

Only One Life Will Soon Be Past

by Zac Poonen

Living a life that lasts means living a life that is pleasing to God and will endure for eternity.

Duration: 49:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:41, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Ephesians 4:31, 1 Timothy 6:7, Revelation 21:7

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a life that pleases God. He highlights the concept of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, where believers will be evaluated based on the quality of their works. The speaker warns against focusing solely on quantity and statistics, urging listeners to consider the motives behind their actions. He encourages a deeper study of Scripture and a willingness to pause and reflect on specific verses that speak to us personally.

Transcript

This is a very well-known statement made by a great man of God. I've often thought about it myself. Only one life, and it will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, it will soon be past, and only what's done for Christ will last. Now, you've got to understand it right. For years, I didn't understand it right.

I'm sure the man of God who said it understood it right, because he manifested it by his life. But, here's what I mean by understanding it right. There are a lot of things we can do for Christ, which won't last, because of one verse, Matthew 15 and verse 13.

Matthew 15, verse 13, Jesus himself said, Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted out, shall be pulled out in the final day. What does that mean, Matthew 15, verse 13? That means, if this wonderful thing you're doing for the Lord, if the idea did not originate in God, that's not going to last. If it just originated in your clever brain, it's not going to last.

Every plant, it doesn't matter whether it's a good plant, that's not the point. Did the heavenly Father plant it, or was it your own bright idea? There are a lot of things which have been done for Christ, I would say in quotes, for Christ, by some very sincere Christians, because they have a lot of money. Today, a lot of people think, if only we had money, we could do so many things for Christ.

Really? If so, why is it that the God who made Abraham a billionaire, and Job a billionaire, and Solomon and David billionaires, why did he make Peter and Paul paupers? Wasn't there something wrong there? No. Why did he make the apostles so poor when he made all these Old Testaments the same God? It's because that abundance of wealth would have prevented Paul and Peter from preaching an authentic gospel. They would have depended more on money than on the Holy Spirit, like a lot of Christians.

I come from India, which is considered a third world country, developing country, etc. The object of mission work for 200 years, 98% not even Christian by name. And I've seen the amount of third-rate Christianity in our country, because of dependence on money.

All the prayer letters that go out asking people for money, money, money, because you need it. You've reduced Almighty God to a beggar. And I say, what is needed? I wish people would seek that earnestness for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Without me, you can do nothing. But as today's Christianity says, without money, you can do nothing. That's not the gospel.

Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. And if my Heavenly Father has not planted it, it's going to be pulled out. So, the real way to say it would be, only one life, it will soon be past, and only what Christ does through me will last.

Not what I do for Christ. There's a world of difference between what I do for Christ and what Christ does through me. What I do for Christ, I'll come back with an empty fishing boat after years of struggling.

What Christ does through me, my boat will be filled in a moment. The five loaves and two fish can feed 5,000 if Christ does through me. If I try to do it myself, I may feed one person or two.

There's a lot of difference. That life of humble dependence upon Christ, moment by moment, like the branches. This is one of the fundamental secrets of the Christian life.

And the other side of the same coin is what Paul said from his own experience, after many years, after 30 years of walking with God. He writes in Philippians 4, verse 13, the other side of the same coin. I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.

He's not saying like today's Christian workers, I can do everything if you fellows will give me money. That's another gospel. You see, God's work is suffering because you fellows are not giving enough money.

The time of recession, you chaps are not paying up enough to the mission field. God's work is suffering. Poor God, struggling for lack of money.

What an insult it is. We live in a world where Christians have descended to the level of the corporate world, where they think the main thing is money. It's not.

It's the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit's power, you can try to live whatever life you want to live. You'll never succeed.

Jesus said, apart from me, you can do nothing. Like the branch in the tree, the sap flows from the branch to the tree. That's the picture of Christ continuously filling us with the Holy Spirit.

Every single day, my wife and I pray, Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit. It's the main thing we pray for in the morning when we pray together. Forgive us our sins and fill us with the Holy Spirit this day.

I get up to speak, Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit. Give me the gift of prophecy. Give me words according to the need of the people.

Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, I'm wasting people's time and my own time and God's time. Without me, you can do nothing.

And that by itself is not enough. With Christ, I can do everything, not everything. I mean, I can't win the 100 meters in the Olympics.

