

# Personal Questions – Honest Answers (2003)

by Zac Poonen

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## Transcript

To begin with, can you tell us something about your past, where you were born, and where you had your education, and when you joined the Navy? Well, first of all, I'm glad all these press reporters are here. I hope you'll put it in tomorrow's newspaper. I hope you'll write your Bible on this day, sir.

Okay, your question was where I was born? You were born and where you had your education, and when you joined the Navy. I was born in what is now known as Chennai, but then Madras, about two months after World War II started, on the 5th of November, 1939. And then my father was working there, and we moved to Coimbatore, then to Karachi, before partition, when there was no Pakistan.

And then when partition came, we moved to Delhi, and that's where I grew up as a boy from the time I was 8 years old. And then I joined the Navy when I was 15. I finished high school, and I joined the Navy.

Yeah, I joined the National Defence Academy as a cadet when I was 15 years old. Well, I really don't know when I came to know Jesus, because my father was a believer, and he grew up in a God-fearing home. And many times I accepted Jesus in my heart.

I'm sure it was only once was the real time, but I was never sure. So maybe from the age of 13 to the age of 19, I must have asked Jesus to come to my heart a hundred times or a thousand times, I don't know. But one of those times was the real time, and I don't know which one it was.

I'm like a man who doesn't know his birthday. But I became sure of my salvation only when I was 19 and a half. The same month I was commissioned as an officer in the Navy, in July 59, by one verse, John 6, 37.

Him that cometh to me, Jesus said, I'll never cast out. I said, Lord, I've come to you hundreds of times. He said, well, I'll never cast you out.

I said, Lord, today I'm going to believe it. And I dropped an anchor that day, and my ship has never drifted. From that day till today, I've never doubted my salvation.

So that's 44 and a half years ago. Can I interrupt you for a moment? We want to get the Tamil press sitting down there. It's more comfortable.

Brother, you can put some chairs there and probably translate there itself. You brothers at the back also can make yourself more comfortable. Tamil newspapers are also important.

Yeah, we'll continue. If you need more chairs, you can pick them up from upstairs or somewhere. Brother Zak, I understand that you had a good upbringing in your family.

I understand that your parents were godly. I understand that perhaps you did not go out in the world and live a wicked life. But how did you know that you were really saved? How did you know that your sins were forgiven? Was it anything because of your upbringing or because you did a number of good things and you felt accepted before God? How did you really know that you were born again? You know, I think I had the problem that a lot of children have who are brought up in good God-fearing homes.

We haven't killed anybody and haven't robbed banks and things like that. And so, it's sometimes a bit difficult for people who are brought up in such families. First of all, to realize that they are also sinners just like anybody else.

I think those of you who are brought up in God-fearing homes will feel that. And I don't think I had such an awareness of sin at that time as I have today. Because our awareness of sin increases as we walk closer with God.

But I knew, I mean I knew my heart and I knew that it was bad just like anybody else's heart. Even if I didn't do things on the outside, I realized a little bit, I know much more today, that it doesn't make me better than others. It just means that I didn't have the opportunity.

I mean if you tie up a fierce lion inside a cage of a zoo and you go past it and the lion says, I didn't bite anybody today, it doesn't mean anything. The question is if the lion was in the forest, it would have probably bitten and killed so many people. You put the same lion in a cage, it doesn't hurt anybody, it's not a proof that it's any better.

Or you put a snake under a piece of glass and it says, I didn't sting anybody. And I feel I was like that. My circumstances were such that I did not have the freedom to sin like other people.

And that's the only thing that prevented me from sinning like other people. And therefore I was not really better. I mean a cobra inside a glass case is no different from a cobra in the wild.

There is equal poison in both. Even though the cobra in the wild may have killed so many, the cobra inside the case says I have not killed anyone. So that's a little picture I gradually realized.

I don't think I understood it all in the beginning. But I realized that God sees the heart and I am no better than anybody else even if I have not done those things on the outside. I am a believer in the fact that God in his great sovereignty says, you did not choose me, I chose you.

So that humbles me. I am not better than my brother, I am not better than anybody else. But God chose me like he chose you.

And today I am a child of God because of that. I just became aware that Jesus loved me. To me at that time, to be honest, it was not so much a consciousness of sin.

I think consciousness of sin has come to me more early in the last few years since we have started CFC. How did you know that you became a child of God? I think it was the fact that God loved me that made me say, Lord, I have to give my life to you. And it was assurance of that verse, as I said, Him that cometh to me I will not cast out, which gave me the assurance that I was a child of God.

I couldn't explain it as clearly as I can now then. But I knew I was alive. What convinced you that God really accepted you and God loved you? I think it was just God's word.

I had no experience. Yeah, this verse, John 6, 37. I want to tell all of you for your benefit that I have never seen any light or heard any voices or I have never seen any angels in my life.

I have not had what people call visions and I have had a few dreams when I eat too much at night, which are meaningless. I would say I have had maybe 14, 15 or 20 meaningful dreams also, which I believe the Lord gave. But these fantastic experiences other people speak about, I have never had them.

I have lived more by faith, not by sight. Does any of your past sort of haunt you? Did it ever trouble you, make you doubt that God had accepted you or loved you? No, I don't know why it is, but somehow I have never doubted God's love for me. I must say there have been times in my life where I have doubted whether God would protect me from some harm, particularly when I realized that so many of God's children through the ages have been persecuted and harassed and God allowed them to be eaten by lions.

I am willing for that, but sometimes such fears have come in the past. They become less as time goes on. But I can't say that I ever felt God doesn't love me.

But don't you remember a day when God touched you or changed your life? No, I don't remember any one day like that. I am exactly like a man who doesn't know his birthday. Were you tempted to doubt your salvation at any time? I have not only been tempted to doubt my salvation, I have been tempted to doubt the existence of God itself.

Is there a God? There are times in my life when I look back on 45 years when I prayed for something earnestly and nothing happened. Is there somebody listening to all this I am saying or am I just talking into the air? Okay, I felt it was safer to believe there is somebody there than to, the other was worse, to think there was nobody up there in heaven. But gradually as I have grown older I have understood that all this was necessary for me to have what we call naked faith with no external sign of anything.

Blind, naked faith. God is there. You only know in your spirit that there is a real God.

That's how it's been for me. I have not had spectacular experiences like other people have. What impact did it really make on your life? Was there a change? Did you notice a change in your attitude, a change in your life? Well, that's one thing that definitely happened.

I had a radical change in my ambitions because I was doing so well in the Navy that I longed, because I was doing well, I thought I would want to end up as the Admiral of the Navy. That was really my ambition and I worked hard at it and that changed completely. I knew that if I was a Christian now, I had no intention of leaving my job but I found in different situations that if I am going to stand up and not do wrong things, be a Christian, I just could not make it to the top.

I would have to compromise my convictions to make it to the top and I was not willing to compromise my convictions. That was one change that came. The other change was, I can't explain it, but exactly like a baby cries out for milk and screams, you know, when you hear a baby screaming, you know that as soon as it gets its mother's milk, it's just quiet.

I had a similar passion to read the Bible and study it. I didn't know the Bible but I found a tremendous thirst for the milk of God's word. I can't explain it.

Did you ever tell what you experienced to any of your friends? Oh yes. Were you shy or intimidated? Well, I was shy. I think I am still shy.

Very shy. I am basically a shy person. I have to battle it.

I would always rather be at the back rather than the front. I stand in front only because God wants me to. But I have been a shy person.

I was much more shy when I was young. I am not this outgoing type of person that other people are. I used to envy people who are outgoing.

You know, people who are called the life and soul of a party. We have parties in the Navy where some people were the life and soul of the party. They would cheer everybody up and slap people on the back and I would be standing in the corner with my glass of orange juice.

But everybody knew that I was a Christian. Did anyone make fun of you? Oh yes. They would call me Holy Joe and all types of... I mean not as bad names as Christians call me nowadays but they were a little more decent.

The heathen are usually a little more decent. But that's like the Romans never called Jesus by as bad names as the Pharisees did. Anyway, but they made fun of me and that made me strong to stand up for Christ.

Every opportunity I got I would pass tracts out and various things like that. Everybody knew I was a Christian. I used to carry a Bible in a little cover.

Once when I was going out of the ship with this little bag, one of the sailors, a junior sailor asked me, Sir, do you have a private insurance job on the side or something? You go around with this bag. I said, yeah, I do. Insuring people for eternity and these opportunities like that I got to share God's word.

Were you ever discouraged? Did you lose faith? Did you lose courage at any time? What was it that really gave you a good foundation in your Christian life? I think after I was born again, for 16 years, I was frequently discouraged. Not all the time. If I had some success in my ministry or something exciting happened or I got a promotion in my job, then I wouldn't be discouraged.

I'd be excited. But it didn't seem to last long because it was all up and down for 16 years. Sometimes up and sometimes down.

You know, if we did something exciting, I'd be up. If nothing was happening, it was all just daily routine, monotonous routine, then I'd be discouraged. But then, the thing that changed it was when I got filled with the Holy Spirit and began to understand the way of the cross, then things really changed.

You went to Brethren Church, is it? In the beginning, I was baptized with the Brethren Assembly and that's where I really developed a love for the Word of God. That's where I was going first. When did you get baptized? I got baptized... Did you go to the body of God? No, I took some time.

I was christened as a child by my parents, but I was baptized as a believer one and a half years after I was saved. Because I heard different people saying, you know, it doesn't matter. These things are not important.

If you don't get baptized, you can stay in the Jacobite Church and be a witness there. That's where people need you. So I decided to study the Bible.

And I studied the New Testament and I discovered that there is no child baptism. There is only believer's baptism. And then I didn't obey it.

Because I was still thinking, what will I lose the opportunity to witness in my own other denomination. And then every time I knelt down, God would say, you are not listening to me, why should I listen to you? And for one and a half years, though I was saved, I made no progress in my life till I got baptized. Did the Word of God make any difference in your life? Yeah, I think that was the time when I really began to take my Christian life seriously.

I mean, I was born again. I had no doubt about it. I went to meetings regularly.

But my Christian life became really serious after I was baptized. Coming back to this up and down experience you said, you said 16 years, is it? Now, you tell us that after you were baptized in the Holy Spirit, that means to say you had no up and down experience? Well, I don't think it was only baptism in the Holy Spirit. I think if I was baptized in the Holy Spirit when I was... See, my baptism in the Holy Spirit, by the way, I can't find foundation for it in scripture.

But I seem to get it in two stages. Now, don't ask me for a scripture because everybody got it in one stage in the New Testament. But some unbelieving creatures like me get it in two stages.

One was, I was really seeking God for power. And way back in 63, I really believed God met with me because I saw some results in my ministry and things like that. When you were in Navy, you were already in the ministry, is it? Yeah, when I was in the Navy, I started preaching.

And I was glad that I was already a little bald then. Was it a gift you had as a speaker? No, baldness was also a gift. Because, I'll tell you why, because I used to get up in these conventions to speak and I was only 23 years old.

And because I was bald, people would think I was 35 and they would listen to me. So, otherwise they wouldn't care. What is this young 22 year old fellow going to say? So, I could see God had a purpose in everything.

And I was serving the Lord even then. I really studied the word. I would come back home, study the word, study the word, study the word, pray.

God gave me a gift to speak. I can't say that. That's how I began to minister the word when I was in the Navy.

