the love of God on Calvary, which we would never have seen if Adam and Eve had never failed.

That is a classic example of how God brings something wonderful out of failure. Out of the failure of man, God manifested his wonderful love on Calvary, which is to show us God is able to overcome the mistakes we make and bring something good out of it. Romans 8, 28 says, God will make everything, even your past failures, work together for good if you love him today and you want to fulfill his purpose for your life.

But that'd be also, it's so important for us to be thankful for our spouses, right? Because as you said, it's a sovereign arrangement of God. God allowed that to happen. So God knows what's the best for me.

That's why God gave my wife to me, right? Yeah, I would say God sees the future. And even though you may have been a non-Christian, unconverted, you never sought God's will in rebellion. You just married each other.

Maybe you lived in sin and got married, whatever it is. God who saw the future knew that one day you would become his child, maybe 20 years later. He knew that before you got married, that one day you were going to receive Christ and become his child.

And so, this is an amazing truth, that God had a control over your life even before you were converted and ordained a number of things in your life when you did not even know him to bring you to the place where you are today. So we don't want to get into the philosophy of all this. The best thing is to do what Paul says, forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward to the things that are before.

I press toward the mark for the prize of becoming more and more like Christ. So never, never look back in regret over the past and say, Lord, I was ignorant. I'll give you a lovely verse for that.

Acts 17 verse 30. It's a great verse, which I always share with people who have regret over the past. Acts chapter 17 and verse 30 says, the times of ignorance God overlooks.

What does he do about the times of ignorance in your life? He says, I overlook it. But now he commands everyone to repent. Please remember this reference.

Acts chapter 17 and verse 30. Okay, last question I have is in terms of you mentioned about disciplining the children. What if I am so frustrated and angry when my children did something, right? Should I just spank them or should I stay away? Like, what should I do? Well, let me confess that I have often spanked my children in anger.

Many years I did not have victory over sin. When I was married, I had no victory over anger. I had no victory over sin.

There was anger in my home from me. Because I began to get victory 16 years after I was born again. I never knew.

Nobody taught me that there's a life of victory in the new covenant. So there were times when I spanked my children in anger. What did I do? I was a Christian.

I knew it was wrong. My children were small, maybe six or seven years old. If I apologize to them, they would not be able to understand the difference between the discipline and the anger.

They think daddy's apologizing for hitting me. And if I keep doing that, they will not value this discipline. So I never told them anything.

Then I would go to the rest to the restroom, to the toilet, because that is the only place I could lock myself and be alone in the house, undisturbed. And I would sit there and I would weep before God and say, Lord, I'm really sorry. The discipline is right, but the anger is wrong.

Please forgive me for the anger. Please bring me to the day when I can discipline my children without anger. And I tell you, it took years.

It didn't happen overnight, but it became better and better and better and better. And I tell you, I finally learned to conquer my anger completely. If you seek God with all your heart, he's a rewarder of those who seek him diligently.

But what about asking forgiveness from my children? Yes, I said when they are about 18 years old, they'll understand the difference. Then I'll give them a consolidated apology for all the years when I got angry with them and said, I'm sorry. Then they'll be able to understand it.

Cool. Thank you so much, Brother Zach. As always, it's a blessing.

Is Sister Annie close by you? I'm sure that all these folks are so blessed by Sister Annie also. Okay. Give me a minute.

Okay. Thank you. Here's my better half.

Hi, Sister Annie. How are you? I'm good, thank you. People all over the world want to say thank you.

I know we all see Brother Zach often, but we don't see you that often. I know we are always in the background. I sit on the other side, listening to the message.

I know, but we are so blessed by your ministry. And I'm sure all these folks from all around the globe want to say thank you to both of you for the work that you're doing. And we've been so blessed.

Thank God. I wanted to share a few things before we all close up. And that is, there are some books related to marriage and family, which you can get from our CFC website online.

You can download it and read it, or you can order it from CFC India. One is a book called Sex, Love and Marriage. For those who are not yet married, your children, to prepare them for marriage.

I wrote this book 50 years ago, soon after I was married, and I've not changed my opinion on anything I've written here. You're invited to go to the CFCIndia.com, and you can download it and read the whole thing. And then for little girls, my wife wrote a book called A Girl's Viewpoint.

It's a fictional story bringing Christian truths for young girls, if you have a daughter. Here's a book that my wife wrote for mothers called God Made Mothers. All of these are on our CFC India website.

And here's a fairly thick book called Here Are My Sons. It's the emails that I wrote to my four sons, when they were teenagers, and in college, in their early 20s. Lots and lots of emails, and warning them, correcting them, advising them, teaching them, obeying the scripture, which says, fathers, bring up your children in the instruction of the Lord.

And that applies to sons and daughters equally. So any young man you have children, this also, you can go to the CFC website, and you can listen, read it, or download it. But I want to encourage you to bring up your children in a godly way.

Thank you. What about the other two books? The Heavenly Home, that would be another one, right? No, I forgot that. There's a little booklet called The Heavenly Home, which is also there.

And then The Encouragement for Mothers? The Encouragement for Mothers, that's right. And in the US, if you need that book, you can write to me, ravensministry at gmail.com. Yeah, that's right. You can get it from there.

Yes. If you're in the US, I can always ship from here. All right.

Thank you so much, once again, Brother Zach and Sister Annie. It's been a real pleasure. God bless you all.

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