You've got to understand, all things means all things that God has designed that I should do. Every single thing that God planned that I should do when he brought me into this earth through my mother, every single thing I'll be able to accomplish before I leave this earth so that I'll be able to say like Jesus, Father, I finished the work you gave me to do. And like the Apostle Paul said, I finished my race.

I've kept the faith. I fought the good fight. You should be able to say that.

Not that I somehow managed to scrape through to the end or I made a lot of money or became very famous. I finished the work, Lord, you gave me to do. I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, do you believe God gave me a work to do? I'm so thankful that I don't remember anybody telling me this, but as I read the scriptures when I was 21 years old, soon after my baptism, I was gripped by this truth 50 years ago that God had a plan for my life.

I had already made a plan for my life because I joined the military in India before I was converted. And I had a plan to go right up to the top. But then Christ came into my life and altered the direction of my life completely and showed me from scripture that he had a plan for my life.

That applies to all of us. Let me show you this verse. It's originally spoken to Israel, but applies to us, Jeremiah 29.

Jeremiah 29 and verse 11. This is one of these Old Testament prophecies in the book of Jeremiah which have a dual fulfillment. Once in the nation of Israel and secondly in us.

There are many Old Testament prophecies like that that have a double fulfillment. Once in the nation of Israel and the other for us. This was for the nation of Israel initially that God would bring them back from Babylon after 70 years.

But it also applies to us. I know the plans I have for you. Make it personal.

Plans for welfare and not for calamity. Not to mess up your life. If you don't follow my plan, you will mess up your life.

But if you follow my plan, there will be no calamity. I'm not saying there won't be any trials. I'm not saying you won't be persecuted.

I'm not saying you won't be killed for the faith. All the apostles except John were perhaps killed. I'm not talking about that.

But there won't be any spiritual calamity. Examples of spiritual calamity. Credit card debt.

Do you think of that as spiritual calamity? Absolutely. One of the biggest calamities facing people in North America. Complete disobedience to Scripture in Romans 13 verse 8 which says, Oh no man anything.

And how does it come? Through Christians. Covetous, covetous, covetous. Wanting to buy things they cannot afford.

Calamity. I think it is a calamity. I decided when I became a Christian I'd never get into debt.

My wife and I have known deep levels of poverty when we were first married. Not today. But when we were first married.

But we decided we'd never, never get into debt. We never bought clothes because we couldn't afford them. We didn't buy many things because we couldn't afford them.

We said when God expands our financial boundary, we'll buy them. And the result is in 71 years of my life, I've never been in debt for a single day. It's a calamity.

Those are the type of calamities God saves us from. From messing up our life. Messing up other people's lives by adultery.

Harming others. Exploiting others. Paul said we never took advantage of you.

We were never a burden to you. So it's a calamity to make yourself a burden to other people. God is able to do all things for us.

I've got a plan for your life which will be the best possible plan which you yourself will not be able to better. To give you a future and a hope. I said Lord that's the plan I want.

Think of someone planning your life who knows everything about your personality. Who knows all about the dangers that are going to take place in your life 50 years from now. All through those years.

And who's got maximum wisdom. Wouldn't you commit your life to ask him to plan your life and you plan it yourself who's so short-sighted. So short-sighted that I don't even know what's going to happen tomorrow morning.

That's how blind I am. And I'm so ignorant about my own capabilities and my own limitations. I can have high thoughts about myself that I can do so many things.

I thank God that I can commit my life to another person who plans my life. And that's what it means. I can do all things that God has planned for me through Christ who strengthens me.

That is through the power of the Holy Spirit. If you are gripped and if you are young brother you're lucky to be gripped by these truths. I often say to people in my own churches back in India.

You who are young, boy, you don't realize how lucky you are to hear these truths when you're 17 years old. I know people who are hearing this for the first time when they are 50. They messed up their life for 50 years and now they are hearing.

Thank God there's still some hope for them. But what can they do about those 50 years they wasted? Nothing. There are certain things even Almighty God cannot do.

For example, He cannot give you the year 2010 once again. Sorry, that's gone. He can't even give you the first five months of 2011.

It's gone. He wasted it. It's wasted.