Yeah, so after my baptism, I began to grow spiritually. Were you prejudiced against the baptism of the Holy Spirit since you come from a brethren background? Yeah, in the brethren assembly, they don't preach about baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, I never thought about baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So, how did you get interested in it? Yeah, because brethren assembly taught me to study the word, which is a good thing. When I studied the word, I found there was such a thing called baptism of the Holy Spirit. And I used to read a little paper in those days called Herald of His Coming, which read of the experiences of people like Moody and Finney.

And these people were baptized in the Holy Spirit and their whole life was changed. And so, I began to seek God for it. I knew the brethren couldn't help me, so I didn't go to them.

I went to some Pentecostal churches, and that was so noisy and so rad. And one pastor told me to keep on saying, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah. I said, No, I'm not going to say that.

I came back home discouraged. And I said, Lord, I don't want what the brethren have. I don't want what the Pentecostals have.

I want what Peter, James, and John got on the day of Pentecost. If it takes me 10 years to get it, I'm going to get it. And I sought God.

As I said, in two stages. First, God met with me in 1963. And then later on, 10-12 years later, in 1975.

But how did you have the assurance that you were baptized in the Holy Spirit? Initially, by faith. I was praying with a brother here in my house. A visiting brother to Bangalore.

And I told him, see, I never seemed to be able to believe. I had a hunger, but I couldn't believe that the Lord had really baptized me in the Holy Spirit. Did you get any feeling? I had no feeling.

And he told me one sentence. Sometimes you know how one sentence can liberate you. He said, Zach, it is unthinkable that God can call you to serve Him.

And then refuse to give you His power to serve Him. That sounded very logical to me. I was sure God had called me.

And then I said, yeah, that's right. So then as I was praying, He rebuked the spirit of unbelief that was binding me. And He laid hands on me.

And I said, Lord, thank you. I believe I have received right now. And I received by faith.

And as I was praying, I spoke in tongues. But the tongues came after I believed. Not before.

Was there any gap? I prayed only for less than 5 minutes. And I suddenly found myself saying something I didn't want to say. And then I stopped and continued in English.

And again said something I didn't want to say. Then I asked this brother, hey, did you hear something? He said, yes, you spoke in tongues. Do you still exercise the gift of tongues? Yes, I do.

I wish I would do it more often. But certainly, you know, more in times of pressure, almost every worship meeting, I will worship the Lord in tongues. Or in a prayer meeting together.

Or in a time of pressure. Or when confronted with a demon-possessed person. Yeah, I do exercise it.

What was it that really brought stability in your life? Were there times that you backslid? Yeah, in those 16 years, frequently. Sometimes pretty badly. But always inwardly.

My outward testimony was always good, which made it worse. Because I became a hypocrite. And it was in that state of hypocrisy that the Lord met me the second time in 1975.

But since then, I would say stability has come through a number of things. One, this absolute assurance that my past sins are all blotted out by the blood of Christ. Another thing that has brought stability in my life is this rock-solid promises of scripture.

In God's word, as I come to know God's word and quote God's word to the devil. And the third is this baptism in the Holy Spirit. And I would say a fourth thing is that the Lord has shown me that I must die to myself every day.

That's also brought stability. And the fifth is the fellowship. Particularly the fellowship that I have experienced in CFC with wholehearted brothers.

But after you were baptized in the Holy Spirit, did you find the Christian life to be tough or heavy or boring? I think more tough than before. I have had more opposition after being baptized in the Holy Spirit. More misunderstanding.

Well, I will tell you this. I remember it was in January 1975 that the Lord met with me the second time. It was like a complete experience.

Till then, my baptism in the Holy Spirit was something like you buy an encyclopedia set and 2-3 volumes are missing. And then you get those 2-3 volumes and then the whole set is complete. My baptism in the Holy Spirit was like that.

And then I said, well, if this is something really from God, because you know the next day after I spoke in tongues I had all types of doubt. Did I make it up yesterday? Was it really from God? Was it really from me? I said, okay, if it is really from God, I will start reading the New Testament all over again and let me see if the Holy Spirit teaches me something which I have not known for 16 years of studying the Bible. And I tell you, I have learned a lot of things since 1975 which I never knew before.

And as I started with Matthew chapter 1 and I wanted to know, I was looking for assurance of baptism in the Holy Spirit. And I thought, boy, Matthew, this so and so begat so and so, and so and so begat so and so and so. I was not getting any assurance from who begat who.

The whole half of the chapter was all this. And then all of a sudden, I came to the end of Matthew chapter 1 where the angel says to Joseph, this thing that has come to Mary is from the Holy Spirit. Oh, that is exactly the word I was looking for.

And then the Lord began to speak to me, this is from the Holy Spirit. But just like it was only Mary who knew it, and all the others misunderstood her, thinking that it is not Holy Spirit, your experience also, you know it, but everybody else will misunderstand you from now on. And like Mary had to bear a shame because the Spirit came upon her, you will have to bear shame from now on.

And then the Lord said to me, just like Mary had the Spirit come upon her to produce Jesus in her, the Holy Spirit has come upon you also to produce Jesus in you. And the Lord said, this gift of tongues is so abused and misunderstood in the world. And I want you to take that gift and adorn it with a Christ-like life so that people will once again have faith in this gift.

Coming back to this subject of backsliding, I think you would agree that many young people face this constantly. What is the cause of backsliding in your life? How long did you remain in a backslidden condition and how did you come out of backsliding? Is it normal for a Christian to backslide? Is it normal? Well, it's the experience of many Christians, but I don't believe it's God's will. It's not what God has planned as normal, but it is normal in the lives of many Christians.

I picture it as the five fingers of the Christian life. Absolute assurance, number one, that the blood of Christ has cleansed me. Tremendous hunger for God's word, number two, to study it, to know it well.

Third, power of the Holy Spirit, to be filled with the Holy Spirit continuously, not just one experience. Fourth, taking up the cross every day, dying to yourself. And fifth, seeking fellowship with other God-fearing people.

With five fingers you can hold something very tight. You can hold it with two fingers also, but it's not so tight. Somebody can pull it out of your hand.

So, you can be born again, you have accepted Christ, you love the word, I suppose you can balance it with one thumb also, but it's a bit tough. But if you have five fingers, you have a solid grip on the Christian life. And people backslide when they gradually begin to lose.

Maybe they don't value fellowship, and where one finger goes. Or they don't take up the cross every day, another finger goes. They don't seek to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit, another finger goes.

Or they don't meditate on God's word, whether they read it or not. Many people tell me that they don't find the Bible interesting. Many people tell me that they don't find the Bible interesting.

How do you find the Bible interesting? Well, I also find the Bible quite boring sometimes. To tell you honestly, I don't feel like reading the Bible many days. But it's like, I say, even if I don't feel like, I mean, it's like, there were days in the Navy when I didn't feel like going to work.

But I still went to work, whether it was raining or not. There were days, I suppose, when I was a child, when I didn't feel like going to school. I suppose my parents forced me to go to school.

Yeah, there were many things in life which we don't feel like doing, but we still do. But, you know, you go to, those of you who work, you go to work, whether you feel like it or not. You don't feel like going to school or college some days, you still go.

But when it comes to the Bible, people say, oh, when I feel like, I'll read it. That's not correct. Whether you feel like it or don't feel like it, you read it.

Whether it's interesting or not. Because it does something for you. And that's what I found.

The discipline of reading the scripture, whether you find it boring. There are days when I read something, I got nothing from it. To tell you honestly, I got nothing.

I just read through it, I got some information. No. Okay.

But sometime during the day, God may speak to me, not from that verse, but it's that discipline of just reading. You know, I remember hearing a story I'll never forget. You know what a sieve is? A sieve is something where you strain tea leaves or So, one person was telling another brother, My mind is like a

sieve.

You know, however much I put God's word into it, it all goes out. Like water. But that man was a godly man.

He said, you know, you put a sieve under a tap. It doesn't hold a bit of water. But have you seen how clean the sieve becomes after all the water flows through it? So, never mind if your mind is like a sieve, it becomes clean.

That was good for me. Did you have some good young people as friends during your youth? I can't say that in the days where I was. Very few who were wholehearted.

Were you lonely then? I was very lonely spiritually. For example, when I used to go and preach in the streets of Cochin, Nobody came with me. Not one person from the assembly.

I would go there and get some other brother from some other full time worker to come and translate for me and I would stand in every street in Cochin and preach. But I had a passion for Christ. What the Lord told me when I was 20, 21, 23 years old was, don't look at other people.

You'll be disappointed. Look at me. So, I did learn to look at Jesus.

How did you get that passion for the Lord? I don't know. I think it came by meditating on two things. How much Jesus loved me and how much I had been forgiven.

Two things. Just two things. Jesus said, those who are forgiven much, love much.

And the Bible says, we love him because he first loved us. So, those are the two things that make us love the Lord more. I can say I meditated much on the cross.

I didn't understand all the deeper meaning of the cross that I know today. But I knew this, that Jesus loved me and I just meditated on that. That's about the only thing I knew those days.

Did you have any interest in sports or music? Are you reading the Bible all the time? Well, when I was a young boy, I used to play cricket. I wasn't very good at other games. I was more the studios type.

But I did have interest in playing cricket. I would go out to play regularly. Then, when I was in the Navy, I played some squash.

So, I did play games. And I had some interest in it. I was never very great at it.

But, and I was very interested as a young boy to watch. I would go sit and see India versus West Indies, five days, sitting in the stadium. I was very interested in those things.

Now, does it mean that after you became a Christian, you kept away from other friends or did you still have friends in the Navy who were not Christians? Yeah, I had some very good friends who were not Christians in the Navy. But they would know that I was a Christian. Who were your best friends? Well, I had good friends in the Navy.

But whenever I went to a shore, I would always find fellowship with some local church. My best friends were always in a local church. But I kept a very good relationship with my secular colleagues.

I wasn't sort of obnoxious by always trying to preach to them. I was very normal and friendly with them. And I never tried to thrust religion down people's throats.

I wanted to be a witness. I didn't have much wisdom. But the only person I was very unwise in preaching to was my own brother.

Every letter was a long sermon. And when he got married, he told his wife, because of religion I lost a brother. I heard that.

I felt so bad. I went and apologized to him. I said, I am really sorry that I didn't mean to be a preacher to you.

I just want to be a friend to you. And we are very good friends today. Did you think you were fanatical? I think a lot of people thought I was fanatical.

But I probably was also. But I gradually sobered up. I think one of the lacks I had was I didn't have a good mentor.

A mentor means someone to whom I could go as a father. Like a Timothy to a Paul. I always wanted somebody like that.

I think the closest I ever came to that was somebody like Brother Baksing. But he didn't have much time. I didn't have much time with him.

So there was nobody locally where I was living whom I really respected as a godly man who knew God. So I was pretty much on my own. So I had to sort of seek God on my own.

And I probably did a lot of foolish things because of that. If there was some older brother around, he would have probably given me a little advice which I didn't have. So many young people are having so much problems in their thought life.

Did you have any problem in your youth? No, sure. I was 100% normal. Because you were always reading the Bible and you were preaching.

Despite all that. All the reading of the Bible and all the preaching. You still have tremendous problems with your thought life.

And also tremendous wandering thoughts when you pray. Even now when I pray my thoughts begin to wander. It's not easy to concentrate.

I have a flesh which I am constantly reminded of. And I keep battling it. So, it's like that.

What about all these temptations that young people face? You would have faced in your youth. Sure, all of them. Temptation to pornographic literature and jokes and filthy jokes.

Was that difficult for you? I was tempted with all of those things. But because I was converted when I was 19, I think I was protected. For example, I used to go to the movies.

I used to take other people to the movies. And then I got converted. And I remember, I said, now I can't go to the movies anymore.

And I remember that first day in 1959, when two of my friends asked me to come with them to a cinema. We had a cinema inside the naval base. And I just did not have the courage to say to them, No, I am a Christian now.

I don't go to these things. And so we walked towards the cinema theater. And I was crying out to God, Oh God, please save me from this situation somehow or the other.

And we walked all the way up to the cinema theater. And there was a big notice there saying, The reel did not arrive. So, today's cinema is cancelled.

I was so happy. But when I came home, the Lord said to me, I am not going to do that for you next time. You got to tell them yourself that you are not going.

But that was such an encouragement to me, that even after 44 years, I haven't forgotten it. That that time when I really didn't want to, and I didn't have the courage to say, No, God help me. So, I was tempted in so many ways.

But it was a battle, it was a battle, it was a battle. And what I want to say to all of you people is, If you fight the battle, if you fight the battle, you will find one day, you will overcome. You know, the fact that you are tempted, doesn't mean anything serious.

And even the fact that you fall, if you hate it and you fight it, and that's what really helped me. It doesn't interest me. The time comes when you, it may take longer with some people and less time with some people, but I want to encourage you to keep fighting that battle.

That's the main thing. When you were in Navy, were you thinking of remaining single, or were you anytime interested in any girls? Well, you know, when I was about 23 years old, I mean, I was a normal human being, attracted to girls probably from the time I was 13 or 12, I don't know. Just like anybody else.

But I didn't have the boldness to approach any girl, you know. So, that's what I think protected me. Indian culture was much more rigid and stiff 50 years ago than it is today.

And the thing is, when I was, because I became a Christian when I was 23 years old, I read a verse in the Bible, book of Jeremiah, where, and I marked it in my Bible, where the Lord said, Jeremiah, that you must not take a wife in this place. And I wrote that down. And I felt God had spoken to me.

And I was convinced, on the basis of that verse, when I was about 23 years old, that I was going to be single for the rest of my life. I was absolutely convinced of it because I wanted to obey God. I felt that's what God told me to do.

And I obeyed Him. And I saw from that day onwards, by God's grace, I never looked at a girl and considered her as a prospective marriage partner. Every proposal that came to me, I'd say, sorry, I'm not getting married.

And that protected me for that period because I see that God allowed me to think like that because He wanted me to study the scriptures instead of just going around looking at, find out, is this my partner, is that my partner. Then how did you get interested in marriage later? Yeah. Well, when I left the Navy, I was 26 and a half years old when I left the Navy.

Incidentally, what made you leave the Navy? When I was 24 and a half, I used to travel around with Brother Bhaktsing during my holiday time. We used to get 60 days leave every year. And I used to travel around with Brother Bhaktsing to different places, preach in different places.

And I found tremendous liberty in preaching. I found I had a real gift in preaching when I was 23 years old. Even Brother Bhaktsing recognized it.

And I was the youngest person he ever invited to speak in his convocation. And that message, by the way, is on the website, A New Vessel Full of Salt, which I preached when? 63, which is 40 years ago. I found I had a gift and I found this tremendous need everywhere.

And I felt, boy, it looks as if I can do more good going around preaching since God has given me a gift than being in the Navy. So as that burden grew, one day when I was reading the scriptures in Isaiah 49, that was my daily portion, sitting in a train coming from KGF with Brother Bhaktsing to Bangalore, interestingly. We stopped at Bangarapet to change trains and by the time God had already spoken to me in that short journey from Isaiah 49, it was a clear call for me from that, which I had been thinking of before, that I must leave.

And while I was sitting in Bangarapet station, thinking about this, Brother Bhaktsing, who has known me for a number of years, came up to me and asked me, we were all waiting to catch the train, when are you thinking of leaving the Navy? I said, this man is a prophet. He knows what I am thinking about. God had spoken to him to confirm to me what I had already been thinking.

I said, brother, I just decided to leave. And so we came here to Bangalore to the house of worship, Herman. And I got up there and I said, I decided to leave the Navy.

I went back to Cochin and I put in my resignation. Just when I went back, I got an order from naval headquarters that I had been selected for the most prestigious course that any officer of my rank could get. It was just like the devil offering me all the kingdoms of the world at that very moment.

And I put in my resignation. My senior officer said, you are a fool. There are other people who try so hard for this course and don't get it.

You got it so easily. Are you sure? Go back and think about it. I said, sir, I have decided.

I am not interested in this. So you thought of marriage after leaving Navy? After leaving, but they didn't release me for two years. I kept saying, because I said to naval headquarters, Jesus Christ has called me for his work.

They said, we couldn't care less for that. You got to work here. Because they had spent so many lakhs training me.

And so, when I began to travel around, I found it was very dangerous. Because, you know, you stand up in the pulpit and so many girls are eyeing you and so many mothers of girls are eyeing you. But you only got the words that you had to be single.

Sorry? You only got the words that you had to be single. Yeah, but I said, Lord, this is, I don't find, what am I going to do? I mean, in a moment of weakness, I may suddenly say yes to somebody. I got really scared as I was traveling around.

And I went back to that verse. And the Lord, it says there, you shall not marry in this place. Then I realized, as long as I was in the Navy, that I was not to get married.

It became clear to me. Otherwise, I had a struggle with that verse. But the Lord hid that part from me all the years I was in the Navy.

And then when I left, of course, I had no job, no salary. I decided I would never consider marriage as long as I was in the Navy. So, I knew that if somebody married me and I didn't, I was bald and I had everything against me.

So, if somebody married me, it was only for spiritual reasons. So, that's how it was. So, how did you decide to marry Sustani? Yeah, well, you see, our Indian culture is such that you can't take people out for a date or anything like that.

But it's very interesting that when I was in the Navy, when I was about 24 years old, I was invited to speak at a retreat for students. I used to minister among students, young people, when I was in the Navy. And there was the chairman of Clarence School here.

It was a man called Alva. He was a lieutenant those days. We were good friends because we used to have meetings together.

He was in the same assembly. And his father-in-law came to Cochin and heard me preach. And his father-in-law was a professor in CMC Velore.

And so, when he heard me preach, he went back to CMC Velore and told the students, you got to get this man from the Navy to come here and speak. And the secretary of that student's union was a young sister called Annie Uman. And she said, we don't want any naval people here.

We want some serious Christians. So, he said, no, you call him. So, she wrote a letter to me.

Dear brother in Christ, we would like to invite you. I didn't know who she was and she didn't know who I was. But did she attend any of your meetings before? I am amazed at God from heaven watching all this with a twinkle in his eye.

Because he knew the future and I didn't know. And I replied, okay, dear sister, thank you very much for your invitation. And I didn't know who she was.

Just a name to me. And I went there and I preached. And boy, it was real revival.

They never had, the hall got so filled, they had to change the hall to another place. And then we had meetings in the hospital, CMC hospital, the place was packed out. And that's where I first saw her.

But of course, I was not getting married, so the question didn't arise. But did you attend to talk to her? Praise the Lord, sister. Now, when you saw her, were you attracted to her? Okay, the question is, when I saw her, was I attracted to her? Well... We must ask her.

This is hard talk. Now, this is real hard talk now. We have both of them up here now.

Now, you can answer that, Rizak, again. Were you attracted? He's asked her whether she was attracted to me. No doubt about that.

Well, you know, I had a struggle with it because I had disciplined myself not to be attracted. So, you know, I used to preach in a peculiar way those days. I would turn to the brothers and I would stand like this.

I said, I don't want to be tempted. I'm a young man and I've got to preach. I would stand like this every time I preached.

And I would be very formal and very stiff and everything else. But then, after that, when I began to consider marriage, I thought about her. I said, well, she's a doctor.

She's not going to marry some jobless guy like me. And I don't know where she is. Then, brother Baksing one day called me and said, I've got somebody in mind for you.

He said, Annie, because she used to go to that assembly. And there was a brother called Chandapilla who was in charge of the students. He was the first general secretary of UESI.

He called me one day and said, brother Jack, I've got somebody in mind for you. And that's Annie. Two people said the same thing.

And then, of course, I had no problem accepting it because I was attracted. But I still wanted to be sure of God's will. And I said, Lord, I don't know whether, is she wholehearted? Is she willing to pay the price of a difficult life? And so, when we did meet, I told her, listen, I don't know where I'm going to live.

I may live in a hut. I may go to Rajasthan. I don't know what my ministry is.

I've just left the Navy two years ago, or a year ago. It was just one year after I left. I don't know what I'm going to do.

I have no money. And I painted the bleakest, darkest picture I could ever paint of the future. And I said, don't give me an answer.

Think about it for three days. I didn't say three years. Three days.

And, of course, I hoped that her answer would be yes. And I inquired from other people. And somebody told me that all her colleagues were going to America.

And she was going to work in a leprosy hospital. And I said, well, that's a good sign. And then somebody else told me that even though she was a doctor, she was sleeping on the floor in the general ward to help some poor sister who was admitted.

I said, well, that's the type of person I want. But were you drawn to her because she was a doctor? Oh, no. I couldn't care less whether she was a doctor.

If she was a sweeper, that would be fine too. I never cared for being a Malayali. I never cared for being a doctor.

What are the qualities you were looking for? I wanted someone who was sold out for God. I wanted someone who was willing to suffer anything for Jesus Christ. I wanted someone who cared for the poor.

Because most of India has poor people. And who was willing to serve at any cost to themselves. But you know, these days there are many good-looking girls and educated girls and all the spiritual... Well, I wasn't good-looking.

So how could I ask for good-looking? I think we must ask Sustani that. What was it that drew you to Brunswick? Were you attracted to him? Was it love at first sight? What was it? Since it's a press conference, I think I have to be very careful in what I say. But definitely I had a lot of admiration for him.

When I heard him speak... Was it because he's a good-looking sister? Yeah. Beauty in the eyes of the beholder. I found him handsome.

I mean, he's still handsome. One more mic. One more mic.

But when I heard him speak at the retreat, I felt that God was speaking to me, telling me that I should remain single and I should go to the leprosy hospital and not think of marriage. That's how his message is. I felt like God wanted me to think of him, first of all.

That means him. Oh, God. But just before going to the leprosy hospital, Pranabhaktsingh called me to Madras and he spoke to me to consider Zak and pray about it.

That's how I started. So how long did it take for you to know that Zak was the right one for you? Because Brother Bhaktsingh had suggested, I was more or less inclined and I had also heard my husband speak. So I knew that I would like to marry a person.

I mean, he's my hero, so I would like to marry Zak. But I had to... Zak, how long did it take you to know that Zak is the right person? But I was praying about it because I didn't know whether he would... I didn't know that Brother Bhaktsingh had already talked to Zak about me. So then I was just waiting for God to show me whether my husband was interested in me or like that.

And when I was praying, I got some guidance that I should now consider marriage. But I had already committed that I was going to the leprosy hospital. So I was working there and praying about it.