However much you fast and pray, He can't give you those years back. I know there are people who quote that verse in Joel chapter 2 which says, I will restore to you the years that our locust has eaten. Don't misquote it to find some comfort in your sin.

It doesn't work. God will forgive you, sure. Acts 17 verse 30 says, the times of ignorance He overlooks.

But the wasted years are wasted years which could have been useful for God. I'm so thankful that I was gripped by this truth not when I was 51 but when I was 21. My only regret is that I wasn't gripped by it when I was 6. Imagine how much more we could have offered of our life for the Lord without having spoiled His name in any way by any action or word of ours.

We don't realize how serious sin is. What I want to say is when we think of this overcoming life, recognize these two very important truths. Apart from me, you can do nothing.

Or in other words, whatever you think you have accomplished apart from Christ you will discover in eternity is zero. That is what the Bible calls in 1 Corinthians 3, wood, hay and straw which will be tested by fire and it will all be burned. And then there's gold, silver and precious stones which will remain through the fire.

If you're not familiar with that scripture, let me show it to you in 1 Corinthians 3. 1 Corinthians 3, it says here, it's fine that you laid a foundation in Christ. That means your sins are forgiven and Christ is underneath your life. Great.

1 Corinthians 3 verse 11. There's no other foundation a man can lay other than that which is laid Jesus Christ. You founded your life on Christ, that's great.

Most of you are really born again. You received Christ as your Lord. Now it says, you better be careful how you build.

The picture is of a house that you're building. You've laid the foundation alright that your sins are forgiven. Now, be careful what type of bricks you're using.

In India we use bricks. Or here you use wood. Be careful what type of wood you're using.

In those days they built with stones. But here he's thinking of building a temple for God. And the material you use must be material that lasts.

And he says it's going to be tested by fire one day. A man can build either with gold, silver, and precious stones. Or with wood, hay, and straw.

But whatever man uses, God's not going to force a person to, compel a person to use gold, silver, and precious stones. Each man's work will become evident. What it looks like now is not going to be in the day

the Lord comes.

The day will show it because every man's work will be revealed by fire. And this is why I say the opinion other people have about your life or your ministry is fit for the trash can. Throw it in the garbage bin.

Whatever people said about you, good or bad, it's worth nothing. People think you're a wholehearted brother? Throw it in the trash can. People think you're a compromiser, a hypocrite? Throw it in the trash can.

Live before God, brother. It's absolutely liberating. I'll tell you one of the most liberating things I've experienced in my life.

To live before God's face. What does He think of my life? He evaluates everything in my life by fire. My thoughts, my words, my attitudes, my motives.

Especially motives. You can do a good thing with a wrong motive. And it's all going to be tested by fire.

And look at this lovely word, quality. Verse 13. The fire will test not the quantity, but the quality of each man's work.

In Christendom today, as I have observed it for 50 years, statistics is the big thing. Have you heard that saying, there are three types of lies? Black lies, white lies, and statistics. So many people were converted.

So many people came to the meeting. So many reports that go out like that. One would think the whole of India is already converted.

The total of all the people from different Christian organizations are converted. Quantity, quantity. That's how it is in the corporate world.

What is the bottom line? How much profit did we make this year? Quantity, numbers, numbers. How big is your church? Only 10,000? We got 30,000 in our church. What is it? Quantity, quantity, quantity.

Here it says the fire will test quality. I say that constantly. I'm not talking about other churches.

I'm talking about my own church. We have maybe about 200 adults in our church. And I said to them like this.

This is what I speak in my home church. Less people think I'm only speaking about others. I say, brothers, if someone were to ask me, and we have about 200 young people and children, so 400.

I say, if people ask me, how many people are in the church? I say, we have 400 chairs that are usually filled on Sunday. But how many are disciples? Supposing one of the angels were to ask the Lord, Lord, how many disciples are there down in Christian Fellowship Center Bangalore? The Lord says, about 20. Will I be shocked? I said this in a meeting there.

I said, brothers and sisters, I'll be thrilled if there are 20 wholehearted disciples in this church. 11 people turned the first world upside down. Can you imagine what 20 can do in India? Don't glory in numbers.

Quality. Wholehearted. So remember this, that your life is quality that's going to be tested in the final day.