But how much did you know about your sister? Then Zak came to the leprosy... In Karigiri, there's a small training center. He came there and took some meetings and that's the time we talked very briefly about it and he asked me to pray about it. By then, Brother Bhaktsingh had already spoken... I mean hinted about it.

So he told me to pray about it for three days and reply. So I prayed about it and I replied to him what my answer was. But he didn't get my reply.

The letter never came. That letter didn't reach him. And I was in a panic.

I was wondering what happened. Waiting for the postman every day. No letter, no letter, no letter, no letter.

It's the sovereignty of God, you know. It's like God saying, who is more important in your life? Finally it became so bad, I called her up. I said, I told you to write after three days.

Even if it's no. She said, I wrote after three days. I said, yes.

Yes. Yeah. I must say I fell in love.

Good. I rose up in love, not fell in love. But did you want to get to know her brother earlier? No, I didn't get... I just knew that she really loved the Lord and she had an interest in the books I was interested in

about the way of the cross and things like that.

The biographies I read of people like Jim Elliot and things like that. Those are the type of stuff she was reading too. So we knew we had like-minded.

And our parents never knew about this. This was entirely between Bhagat Singh and her and me. And after that, I told my parents and she told her parents.

And it was... I mean, my parents said, okay. But her parents said, no, we'll never let you marry this man. We didn't train you up to be a doctor to get some fellow who doesn't have... I don't blame them.

I think if some daughter of mine far away said she is marrying some full-time worker, I would have some questions in my mind too. But then he finally agreed. Within three months.

Yeah. While we are on this subject, I think everybody is awake now. What would you say to young brothers and sisters attracted to one another? What would you say about a young brother and sister, you may use the term, falling in love with each other.

And if they do, what is your advice? How should they conduct themselves? See, I personally don't believe there is anything wrong in falling in love because I think we did both fall in love with each other. But the basis on which we loved each other was not physical. You see, it's true.

I'll tell you absolutely honestly that I found her very attractive physically and I still do. Because beauty is not determined by these Miss Universe contests. Beauty is more than physical.

It's a total thing. And as I see it, it was the spiritual part which is primary but not the only. I felt that it's perfectly right if you are drawn to a person because of spiritual values first, not just because you want to get married.

Because some people, just because they want to get married, get attracted to somebody and they are very unhappy. Within 6 months they wish they hadn't got married. I've been married 35 years.

I'll tell you the honest truth before God. I have seen numerous girls in many parts of the world. I've never, never, never felt that I could ever have married any one of them.

I mean, my honest conviction is that if I hadn't married any, I probably have been single for the rest of my life. Because I just didn't find anybody. So it is not a question of, okay, this is the only one available, I better get married.

It wasn't like that for me. For some people it may be. I don't say it's wrong.

But for me it wasn't like that. I pray that whoever gets married, they'll be drawn to someone through spiritual factors. And it may be, you see, ours is, in a sense, we didn't go dating for so many days and then discover each other.

We sought God. And I say God is not the prisoner of any culture. He is not bound to western culture or anything.

In the west they do it one way, in the east they do it another way. God is the one who leads the people who date. And God is the one in India who leads the people who, God knows in their culture they cannot

date.

So what? But God is not the prisoner of a particular culture. And whichever way we do it, God must lead us. And then we'll have a very happy marriage.

How long did you have to wait? Did you have to wait till you got married? Yeah, well, because her parents objected, it was about ten months after we ourselves decided that we would accept each other, a little over ten months that we actually got married. So what would you say, I mean, in that time, how much did you know of each other? Well, by correspondence. And she was living in the middle of Maharashtra and I was traveling here and there and we could write letters.

But when her father said no, then no correspondence. He said, then we mustn't, we respect, I believe that we must honor our parents. I said, your father is a believer, we must honor him.

We will do what he says. If he says no, we commit it to the Lord. And I didn't write.

And then when her father finally came home and agreed to it, to my home, that is, to my parents' home, agreed to it, then we could correspond more freely. Sister, you are not looking for a doctor to be married to, is it? I just wanted God's will in my life. Even when I was a medical student, I spent most of my free time with Evangelical Union and visiting the hospital and arranging meetings for fellow students.

So I was interested a lot in serving the Lord. So I was not primarily interested in a doctor. But sometimes I used to think that my classmates who married doctors, they did well in their profession because both were doing the same thing.

But in my case, my goal, medical, my goal was not my profession. So that was okay with me. I suppose you don't have any regrets that you didn't marry a doctor? No, I have no regrets about that.

Now, in this time while you have waited for one another, I mean, did you daydream and fantasize? Oh, sure. In a good way? Plenty, plenty. Brother Zak, you have mentioned on several occasions that many young people backslide after marriage.

Did you backslide after marriage or how did you overcome this problem? I think I was at the other extreme. I was traveling, ministering, and I continued traveling and ministering and sometimes left my wife for long periods. I would not recommend that today.

I didn't have wisdom. I really sought to serve the Lord. I thought serving the Lord meant that I got to, whether I am married or not, if I have to go away for three weeks.

I think within two months of my marriage, I left my wife and went off to Sri Lanka for quite some time, for some meetings, and I continued traveling continuously in my first year of marriage. But I wouldn't recommend that right now. I think I was a bit foolish.

I should have spent more time with my wife. But my understanding, you know, I mean, I sought to love the Lord and I think one thing that helped me was we were very poor and it's easier for rich people to backslide than poor people to backslide. When a poor person is poor and serving the Lord, we have to cling to the Lord.

We don't even have money to survive. I had no income and all of the money she earned, she had to work for one year in our marriage because she had a bond to the hospital. But that entire money which she

worked for one year, she sent to her parents because she had other brothers and sisters who were still studying.

So she sent all of her first year salary, that's the only year she ever worked in her life, sent to her parents. So we were very poor and I think that kept us close to the Lord. That's what I can think.

While you are on that subject, yeah. See, you came from a family where, you know, maybe a wealthy middle class family, let's say. Middle class, I would say, but not wealthy.

We were average. I mean, my father was not a rich man. He was in the government service and just earned one... He was a very honest person, never made any money more than any government servant would make.

How did you all accommodate yourselves to a simple lifestyle after you got married? I think both of us had decided that we were going to serve the Lord and even when I was in the Navy, I used to discipline myself by sleeping on the floor. I think I can still sleep on the floor today. I would sometimes go two days without food while I was on the ship, just drink some liquids to prepare myself to serve the Lord and try to kneel down and pray for a whole night and things which, maybe they were just physical feats, but I wanted to discipline myself and I knew that if I serve the Lord, I have to live a very simple life.

So, and I had given up all my money to God's work. I didn't have any savings left when I left the Navy. So, we just accepted that.

We knew that Jesus was poor, the apostles were poor, so we were in good company. We just accepted it. I had asked you a question earlier.

Maybe you can give your opinion, both you and Sister Annie. What is your opinion about young people falling in love? Now, we are in a country of mixed cultures. Now, in some cultures, in some places, people would like to have an arranged marriage.

What is your opinion of, you know, young people falling in love with each other and what would you, first of all, what is your opinion on that and then I will ask you the next question. I don't think there is anything wrong with it if the attraction is purely based on something spiritual, but I would say that as soon as possible thereafter, you should tell your parents about it in India. Because if you are considering marriage, I personally believe that we should get the blessing of parents if parents are born again believers.

And since her father was a born again believer, I knew that, I have never met him, he never met me, I told her that we will honor your parents and until he says yes, I won't marry you. If it means I have to wait, I will wait. I will wait 20 years, 30 years.

Because I have faith in God that if it is God's will, He will speak to your father. And in three months, God spoke to her father. And he agreed without even seeing me.

It's really amazing how he agreed without even seeing my face. He didn't want to see you? No, no, no. No, he was naturally scared.

You know, whenever anybody gives a daughter in marriage, the first thing they think of is will this man be able to take care of my daughter? And secondly, is he trying to exploit her medical profession to make her work and earn money because he is... You know, people go into full time work. You know, you talk about

in India today, full time worker. 90% of them are crooks.

So naturally, full time worker has got a bad impression. So, how does he know whether I am in that 90% or the other 10%? I don't blame him one bit. But then, so he said, he ruled it all.

But then he used to, in his business, he used to travel all over India and he met some missionaries whom he had a tremendous respect for. And he asked their opinion. And he asked someone, whether, you know, there is some guy called who wants to marry my daughter.

That chap said, boy, you will be lucky if you get him or something like that. So he, God made him meet the right people. And so, he got some good reports from these people.

And when he heard those reports, I think he was also a believer who feared God. Otherwise, a person who was only interested in money would never allow that. He agreed to it.

So, Sandy, what's your advice to young people who fall in love with each other? And the second part of that question is, you agree with her, how should they conduct themselves till they get married? If a girl is a believer, definitely, if she falls in love with an unbeliever, we should say, immediately rule it out. Because we should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. So, there is no question of falling in love with unbelievers.

But if you are interested and like a believer and pray about it, definitely, we should tell our parents and wait for their consent. we should not do things on the sly and put ourselves in embarrassing situations. How would you know a person is a believer? How would you know that somebody is a believer? His testimony, he has accepted the Lord and he loves the Lord and his values, when you talk to him, you know what his values are and like that we can know.

Brother, these days, people don't think of any God. They say, we must get to know one another before we get married. What do you say for that? I believe we must, you can't marry somebody you don't know anything about.

I could not have married her if somebody just said any woman. How can I find out who is any woman? I don't know. So, you need to know something.

The thing is, in the western countries, they try to find out in one way and here in this country, we find out in another way. That's the only difference. But in both cases, we need some information on the basis of which we decide.

And it's a question of how we get that information. In the western countries, they tend to sort of go out together and try to know each other. Here, because we can't do that and keep our testimony, at least couldn't do it in my days, things may be different now, we had to depend on God more and say, Lord, give me correct information.

And I believe God loves us so much that he will give us the right information about a person within the limitations of our culture and find out from people who know about the other person and not blindly go ahead. I don't believe that I would ever have fallen in love with anybody if I didn't feel that that person was a totally committed Christian. And I want to say now, looking back after 35 years of marriage, you know, marriage, there are so many pressures and particularly when you have children and if you men marry a girl who is not a wholehearted Christian, you know, when some pressure comes, they don't know how to

handle it.

You'll have to be the one whom they lean on all the time for any spiritual problem. The answer is only found in God. They don't know God so well and you have to be everything.

When I thanked God, I didn't have to be everything because she knew God as well as me. She could pray as much as me. If I'm not there, she doesn't have to ask me.

She can ask God. Whereas if you marry someone who doesn't know the Lord, who just was born again yesterday or something like that, what's going to happen when your children have a problem later on in life? You hear somebody who doesn't know the Lord and she'll be like marrying a lame person whom you have to carry around all the time and can't stand on her own feet. Maybe alive, born again, but lame.

You wouldn't marry a physically lame person because it would be a tremendous handicap. You should not marry a spiritually lame person even if the person is born again. That's why you need to really ask God to show you as much as possible within the limitations of Indian culture whether this person can really be strong on his own.

And if you girls are getting married, the thing that will help you the most is if you can say, can I look up to this person? Can this person be someone whom I can really look up to all my life, not whom I have to accept as my head because the Bible says the husband is the head of the wife, by whom spontaneously I can look up to because he's my leader. Brother, do you think the young people should consult anyone or they can just make decisions on their own? See, love is sometimes at first sight. You have to admit that.