I'm not saying about going to heaven, because it says, if you're built with wood, hay, and straw, verse 15, a man's work will be burnt up, he shall suffer loss, but he will be saved. So if all you're interested in is going to heaven, you might as well not come tomorrow onwards for the meetings, because you've got nothing to tell me. But if you're interested in overcoming life, you're interested in standing before the Lord, people have asked me, Brother Zach, why do you so often say that people will have regret in heaven? Well, I'll tell you, I believe that, and my main aim is to prevent people from having regret when they stand before the Lord, and I'll tell you why.

I'll show it to you from Scripture. Supposing you're one of those people who spent years and years and years emphasizing quantity and doing this thing for the Lord and that thing for the Lord and giving money for the Lord and this thing and other things, going here, going there, and doing so many things, and in God's eyes, the whole thing is wood, hay, and straw. None of those things originated in God's mind, it was all your bright ideas, and you were pretty proud of all that you were doing so-called for the Lord, and all the people you thought you were reaching, etc.

I'm not against numbers. The first day of Pentecost, 3,000 were converted, and the Bible says that. Sure, I'm delighted if multitudes become disciples, not just say they believe in Jesus.

And you stand before the Lord, let's imagine Jesus has come, and you're standing before the throne, and one by one we are being evaluated, and your turn has come. The Lord reveals it, plays the videotape of your life from the time you're born again, because all the previous part of your life is blotted out. From the day you're born again, here's your life.

And shows by the standards of heaven what your life was worth, not by what people thought about you. And your work is tested there by God's standards, and you stand there after 50 years of being a believer with nothing to show for your life. Everything was done by human methods, and for money, and honor, and everything earthly, not the result of waiting on God and trying to find out His will, or seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit or for the glory of God.

Tell out of it for your own honor, etc., etc., and it's all wiped out. And the Lord says, but you're forgiven. Tell me, will you have regret at that time? I tell you, if I heard that from the Lord, I would bow my head in shame and sorrow, and say, Lord, please give me one more chance.

One more chance to live on earth. The one life. Not because I won't get a reward in heaven.

That's not what I'm looking for. No, no, no, no, no. Don't misunderstand me.

Not because, oh, I can't sit with the throne of Jesus, because He's on the throne, or He won't have some crown or mansion. Those are not the things that I'm looking for. But I'll tell you what will bring me sorrow.

Lord, you gave me one life on earth to show my gratitude for what you did for me on the cross. And I wasted it. Seeking man's honor, seeking to advance myself in the world, making more money, trying to become famous, and living basically for myself, knowing more about movies and film stars than I know about the Bible, and I fooled other people that I was a wholehearted disciple of Jesus, and I raised up children who were like me, and I produced other believers who were like me.

Boy, I tell you, if I were like that, I'd have tremendous regret, because I can't live my life again. Forget the reward. Lord, I let you down in the one life you gave me on earth.

What's the use shouting in heaven, oh, I love you, Lord, I love you, Lord? It'll sound so empty. Because the one life you gave me on earth where you wanted me to prove my love for Him, I didn't. I lived for myself.

Think about it. This is real. I'm not painting an imaginary picture.

It's all from Scripture. Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10. We must all appear for... Whenever you find the word for, connect it to the previous verse.

2 Corinthians 5, verse 9. We have, we can say, one ambition. That is, whether we are in heaven or earth, to please God. Why? Because, because, for means because, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, not whether we go to heaven or hell, so that we can be rewarded according to the deeds we did in our body, whether good or bad.

Good or bad means whether gold, silver, or precious stones, or wood, hay, and straw, by God's standards. And, therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. We tell others, hey, fellas, don't forget that you're going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ.

Make sure you're ready to be evaluated by God's standards. And so, Paul says, verse 9, this verse has really gripped me. I want you to think for a moment, I feel that many of us read the Scriptures too superficially, too fast.

I want to encourage you to develop the habit of sometimes stopping on a verse for a whole day. It's happened to me many times. I read the Bible and I get to a verse and it's like a stoplight there saying, stop.

Don't go further. I stop. It's like obey the traffic lights on the road, I stop.

God's got something to say to me. And sometimes, the next morning when I get up, the stoplight is still red. I can't move on from that verse.

God's got something more to say to me from the same verse. Have you ever had that experience? Or you're trying to, you know, somehow complete the Bible in one year. You know, I'll tell you honestly, once upon a time I had that goal, but I don't want to get into the Guinness Book of Records of how many times I went through the Bible.

I want the Bible to go through me once. In my life. Every verse in Scripture.

I prayed this prayer. I said, Lord, every commandment I'm supposed to obey. As a New Testament Christian, I want to obey before I leave the service.

And so what does God do? He gives me a few enemies. But how can I love my enemies if I don't have enemies? Thank God for enemies. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to obey that one verse.

He gives me people who persecute me because it says you've got to pray for those who persecute you. He gives me people who curse me. Thank God.

Because it says you've got to bless those who curse them. I'm serious. I thank God for all these things which the Lord has arranged so that I, he's trying to answer my prayer.

He makes me lose money sometimes. And I asked him, Lord, why did you do that? Didn't you pray that you want to be free from the love of money? Okay, Lord, fine. If that's the reason, it's okay.

And I said, the other thing is, I want to claim every promise that there is in Scripture which I'm supposed to claim as a New Testament Christian. I remember there were some who hated me a lot and there were some who created some problems for me, so-called Christians. But finally, after a number of years, I just loved them and did nothing.

They came and sought peace, cleared the whole thing. I said, praise the Lord. Fulfillment of Proverbs 16, 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

I want to give you a project, a lifetime project. Ask God what I ask God. Lord, before I leave this earth, I want to obey every commandment I'm supposed to obey as a New Covenant Christian.

I want to claim every promise there is in the Bible which I'm supposed to claim as a New Covenant Christian. I don't want these empty promises other people are trying to claim which are not in Scripture. And I say, Lord, this verse really gripped me, verse 9, 2 Corinthians 5, 9. If you read the context, you will read there that at home means heaven and absent means absent from heaven.

So what he's saying is, whether I'm in heaven or on earth, I have only one ambition, verse 9, to be pleasing to God. And I meditated on that. I stood at that stoplight and I said, Lord, what does that mean for me? And the Lord said, think what will be your ambition when you go to heaven.

Will it be to become famous or make more money or to be known as a great preacher in heaven? Ridiculous. I wouldn't have any such ambition in heaven. I said, Lord, I only have one ambition in heaven, to please you.

If you're a wholehearted disciple, that would be your ambition on earth as well. That's what Paul says. That means when I move into heaven, there's not going to be any change of ambition.

There's going to be a change in my body, sure. There's going to be a change in my mind. I shall understand things I never understood before.

My body will never be sick again. I'll have a resurrected body. I won't be wearing glasses there.

But no change in ambition. Great. I want to ask all of you a straight question.

Don't give the answer to me. Give the answer to yourself before God. Will your present ambition change if you go to heaven today? Then you know for yourself whether you're a wholehearted Christian or not.

I took that decision years ago. I said, Lord, I don't want any change of ambition when I go to heaven. I want to align my earthly... I've had many ambitions in the past, but I want to align my earthly ambition to be exactly the same so that I don't have to alter track when I go to heaven.

Hey, I've got to please God now. No, no, no, no. It's the same old ambition I had on earth for a number of years to please God.

Not to impress people, not to impress the angels or impress anybody in heaven, but my Savior and exactly the same on earth. And the only way to do that is if I judge myself all the time. I do that every day.

I never preach a sermon without going home and judging myself. Lord, was there something I said? I sat here between the two sessions. At the end of the last session, I said, Lord, tell me, was there something I said in the last session which was really not of use? I want to cleanse myself.

If you live in that, if you think it's a burdensome life, far from it. Is it a burdensome thing to have a shower and get rid of all the dirt from your body? Don't you feel fresh when you come out of a shower? That's exactly how you feel. Judging yourself is like having a spiritual shower.

Lord, cleanse me. Show me the things, there's some dirt sticking here and there. As long as we live on this earth, we're going to perspire and be dirty.

But thank God for a shower. If you have the habit of taking a daily shower, have the habit of cleansing yourself every day. I've developed that habit long ago.

Make sure that you're, you know, we all start off with many, many ambitions when we are born again. Don't think every born again person has an ambition only to please God. What is your ambition in life? On what basis did you make the decisions that you made in life? After you're born again, forget the earlier.