It's blind, you see. It's blind also, but they say, but it shouldn't be blind. In fact, the saying is keep both eyes open before you get married and one eye shut after you get married.

So you don't see all the faults in your husband or wife. The time to keep one eye shut is after marriage. Before marriage keep both eyes wide open.

So, but the thing is, when you see somebody who you find is really spiritually minded, you're really, if you're a spiritually minded girl or boy, you're naturally attracted to that person. And in your mind you begin to consider, boy, I'll be good if I can marry that person. There's nothing wrong with that feeling.

But you have to consider the possibilities of it and say, are you compatible to one another in socially, economically, educationally, like that, in the sense that can you speak the same language, can you speak at the same level. There are so many factors like this you got to think of. And then I would say the next step is, in our culture anyway, if you've got God-fearing parents, tell your parents about it.

Or if you don't have God-fearing parents, go and tell an elder in whom you have confidence. If you don't have confidence in your local church elder, find some other elder brother in somewhere else or some godly person, need not be from your church, who will keep your confidence and advise you and who can help you. I would say definitely we must consult this.

In the multitude of counselors there is safety. What was some practical advice to young people who are interested in one another and they have to wait till they get married, what should they do? I think first of all they should decide whether they are definitely deciding to get married. Otherwise they shouldn't continue a friendship too long because you know, very often things break up and I would say consider all the factors before you decide to commit yourself to each other.

Especially in India, you need to consider the opinion of parents. Whether you like it or not, in Indian culture marriage is marriage into a family. Unlike western culture where you marry an individual full stop, in Indian culture you are marrying into a family, they are very close links with the family, you cannot avoid it and therefore you need to consider whether the girl's parents or the boy's parents will accept this, are you sure of that, if not, hold the reins back a bit, hold on and wait till that's what I did.

I mean when parents didn't agree, I said okay we'll wait and that's the place where you are tested whether God is first or the other person is first. I even said to the Lord, Lord, if you don't want to marry her, that's fine, your will is more important to me than anything else and you are more important to me, I'm not going to be disappointed, I mean I'll feel sad but disappointment is only if God gives up on me, which will never happen. Sister Annie would you like to say something on that, give us your opinion.

I agree that we must wait for our parents to, I mean God's blessing is there if we honour our parents and even if unbelieving parents, I think if we have faith, I don't know, I feel that they can, but I'm convinced that we shouldn't run away and get married, definitely that's wrong, we should wait for both parents to be happy about it. Thank you. Well our time is running out and brother can you, in closing, can you tell us what's the secret of your Christian life.

Maybe before we go to that, there's one area that I think is a problem for many young people, I know it's a mixed gathering but maybe some advice, you know in the sexual area, some of the sexual problems that young people face, particularly in this day and age, the culture that's come into our country in terms of internet pornography, in terms of temptations to self gratification, you know, both boys and girls, how to overcome some of these temptations and maybe some in bondage to a habit, can you help us from your own personal experience? Yeah, I would say that to be tempted is absolutely normal and when you come to a certain age, early teens, a natural curiosity comes in all boys and girls concerning sex, sexual matters, they feel aroused sexually, they want to know more about how the other sex's sexual organs function and it's curiosity and there is where the devil plays up on that and people want to peep through keyholes and bathroom windows and all types of things because of this curiosity. I mean you do a lot of unchristian things out of curiosity first to see what someone else's naked body looks like and pornography begins like that. Curiosity and then you begin to try and stimulate yourself.

You know the only thing that can help in such situation is to think of Jesus and say what would Jesus do? He was tempted exactly like us as a young man. He understands it all. He doesn't condemn us but I if you were to ask yourself would Jesus do this? Don't ask me for an answer.

You will know the answer in your heart immediately. Concerning any habit, I don't have to make a list of habits because the Bible doesn't make a list of habits. The Bible says anyone 1 John 2 6 anyone who says he's a Christian must live like Jesus lived and Jesus said follow me.

He kept on saying follow me. And I know the times when I've been in tremendous pressure of temptation and I've said Lord Jesus when you were in Nazareth as a young man you were tempted exactly like I'm being tempted now and I want to follow you. I haven't always succeeded.

Many times I've failed. I've failed so many times that my failure has taught me two things. My failures have taught me that I can never get victory on my own.

It is impossible. I need the power of God's Holy Spirit. And God allowed me to fail so many times that I knew I couldn't get victory.

Secondly, God taught me never never to despise another human being who has failed. I tell you this is my witness. There are people who have come and confessed the most horrible things to me.

I don't despise them. Because I have learned one secret that my flesh is the same as everybody else's flesh. If I did not do it maybe it was like the cobra inside the cage.

That's all. That's the only difference between me and that person. That cobra was in the wild, I was in the cage.

But my flesh is just as bad as that person's. It is impossible for me to despise a human being today. Not only a believer, a human being.

I can challenge the devil on that. You try and get me to despise a human being because they sin so badly. Impossible.

Not because I have done all those things that they have done. But because I know that my flesh is the same. So, I don't despise anyone.

I believe that if we keep the standard. This is what Jesus' standard was. I say, Lord, I want to be that.

I want to be that. I would say to all of you young people, fight the battle. Fight the battle.

Repent of your past. Ask the Lord to cleanse you from your past and say, Lord, I'm never going to give up till I become more and more walking as you walked on this earth. You'll find your standards become higher as time goes on.

And you give up a lot of things that don't help you one bit. Movies that you watch, you'll stop watching such movies. You'll become more pure in the type of books you read.

It may take time. Don't worry if it takes time. But fight the battle, fight the battle, fight the battle.

If you have a longing for purity, it will go exceptionally well with you even if you're going to fail for the next ten years. Fight the battle. Don't ever give up.

That's my advice to you. Now, failure in this area, how can a young person keep from being condemned, feeling unaccepted before God? No, the thing is there's enough in scripture to show that Jesus loved even women who fell into adultery, Mary Magdalene, that sinful woman who was the most well known prostitute in the city, Luke 7. Jesus said she loves much. So there are many examples.

The thief on the other loves sinners. He loves us and he hates the sin because he knows it's destroying us. And that's why he hates it.

And he knows that you can do nothing about your past mistakes. That's the wonderful thing. You see, men look at you and condemn you for your past mistakes.

Jesus never does that because he knows you can't do anything about it. He only says turn and feel sorry. Many times the failures of the past, many are harassed by it.

Yeah, I know. But that's because of two reasons. First of all, it's the devil who keeps reminding you of your past.

And I'll tell you something. If you have not really repented of your past, you know, there are some people who have done certain wrong things in the past and they justify it. You know, like Adam, well, my wife gave it to me and it was these circumstances.

As long as you justify yourself, you deserve to be harassed. I tell you that. You deserve to be harassed for the next 50 years or all your life and probably to go to hell if you justify yourself.

But the moment you stop justifying yourself and say, Lord, it was nobody's fault, it was my fault 100%. The moment you begin to say that, you'll be justified. And you'll go home rejoicing because your sin is forgiven.

And you say, Lord, I don't want to do it again. I really don't want. I believe that many people are harassed because they are putting part of the blame on somebody else who caused them to sin.

For example, a sexual sin. Supposing somebody has fallen into any type, if it's not adultery, any type of sexual sin. And you say, well, but it was also his fault.

You deserve to go to hell. Whoever you are. You deserve to go to hell.

And I believe God will be justified in sending you to hell. But if you say, Lord, it was my fault 100%. You'll be justified.

Now, if a person, that's the first step. Stop blaming other people. Take the blame 100% yourself.

And then, next thing you need to do is believe that the blood of Jesus has cleansed you. That when he says, if you confess your sin, he's faithful just to forgive us, cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities, I'll remember no more. It means no more.

It's finished. I believe the biggest problem is getting past that first hurdle of trying to put the blame on somebody else. If you got past that, the second step is believe that what Jesus has said, his blood has cleansed you completely, you're justified just as if you've never committed that sin before, never ever committed that sin, but be careful.

In the area where you have fallen in the past is the area you have to be very careful about in future. If you were a drunkard, avoid anything. I can go near a never liked the taste of alcohol even when I was in the Navy, but another person who is a drunkard, any amount of cigarettes in front of me, don't tempt me because I never liked smoking, I never did it, but the areas where we have fallen, those are the areas we have to be very careful about.

Extremely careful, sure, otherwise that's the area where you are prone for the rest of your life. You are prone. You have to be very careful.

Avoid such places. Can you suggest some practical steps for anyone who is in bondage to a sexual habit? Some practical steps? See, the first thing is you must confess your sin wholly to God, repent, and if that does not help you enough then go to some brother, elder brother, mature elder brother in whom you have total confidence that he will not sneak on you, he will not look down on you, he will not go and tell your stories to other people, and pray with that person. I know there are very few elder brothers like that in the world, so a lot of people, I don't know what to suggest, I say, go to God then.

You say sister to an elder sister? Yes. Not many seem to get out of this discouragement, you know, because of past failures. Yeah, they must believe the word, they must believe that Jesus' blood cleanses

us and justifies us.

I want to speak more about that later, about justification, but that's very important. Well, time is up. One last question.

Can you tell how the young people can be preserved from messing up their lives? I think for many of you who are in fellowship in a church, if you have God-fearing elders, please listen to me very carefully, if you have God-fearing elders, and you get into conflict with those elders, you can be pretty sure the fault is with you. Almost certainly. You haven't been to other denominations.

You know, I have sometimes suggested to people, actually suggested to people, you should go and spend six months in another assembly. You will come back to CFC with tremendous gratitude. Here you sit and criticize the elder brothers and the elder sisters, this is wrong, that is wrong, the other thing is wrong.

The only cure for you is go and try another hospital, go and try another church, and then you will appreciate. But very few people listen to me. If they did, it would have cured. Because their problem is ingratitude.

And ingratitude, Romans chapter 1 says, when people are not thankful, they begin backsliding. So when you are not thankful for the wonderful fellowship God has given you in a church, God fearing elders God has given you, the rich word of God, you begin to take these things for granted and you are not actually inwardly thankful, your backsliding has already begun. And that is why I have found that people backslide quicker in CFC than in any of our other churches because they get more of God's word here.

And backsliding takes place without even their knowing it. It's ingratitude which leads to a lack of respect for those who have walked with the Lord for as many years as you have been born and lived. I'm amazed how young people who have hardly lived a few years on earth can treat lightly godly older brothers and sisters who have walked with God for a much longer time than they have lived on the earth.

Such people, it's very easy to backslide and there's not much you can do for them until they learn to be grateful. But if you don't have such a fellowship in such a church, then you must do what I did. Say, Lord, I want to lean on you.

Seek every opportunity to read, listen to tapes, and seek fellowship whenever you can, like go to a conference or seek fellowship wherever you can with godly people. But if you're eager and sincere, God can preserve you. Rozak Sistani, I think, has been very, very helpful.

I'm sure everybody will agree, all that we have heard from both of you. One last question. One last question.

Each person has a last question. So you first and then Sistani, if you were to give the last words, supposing you're not going to see these young people again, or you were leaving this earth, the last words, the last bit of advice that you will give to young people, what would be, supposing it was the last breath, the last words that you can ever speak to young people in your time on this earth, what would be those words, what would be that advice that you would give us? I would say the thing that has helped me the most is to fix your eyes on Jesus. NASB translation is better than looking under Jesus.

Hebrews 12 says fix your eyes on Jesus and run this race. And I think this means to look at two things. In that verse it says, one, in the same verse, I'm speaking only from Hebrews 12 too, one, how he took up

the cross and endured the cross and how he's at the right hand of the throne of God.

Two things. That means one, on earth, I fixed my eyes on how he suffered, how he endured. And I said, Lord, I want to go that way.

I remember as a young man I prayed to God and said, Lord, every experience that you went through on earth, if you will give me the honor and the privilege of going through that experience, I will count it a tremendous honor. I remember that when I went to court, I was taken to court by religious people and the Lord said to me, I've gone here before you, this is an answer to your prayer. And I said, thank you, Lord, you've given me this honor to experience what you've experienced on earth.

Boy, this is fantastic. Everything changes its color when you see, fix your eyes on Jesus. And the second thing is to see him at the right hand of the throne of God.

He's got absolute authority over all the people who come into your life, into your circle. Everybody who's troubling you or influences you, your parents don't understand you, doesn't matter. There's somebody at the right hand of the throne of God who can control all those people, change their opinions about you, change your circumstances.

If you can fix your eyes on just Hebrews 12 2, looking at Jesus in his earthly life and seeing him today having all authority in heaven and earth, I believe you are okay for the rest of your life. Sister Annie. I 100% agree with what my husband has just said, but I also want to add like from a woman's side, two good things which are very valuable to us.

One is to be honest about our condition and what we hear. Like we hear some things in the church, some things which may not be true in our life yet, maybe some fault and at that time be honest and say, yes Lord, that is true, that is my condition. Don't get upset but accept it and be honest about it and bring it to the Lord and say, Lord, please help me to change that habit or that failure which I have, that weakness which I am seeing or that besetting sin, whatever it is.

Honesty is one thing I can add to what my husband has said and the second thing is to have a spirit of submission which is very valuable for a girl because submission in the home to our parents, first of all, in the church, to the elders, sometimes we think like, I have noticed that some sisters who are here and whatever they heard in the church, they used to always say, I don't agree with what we hear because in this day and age we can't just, you know, they had their own comments about it and their critical attitude about what they heard and I found that those sisters either have left the church or it hasn't gone well with them. So a spirit of submission is really a valuable thing which we should long for and keep with us all our lives. Thank you very very much.

Thank you. We praise the Lord, we praise the Lord that we not only have Jesus who has gone before us, we have examples on this earth, we have role models to follow. We praise the Lord from Razak and Sustani.

Let's give thanks to God. Dear father and everyone, we want to thank you Lord for this afternoon. Thank you for this good time we had together Lord.

Thank you for the examples you have given us Lord. Thank you for those who have gone ahead of us Lord. We pray that you will help everyone of them Lord.

We pray that you will bless them and encourage them Lord. Keep them from all the snares of the devil Lord. We pray that you will give them boldness and courage and hope and faith Lord and fill them with the Holy Spirit Lord.

Lead them into all your fullness Lord Jesus. Thank you also Lord for Razak and Sustani Lord and for their example and their sacrifice and for all that they have done for us Lord. We want to praise you and give you thanks for this afternoon.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Let's start without any delay.

Who's the first one? We're going to ask the first question. Just raise your hand. I think what with a lot of young people today it's not that they don't respect the elders and they don't have the confidence in the elders to share those things with them and they really respect them but a lot of times they feel there's a cultural gap, a generational gap of like 30, 40 years and things are different back in the 1960's than it is now and they're not sure if the elders can relate to that and so they want to have someone else to go to and then the people they want to go to are not as mature.

How do you resolve an issue like that and who would you go to in such a situation and is it wise to just try and resolve it on your own? Yeah, the question is that since there's so much difference in age between many elders and young people, sometimes 40 years, and also between parents and their children sometimes, and they can be a complete difference in understanding, you know, the culture has changed in India also, that it was not like people got married 40 years ago, the people get married today, even in India. So sometimes an elder is a bit part of the old school and feels that anything new is unscriptural or wrong, what do you do? Well, can you go to that person because the person will never understand because he won't be willing to think like today's young people think. See, I've had to face this problem in relation to music.

I remember when I was a young person and I listened to even secular songs, they were usually the slow type where you could follow the words, whereas today I can't follow the words of any of these songs, there's something in it, there's some noise there, but I find a lot of young people can follow the words. They enjoy it also. So I've just felt this is another generation and I can't expect them to be interested in the things I was interested in 40 years ago.

If it is not sinful, now I believe that rock music is, there's a demonic element in rocks, drugs and demons go together. So I feel that there's, I mean there's lines here, but if it doesn't go as far as that, just because something is fast and it doesn't, is not what I'm used to, does not mean it's wrong. I believe that in Christian singing we must understand words.

So the same thing applies here also, that cultures have changed and I personally believe that it's very difficult for traditional Indian parents to change their way of thinking and it's true that some elders also do not change with the times. They're not flexible. It's a fact.

And I agree that it becomes difficult for a young person if he's going to deal with a very inflexible elder brother. I hope our elders will be more flexible. The only thing to avoid is sin and even what is worldly.

You know, I know in some of our churches, in other places, there was a time when they felt the salwar kameez, churidar is all worldly and now of course their own daughters are wearing it. So things have changed. I never had a problem with it.

I always felt the salwar kameez was more modest than the big midriffs that Indian women exhibit with a sari and blouse. But there are many things like that, you know. Some people feel that if you wear a pant, a girl wears a pant, that's wrong.

I don't have a problem with it personally. To me there's only one rule in scripture, be modest and be simple. That's about all there is that I'm bothered about.

So in the same thing in this matter of getting boy-girl relationships, see we have to respect the culture we are in and that means, to me the principle is this, Jesus came to earth, Hebrews 2.17, he was made in all things like his brothers. So that means he dressed like the Jewish people around him dressed. Jesus is our example, fixing our eyes on Jesus is the secret.

So how did he do it? He lived like the Jewish people, he ate like the Jewish people, he did everything like all the people around him. If the others had a beard, he had a beard. If the others had long hair, he had long hair.

If they had short hair, he had short hair. So it's all, he was like the people and so as, and he dressed like them. So I believe without being sinful, without doing anything sinful in the society and So I believe that the best example is that that in the society and culture you are living in, if you are living in a western country, you do it another way.

If you are living in Bangalore, you do it another way than you do in some village in, some small village in India. You can't, you know, just like the missionaries who came from America, one of the big mistakes that a lot of missionaries, particularly in Nagaland and all that they made, was they brought along with the gospel their American culture and changed those, the way they dress and all that, which was wrong. The best missionaries are those who became like the local culture and became one with the society around them without sinning and so I believe that the, a spiritually minded person will follow Jesus and adapt to the culture in which they are living, whether it's a city or a village or a western country or an eastern country and there seek to be a witness for Christ without doing anything that will spoil their testimony and adapting and if a culture changes, for example, Bangalore is very different today than it was say 40 years ago and, or even 28 years ago when CFC started.

So, we have tried in CFC, I don't know whether we have fully succeeded, to adapt to this changing culture around us in this city because we believe that our younger generation must be a witness in that culture and if there were things that were considered wrong, not sinful but wrong by society, we'd avoid it 25 years ago. Today we don't avoid it because society doesn't think it's wrong. There's nothing, there was no sin then and there was no sin now.

But where people don't understand it, then I would say there is a limitation and you don't have to go to an elder brother but maybe go to an older person who is willing to listen to you. A married person who's got a little maturity and who can advise you. And we hope that, among us elders here anyway, that we want to be more flexible and adaptable.

The Holy Spirit is always flexible. Not rigid, you know like we were considering in the picnic that the place in the Bible where it says somebody was stiff was that demon possessed boy, he became stiff. And demon possession always makes a person stiff but the Holy Spirit makes us very sensitive and flexible to the culture we are in.

So I would say that if you can't find, if you find an elder or a parent who is rigid, well, respect them but consider whether their objections are to prevent you from becoming sinful and worldly or that there may be a point in what they say, don't just reject it out of hand saying, oh, you're old fashioned. Consider the point and if you still feel that's because of prejudice, then seek the counsel of other godly people whom you know who may be a little more flexible or a little more suited to the culture you're in. Okay.

My question is not really relevant to what we were just now talking about but I was thinking in terms of what you said earlier about first love and loving the Lord and I think it's probably true of a lot of us who at some point in our time in our life where the Lord met with us and we really loved him passionately and he was the first desire of our hearts and we have drifted from that and we know the word of God says repent then you may not be your first love but sometimes you don't know what that means what are the steps you have to take. Can you give us some practical thoughts on this and what exactly does that mean to repent at that point? Well, you know, I find ultimately you have to trust the Lord to keep you because the Bible says he's able to keep you from falling. In fact, you know, nowadays when people go to all these meetings where people lay hands on them and make them fall, I say I'll give you a verse, he's able to keep you from falling and he has kept me from falling in more ways than one but apart from that, ultimately don't trust in yourself.

Say, Lord, only you can keep me from falling away from my first love. Please preserve me and I have found in my life, we have to do our part but also trust the Lord. My part for myself has been to never forget the sins I have committed in my life which only God and I know.

All of us, every single one sitting here, there are sins in your life even if you are a young person that your parents don't know, your husband doesn't know, your wife doesn't know, you don't have to confess to any of them. They are forgiven, they are blotted out, God does not remember them anymore, they are forgiven. They need not condemn you one bit because he doesn't remember them, but you must remember them not for condemnation but to remember the pit from which God pulled you out.

That will make you immensely grateful to God and it will never make you despise another person and the more you realize and constantly remember how much you have been forgiven. If it brings you condemnation, stop thinking about it. Immediately stop, turn to some other subject.

But if you know surely God has forgiven you, it's gone, then I can think about it because I know God has forgiven me and I think about it only for one reason, I say Lord how much you have forgiven me, how much you have hidden from the eyes of others, I want to hide the sins of other people, I don't want to reveal them, I don't want to be a gossip. You know people have told me so many things and nobody, not even my wife, not even Ian or Newton, ever hear from me what somebody has told me. It lives and dies with me.

Because God has hidden my sins, I hide the sins of others, if I know something about somebody else, I will never say it. If God himself exposed it, that's his business but I will never reveal it to anyone. That's one help and secondly it reminds me of how much I have been forgiven which makes me love the Lord more and the other thing as I said earlier also is to meditate much on how Jesus loves us, the immense love of God and how we hurt him every time we do something violating his law.

So these are some of the things that help us to preserve us in our first love and I find also that reading, I don't read many books, I only read something that really challenges my heart. I am not interested in English, I am interested in something that challenges my heart. I was just reading last week something by

Tozer that really challenged my heart and every now and then but it's God who brings that across my path at a time when I need it and the other thing is even a small sin, you really repent seriously and ask God to forgive you.

Sometimes if I have just spoken a little sharply to someone somebody at a petrol filling station or a shop or a vegetable man or a porter or an auto rickshaw driver, I have tremendous remorse over it. It means Lord that was not good. I don't want to ever speak like that to another human being and that God sees there a desire to be absolutely like Jesus, a remorse.