After you're born again, on what basis? There are many decisions you made in life after you were born again. Whom to marry, what to do, where to live. What was the motive behind those decisions? Was it I want to please God? If I want to please God, I must find out His plan for my life.

Don't think that the most difficult task on earth is always God's will for you. Or maybe God wants me to go to Afghanistan and I'm living here. That's a crazy thing.

A lot of people think that if I seek God's plan, He will always give me the most miserable possible thing I can think of. Young people fear like that. If I say, God, I'll marry anybody you choose for me, God will pick out the ugliest woman in the world and say, marry her.

Or if I'm asking God for a job, He'll pick up the most low-paying job in the world and say, take that. Or if I ask Him where I should live, He'll tell me the most inconvenient place on the face of the earth and go and live there. Who gives you these ideas? The devil.

To make you feel that God's not a good father. He's not a good father. He's one who's out to mess up your life.

I remember one young person telling me this. I said, why don't you give your life completely to Christ? He said, I want to enjoy life a little. In other words, if I give my life to Christ, no, I won't be able to enjoy it.

I'll mess up my life and I can't do this and I can't do that and I can't do all the other things. I said, it's the other way around. To do your own will is like eating the pig's food, the prodigal son.

To do God's will is like sitting at the banquet table with God. Do you believe that? Hasn't the devil reversed it and said doing your own will is like sitting at the banquet table and doing God's will. That's like in a far country with the pigs.

The devil's a master at reversing the truth. Dear brothers and sisters, I encourage you. An overcoming life is God's will for every single one of us sitting here.

It's not something for the spiritual elite. You know, those who are upper class Christians. There's no such thing as upper class Christians.

There's only one class of Christians. Those are disciples of Jesus. And God wants every one of us to live an overcoming life.

And that is the best possible life you can ever live on this earth. I wish I could convince people about this. I feel my words are so inadequate.

So often when I finish preaching, I say, Lord, I tried my best, but your Holy Spirit's got to convince them. I can't do it. Flesh and blood cannot reveal to anyone that following God's plan every day is the best possible life you can ever live.

Obedying Him in all things, walking in humility, when it says put away all anger, it means put away all anger. When it says put away all hatred, it means put away all hatred. If I say, please put away all the pews from this building, how many pews will be left? Not even one.

You take verses like that, Ephesians 4.31, put away all anger, put away all malice. You take it like that or do you think a few remnants lying around are okay? Don't question how seriously you take God's word. There is a life we are missing.

You don't realize what a wonderful, glorious life the overcoming life is. I hope you'll get a little glimpse of it and want it. Like many things that people want to sell us something, give us a taste of something that you want it.

I hope that you want this overcoming life. God wants you to have it, brother. Jesus died that we might all be overcomers.

Let me show you this verse in Revelation 21. Revelation 21 it says, verse 7. This is talking about heaven. Revelation 21 is speaking about the new heaven and the new earth in verse 21, verse 1. And who are the ones who are going to inherit this new heaven and the new earth? I saw a new heaven and a new earth, verse 1, because the first heaven and first earth are passed away.

And God said in verse 7, He who overcomes shall inherit these things. I will be his God and he will be my son. I want to be in that number.

I hope you also want to be in that number. Inheriting all things that God has prepared for us when Jesus died to purchase on the cross for us. In that day we shall see that all the things of earth which we valued so much were temporary, were used by God not for us to keep permanently but to test it, to see what we're going to do with it.

Let's turn to 1 Timothy chapter 6. I want to show you one word which you may have missed out in this verse. We're all familiar with this verse, but there's one word that you may have missed out. 1 Timothy chapter 6. That verse makes a lot of difference.

One word. 1 Timothy 6 verse 7. Let's read it slowly. For we have brought nothing into the world so we cannot take anything out of it either.

What is the important word? So. So. Why can't you take anything when you leave this earth? Because when you were born, you brought nothing in.

It's like I've seen sometimes, you know, mothers come with their little children to visit a home and the people in that home are very kind to let that little boy play with toy cars and all types of things. And like little boys who like these toys, they put one or two toy cars into their pockets when they are leaving the house. So mommy has to check the pockets before leaving the house.

And says, son, you shouldn't take these out. But mommy, they allowed me to play with it. Yes, but that's only when you're here.