Nobody needs to see it, it's just between you and God and these are the things that preserve us in our passionate love for Jesus Christ. Okay. We have a question here.

It says, you know, being Christians, being committed Christians after marriage sometimes, we feel it difficult to understand each other. So maybe we can ask both Brazac and Satyani to give us It's almost impossible for one person to understand another completely. But I think we should try to, I mean, from a wise point of view, we can say, express our opinion and then leave it.

Maybe... I think your husband eats too fast. I think we should And then, if it's not an important thing, I feel that most of the things which we think husbands need to understand, I found that they are not all that important, that we have to convince them and convince them. Because after some time, I think it was not all that important to, after all, not a matter of life and death.

So I find that there are less and less things which I need to... Threaten me out on. Which works me up. Yeah, you know, one of the best definitions of marriage I have heard is, two imperfect people imperfectly related.

That's the best definition of marriage. Two imperfect people, imperfectly joined and imperfectly related. But in that mutual imperfection, we learn to bear with one another.

You know, it's not a matter of marriage. Even in the church, when we are conceited and proud, we think, oh, I have to bear so much with my wife or my husband or with that brother. And we don't realize that the other person has, that proves that the other person has had to bear with me too.

And that's been a tremendous help to me, to know, particularly in the church, when I think of some person's behavior, that because I'm not like that. I say, well, my behavior must be working that person up too. Also, I don't realize it.

I'm sure that person doesn't realize it. So there are many things which we do in married life, which we don't realize that each has to bear with one another. And in that process, God sanctifies both of us.

There's a lovely verse in Proverbs which says, iron sharpens iron. So, you know, you go to the can only sharpen iron with iron. So that's what happens in mutual relationships, we bear with one another.

We, as young people, we hear a lot, a lot of messages about coping with failure and coping with criticism. But on the other side, how do we cope with success and people praising us? It's easy to say, okay, don't let it go to your head, but eventually it will happen to any of us. How do we cope with it? I think that's important also, because there are a few, you know, even in Corinth, Paul said, not many of you are wise and intelligent.

There are a few in every church. And that's something we have to cope with. Particularly, I would say that a person who is doing exceptionally well in any area, whether in school or in athletics or in college or in a profession, succeeding in a business or anything, the mark of godliness is would be, first of all, personally, to recognize that it's not because he is spiritual that he is successful in the world.

Because, I mean, we have enough examples in the world of very intelligent people. The most intelligent people in the world are not Christians. The most successful businessmen and scientists are not Christians.

Some of them are atheists. So, if we recognize that this type of earthly success, whether in school or college or business or science or anything, is not a mark of spirituality. It's something god has given to some people different and the Christian who is very clever and intelligent has an opportunity to show that, yeah, god has got some people who are clever and intelligent also who do very well in their profession and who are still ordinary Christians.

I mean, we feel that in CFC, nobody should know, for example, who is what profession or who is coming first in the class or who is coming last in the class. I mean that you shouldn't be able to see by their behavior that there is any difference. Nobody should be able to find out who is earning so much and who is earning less.

Then, you know, there is a, then you know that's the body of Christ where each member values the other and the other is, I believe that if you are very successful and intelligent, you should, you have to be very careful that you never make another person feel small by anything you say or you don't dominate a conversation. For example, supposing by God's grace, you never have committed adultery in your whole life. That's a wonderful thing.

But I would never boast about that because, you know, you can make somebody else who happened to fall into that feel very small. It's the same as, you know, trying to boast about your intelligence. I mean, if God has preserved you, okay, fine, leave it before God.

Be, the principle of Jesus. He was made like his brothers. He never made other, to me the most wonderful thing about Jesus is he never made anybody feel small in his presence.

Whether they were sinners or stupid or dumb. Even if the disciples asked some stupid question, he would answer it and never make another person, if you are very capable, never make another. It will make an effort, you know, because there is a tendency to show off your knowledge, to dominate a conversation, to know the answers and to give it, I know I have had to battle this myself and sometimes if you are in a midst of a group of people where others are perhaps not so intelligent, don't give them the impression that you know the answers.

Sometimes you just need to keep quiet. And even if somebody has, you know, some things people talk about, it's not so important whether everybody gets your opinion. So, we have to be very careful and the other thing is, try your best not to, you know, keep on talking about your abilities.

And I'll tell you something, if you really are serious, you young people, go to somebody who is a good friend of yours. If you are a sister, go to another sister, if you are a brother, go to some other brother in whom you have confidence. Young brother, your age, you know, because the elders may not know what you talk about.

When you are in the midst of young people and ask them, do you find something in me that you need to tell me about? You know, you find there is some habit in me that I'm not aware of, perhaps you can help me. And somebody may tell you, you talk too much about yourself. Oh, I tell you honestly, sometimes we don't realize it.

You know, I've had to be corrected at times when I interrupt people in their conversation. It is a habit, I just say, Lord, I want to get over that. We've got unconscious habits which we have acquired.

You know, I ride a scooter, I ride a scooter and I keep telling myself, you got to go slow. You got to slow down. You are not young now.

There are certain habits which are not necessarily evil but which are not good. So, much more in mutual relationships, never make another person feel small and say, go before God frequently and say, Lord, this is nothing spiritual about this. It is just you have made me, I want to use it for your glory.

If you use it well and good. But I just want to live like an ordinary brother among other things. Okay.

So, this question is actually a little bit fun. There is supposed to be journalists here, so I am going to play the role of a journalist from Russia. And I have read your books.

I write for the Moscow Times. And I have read your books. And Mrs. Tunin, I have read a book of yours, The Lady's Viewpoint.

It also translates nicely into Russian. The question is, the people in Russia want to know, what do you do for fun? That is, when you are not reading the Bible and praying and eating and sleeping, do you do other things or would you recommend other things that are fun? What is your recommendation of what people should be listening to music and, you know, watching programs on TV? Practical tips for how people might handle times outside of the time when they are in the meetings in the church? I didn't do the Russian accent well. Okay.

Well, I shall answer that question as best as I can. Since you do not understand English so well, I shall explain. We are having fun.

That is one way of And it is very important that people are free with you in all these things. And sometimes, you know, I don't want to horrify you by some things that we do in our country, but something which is clean and funny and makes us laugh, I believe it is laughter is good medicine for all people. It is good medicine for all people.

It is good medicine for all people. It is good medicine It is good medicine for all people. It is good medicine It is good medicine for all people.

It is good medicine You have to do it according to your culture, and I do not make rules for other countries. You have to do it, they say when in Russia do like the Russians, and in Rome do like the Romans. That is what I believe.

You know, in certain countries, it is perfectly alright for a boy and a girl to go together, and that is okay for me, but if it is in your culture, that creates a problem for your Christian testimony, then you must be very careful in that area. But I believe in good, clean fun. I believe in humor is a gift of God.

And we must enjoy ourselves and I believe particularly older people like myself, the only way if you are an older person and you want to really get down to the level of younger people, you must learn to have fun with them. Then only they will be free to ask you many things and believe that you are at their level. Now I always seek to be at the level of little people.

If I speak to children, I speak to them just like children. I have an Indian wife, by the way. She has not picked up my accent as yet.

So there's a demonstration of a cross-cultural marriage already. So there's freedom if you want to take that freedom. But down to earth matters, I think, for young people.

I found when my children were growing up, it was a good thing for them to play games because I found that when they came back in the evening, the thing that they would look forward to the most was playing after they came back from school. So playing games, whatever games they like, indoor games, outdoor games, that's very good and that brings a lot of, builds up friendship and bonding between the family members and friends. And if you like music, learning to play some musical instrument and joining with people who enjoy music and like we did this afternoon, those are two of the things which I can think of.

When I talk to girls and when I see movies, you don't preach against me in the meeting? Dear brother, do not try to imitate my accent. Because when you try to imitate my accent, I do not understand what you are saying. Please be yourself like I am myself.

I speak in my language now. When I do what I like, do preach against me in the meetings. Okay, we'll hand the mic over to the other brother, right? No.

Okay, when you speak in the meetings, do you, when you do what you like, do I speak? I'm sorry, I didn't clarify that. Supposing as a young brother I talk to the girls or I watch movies, do you preach against that in the meetings? If I, you see, if you are a shepherd, you have a responsibility to speak against anything that is wrong in a church. Even if, the clearest example is in Corinthians where the family of Chloe wrote to Paul saying these things are going on in the church in Corinth.

Paul said, oh, is that so? And he wrote the whole letter of Corinthians about how to behave with women, about marriage, about speaking in tongues, about the man who was living in sin. He answered all those questions. So, it's like, you know, think of an elder brother like a father.

If you know that one of your children is doing something wrong, would you speak to him about it? Or if you find there is a general danger that all your children are facing when you sit around the dining table, would you talk to them about it or not? Of course you will. And so, I have no hesitation, for example, if I hear that somebody in the church is doing something wrong and I feel that is a general danger for everybody, I would have no hesitation in speaking about it openly. And I would say, I would even introduce myself, I have heard that somebody is doing this and that's not a good habit and I felt it is good to talk to everybody about this subject.

You know, we shouldn't get this idea that I only hear from heaven and I speak. God can speak to me through my brothers. God spoke to Paul through the family of Chloe, you read in 1 Corinthians 1.11, who wrote a letter to him saying these things are wrong in the church in Corinth.

God told Paul, speak about it. He didn't hear from heaven. He knew the answer was from heaven, but the pointing out of something wrong in the church came through Chloe.

So, I have no problem if somebody tells me that in some particular church this thing is going wrong and I go there for meetings, I say, okay, I am going to deal with that subject. You know, there are some people who say, don't tell me about anything that is going wrong here, I will listen to God. Paul did not tell Chloe that.

Paul was not super spiritual. He was down to earth. He respected Chloe and he knew that God would speak through Chloe.

So, if I feel that you are, I hear that some of you are watching movies, I would not like to expose you by name, but I will speak about it generally because if it doesn't apply to you, don't worry. But I would have no hesitation to speak about it because it is helpful to people to warn people about lot of movies are like cobras. They will sting you and destroy you.

They put images into your mind that remain there forever. So, you got to be careful. Like I said, you know, if you are watching something clean and good, sometimes you don't know whether it is clean and good and then if you have had one or two sad experiences like that, then you be careful about those type of movies.

So, you know, I believe that entertainment is good. We need relaxation, we go for picnics like we play games and I say we live in a world with such tremendous tension that for some people the only release they get from that tension is say watching sport on television or some type of relaxation. I have nothing against it.

I lived in another age when I was a young man 50 years ago to say that I did not watch television when I was young. It doesn't, I mean, that's the way I was. The age was different.

We are in a different age today. If you find it relaxes, the only thing I say is be careful of sin. Be careful of anything that pollutes your mind.

Please be careful because I tell you it will destroy your usefulness to God. So if you are very eager to please God, I am not at one extreme where I say we don't want any entertainment. There are some people who believe that.

I say fine, I respect that conviction. I really respect those who differ with me. I am just expressing my conviction and I am not asking anybody to follow me.

I am just saying I believe that in a world of tension today we need relaxation. Some people find their relaxation by, you know, just going to prayer and some people don't find it that way. So you must find it your way and not judge other people.

Give freedom. Anybody from the assistance? I am not from Russia. I am from Singapore.

So I have a Singapore accent. I understand you have boys only, only sons? I think so. I have heard it is four lovely sons.