They were kind enough to let you play with it. We empty our pockets when we leave the house. Why? Because you came to this house with empty pockets.

So. We must go with empty pockets. Now apply it to this verse.

You came with nothing. You have to go with nothing. So what about all this I worked so hard to achieve and earn? You didn't realize they were just toys God gave you to play with on this earth.

More than toys, God was using them to see how you would use them. Did He help? He just tested you to see what you would do with that help. I remember once I was invited to pray for some nominal Christian.

He wasn't born again. He was sick. So I wanted to help him to understand the meaning of praying.

It's not just an empty request. So I said to him, so brother, I mean, I call him brother just to encourage him. He's a brother as a human being, not as a Christian.

What should I pray for? He's sick, lying in bed. Should I pray, Lord, give him strength so that he can watch internet pornography? No, he's not able to do that because he's lying in bed. He's not strong enough to yell at his wife, Lord.

Please give him strength and heal him so he can get up and start yelling at his wife again. Or go and stand in line for the cinema tickets. He's not able to stand.

Do that now, Lord. What do you want God to heal you for? I say that to Christians. Do you pray for healing? I've had different problems at different times.

I'm 71 years old now and you can expect that the machine doesn't work perfectly always. So we pray for God to repair it. But the question is, why do you want God to repair it? Why do you want God to repair this body? I can honestly say every time, Lord, only to do your will better.

No other desire. I've said that for many years now. So you will discover in that day that all the offerings, God gave you health.

What do you do with it? He gave you a house. What do you do with that house? I remember the first time years ago when I owned a house of my own. And I was scared.

I was scared because I said, Lord, I never expected in my life that I would own a house of my own. It wasn't worth very much but the old house we lived in and but it was a place and I was so scared. I said, Lord, please take it away.

It's going to be an idol in my life. I want nothing on earth but Jesus. And this is way back, nearly 40 years ago.

I said, I only want Jesus. And if you think this thing is going to come between me and Jesus, burn it up. Let there be some electrical short circuit or something and get burned up.

And I don't even have insurance on the house so I'd really be reduced to zero. Great. But I don't want anything come between me and Jesus.

For six months I really thought he would burn it up but he didn't. I placed my Isaac on the altar and he said, you can have it back. But now I said, God, you've got to give me a house.

What am I going to do with it? Use it for my glory. And that's where, three years later, the church was born. People were saved.

Demons were cast out. People were healed. That became the door of heaven and the gateway into God's kingdom for many people.

God will ask you, I gave you a house. What did you do with it? It was something God was testing you with. I gave you an increase in your salary.

What did you do with that? So many things. I gave you children. What did you do with them? One life and at the end of it it's all gone.

What did I do with it during this one life? God took me through trial. What do you do with that? They were meant to produce glory in me. Instead of that, it produced complaining and grumbling.

I messed up. I said, Lord, of the years that are left to me, I can't do anything about the past. Help me to bow and do your will.

I want to be an overcomer. I want to live as Jesus lived on the earth with one ambition, to please the Father. Don't think gifts are necessary for that.

You may not have the gift of preaching that God has given you. I find in India that I many times pray, Lord, I wish you would give a hundred people in India this gift of being able to preach like you've given me. But He hasn't done it.

I wish there were many more. But the Lord has shown me that gifts are not the main thing. Get people to live the way Jesus lived.

That's the main thing. To live the way He lived, even if you don't have any gifts. Jesus lived for thirty years without any gifts.

Not preaching a sermon, not healing the sick, not casting out demons. And the Father said, I'm well pleased with you. Can God be well pleased with a man who never preached a sermon? Never healed a sick person, never cast out a demon? Is that the overcoming life? Yes, it is.

Thirty-three years Jesus lived on earth, only ten percent was in ministry. Thirty-three years He lived an overcoming life. The overcoming life has got to do more with our daily life as a mother, as a father, as a brother in the church, in serving, not just in fantastic things.

May God help us. I hope we got a little of our ground plowed up to receive what the Lord has for us in the coming days. Let's bow before God.

Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, we pray that you will help us to be gripped even if we don't remember everything we heard in our mind, that we're gripped in our heart by the challenge to live the way the Lord Jesus lived on earth. Help us each one we pray. In Jesus' name we ask.

Amen. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

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