It is a bit unfortunate you don't have any daughters. I mean I am sure it is not unfortunate. It is probably God's will.

But just suppose you had a daughter, what would be some of the things you would allow her to do or don't allow her to do? What would be some restrictions that you would have? Just your opinion. You want to

answer that Ian? Okay. I have often thought about that.

You know, as my sons have grown up in CFC from a young age, I know and they also knew that they were very carefully observed by other people. I know one brother who came, who many years later after my children had left home, told me, do you know brother Zach, every time I came for a conference I was observing your children. And I think they were aware of it too, how they dress, what shoes they wear.

I think any elder brother faces that. His children. Any elder brother faces that with his children.

His children of elder brothers face that. It is part of the price they pay for eldership. That other people, some are critical, some expect the children to live up to certain standards, don't allow them to grow up normally.

In fact, one person told my wife, your children will never be able to grow up, have a normal development in India. They will have to go somewhere else because everywhere they go they say, Oh, you are Zach Minnan's sons and they expect him to behave in a certain way. So, if I had a daughter or daughters, I think they would have faced extreme difficulty.

Because, you know, dress is a much more important thing for women, even the Bible speaks about it, than for men. And a lot of things that today's teenagers would accept as normal and which is accepted as normal in churches, my daughter would have been a teenager 20 years ago or 18 years ago when I would have accepted it. But a lot of people wouldn't have accepted it and I think she would have had a tremendous struggle.

But, I don't know, I have, lot of people think I am a very strict person. I am strict when it comes to sin. But I am not strict when it comes to anything that has no connection with sin.

I don't believe worldliness is in a person's dress unless it's immodest. I don't believe worldliness is in a particular way you fix your hair or, it's a spirit in your mind. That's what determines worldliness.

And I think I would have told my daughter, don't worry about what people think about you. But seek to please Jesus. Always dress in a way, supposing you are going for a walk with Jesus into town.

How would you dress if Jesus was, you have fixed an appointment with Jesus and you are going to walk with him through going shopping with Jesus one day. You are going to dress in a way appropriate to walk with him or you are going for a visit somewhere or you are going to the meeting or you are going for a wedding. You are going for the wedding along with Jesus.

I think it will make a difference in the way you dress or the things you talk about. Think if Jesus is there. So that's the advice I would give to that person and say, don't be too bothered about what other people think about you because, you know, there will always be some people to criticize you.

You know the story of the man and his son who wanted to sell their donkey in the market. Well, if some of you don't know, I will tell you. They took the donkey to the market and they were walking by the side of the donkey and some people said, what stupid people they are.

They are taking a donkey to the market, at least one of them can ride on the donkey. So the man said, hey, that's a good idea. So he sat on the donkey.

Then some people said, hey, look at this old man making his poor boy walk and he himself is sitting like a Maharaja on the donkey. So he got off and his son sat on the donkey. Then some people said, look at this smart young fellow making his poor father walk like that and he is sitting on the donkey like a Maharaja.

So they both sat on the donkey. Then some people said, look at these fellows, they are making the poor donkey suffer so much with both of them sitting on it. So they carried the donkey on their head.

And as they were crossing a bridge, the donkey kicked and fell into the river. That was the end. They couldn't sell their donkey.

So that's what happens when you listen to what this person says and what that person says and the other person says, you will finally carry the donkey on your head and lose it. So I would say, I am not saying don't bother at all. I think you should be concerned about what your parents say.

But basically, think of Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus and say, Lord Jesus, if I were coming to meet you, how would I dress? Somebody asked me, what should I wear for my wedding? I say, just think you are going to meet Jesus. How would you dress if you are going to meet him? I make no rules.

Go to meet Jesus and dress like that. Dress is an important thing. And be careful, I would also tell my daughter, be careful about the type of friends you have.

Even among Christians, there can be people who are always following the latest fashions and who are always talking about various things. They may be Christians and okay, don't judge them. I would tell my daughter, don't judge any of those young sisters in the church because that way you will defile yourself also.

But don't follow them. If you don't feel that way, don't, for the sake of being accepted into their company, don't dress like them and talk like them and imitate their accent. No, no, no, be yourself.

God wants you to be yourself. That's what I would tell her. And rejoice in the fact that God has accepted you as yourself.

If you are not as pretty as somebody else or you are not as fair as somebody else, you are not clever as somebody else, just rejoice that Jesus has accepted you. Those are some of the things I would tell a daughter of mine. Sister Annie.

Daughters, I don't have daughters but whether sons or daughters, I think a mother can build up fellowship with the daughter because the daughter is more at home. And being a friend to the daughter, as a mother, I can teach her all the values. Like if I make a lot of rules, don't comb your hair like this and don't dress like that and put your sari like this and cover like this and I keep on giving her a lot of instructions, she will get fed up of me.

But if I give her general rules like you must be modest, you must seek to please Jesus above everybody else and don't seek to be popular among your friends. And just give her some general principles that will guide her throughout her life and prepare her for whatever she has to face. Because suppose God takes me away from this earth, my daughter must be able to survive and be a godly woman.

She should grow up to be a godly woman. So I should build those, give her those principles and leave her in the hands of God, the Holy Spirit to teach her and bring her up in a godly way. Anyone else? Any other

question? Brother, how can we get over the fear of praying in a meeting or sharing maybe in a Wednesday meeting or something.

It's a fear that many young people have. Maybe we have read something through the week and we want to share it. But we are scared of many things.

Or maybe just open our mouth and pray to God. How can we get over that fear? I spent most of my twenties defeated with different sins. So I felt that that gave me no right to get up on speed because I took the verse, if you love me, keep my commandments.

I didn't feel I was keeping all those commandments because I wanted to sin that I was keeping all those habitual sins. So now as I've got more victory, I've got more boldness. Now that I've got more boldness, I've realized that my victory came because of my disdain with it.

So I feel like I could have had that boldness in all my twenties even though I was still struggling, even though I was falling. So how do I come with that boldness to speak and to share if not a victory but a false impotence to keep me from sinning more of them. Very good questions.

And I believe that we should never be hesitant to testify. So long as you're not pretending. So long as you don't get up and say, I have victory over all sins.

I mean that's a lie. See, you don't have to get victory over sin before you testify. You don't have to get victory over sin before you pray.

The Apostle Peter got up on the day of Pentecost as a thirty-year-old or thirty-three-year-old young man filled with the Holy Spirit and he spoke boldly. He made a lot of mistakes thereafter. Paul made a lot of mistakes thereafter.

And these things are written for our instruction that I believe that even in the coming year, 2004, I may do some stupid things but I'm not going to stop testifying according to the light I have but I'll never pretend. I mean there was a time when I used to pretend about thirty years ago and I was a backslider then. But I don't pretend.

I mean one of the decisions I took many years ago is I won't pretend. But that doesn't mean I can testify only when I've got victory. You know, when you get up to pray or testify, the devil says, Hey, you're the fellow who got lost your temper there or you did something wrong there.

You say, yeah, that's right. I'm the same fellow. But I repented and I've asked God to forgive me and I'm here getting up to pray because I believe that Jesus has forgiven me.

I agree with what Sandeep says that there are a lot of people who are hesitant to get up because they say, hey, I don't have victory yet. We are clothed in his righteousness and that's why we stand. And even when we think we've got such a lot of victory, it's only still 10% of our life.

If only we saw the other 90%, we would really say, Lord, I want to stand in your righteousness. Sometimes God has shown me a little bit of that other 90% in my life and I have said, God, forgive me for ever thinking that I can ever stand with anything other than the righteousness of Christ. And you know, I believe that sometimes God gives you a little glimpse, if you're honest, about that other 90% in your life which other people don't see, which you yourself have not seen.

And then you realize it's only the righteousness of Christ. That means it was the righteousness of Christ from the day you were born again. You know, I believe that it is our fault also in the leadership that we have not spoken sufficiently of he is all my righteousness.

I stand complete in him. That's our fault. I acknowledge my fault there that I have not preached it enough.

And partly because I thought, oh, you know, I had this idea but I saw so much worldliness in Christianity and I said this is the result of these fellows saying I'm righteousness in Christ. Therefore, I threw away the baby with the bath water. I threw away something good, which is in scripture.

And I realized and we're coming back, you know. We've steered the car so much to the right that we've gone way off the road. And we want to come back to the left, come back to the center of the road and be accepted in Christ.

And that's the thing that gives us boldness. If you have not confessed your sin, if you have not repented then of course you shouldn't pray. But how long does it take to confess or repent? Supposing in a breaking of bread meeting you're terribly convicted about what you did wrong.

You know, you can still break bread because how long does it take to repent and say you say, but I haven't set it right. Zacchaeus did not set everything right. It probably took him ten years to pay back all the four times.

But the Lord said, salvation has already come. Salvation came as soon as he took that decision. Not after ten years when he had paid everything back.

So once you have taken a decision, Lord, I don't want to sin, do that again. You may do it tomorrow, so what? You don't want to do it. You know, when people come to me for baptism, I ask them one question.

Do you want to sin again? Even once? I say, now listen. I'm not asking you, will you sin again? I'm asking, do you want to sin again? Even once. And I say, the answer is no, you're ready to be baptized.

Because, I'm not saying, even I can't say today, I will never sin again. But, boy, long long ago, I could say, I don't want to sin again, even once. I'm sure many of you sitting here, perhaps almost most of you, say that, and I believe, don't let the devil rob you of your confidence.

And the other thing is, you have to, the only way to get over fear is by actually facing it. You know, I would never have discovered, how much of honor seeking there was in my praying, until I actually prayed. I would pray, and I say, boy, there was, 10% of that prayer was for God, 90% was for man.

I say, okay Lord, it's going to be 89% tomorrow. Next week, it will be 89%. I work my way.

You know, like climbing a mountain, I tell you, this battle, seeking honor, will be with us till the end of our life. And, you know, I mean, today, if you see me a little more free, it's because I've been praying and speaking in public for more than 40 years. But, I remember the first time, okay, I'll tell you, I'll confess some of my sins now.

You know, when I was in a brethren assembly, way back 40, 43 years ago, and they had, in the brethren assembly, you get up and you can get an opportunity to share before they break your bread for just 3-4 minutes, and I would think up something really emotionally stirring, and I would get up, and I would sit down and say, boy, what a, I put in my thumb and pulled out a plum and said, what a good boy am I. I

really felt like that. And, if somebody came to me after the meeting and said, oh, Brother Zak, that was so good what I said, you know, I would act humble and say, yeah, we give the glory to God for that. You know, you say the right words.

But, boy, I was very conscious that, but I battled it, and I battled it, and I battled it. I didn't stop. I discovered more of myself.

I prayed, and I discovered myself. I spoke, and I discovered myself, and I cleansed myself. For example, people serve in the conference.

Do you know what a lot you discover about yourself? All you brothers and sisters who serve in the conference, haven't you discovered a lot of your own flesh when you organize some local church function? Yes or no? Sure, at least five people discovered something in their flesh. Have you discovered something or not? And that is God's reward to you for your service. What is the reward? He gave you light on yourself.

He gave you a free scan. Scans cost a lot these days, but God gave you a free scan. Because you served Him.

But if you had not served Him, and you stay away from taking part in the conference and doing anything, you don't get any light on yourself. So how will you get light on yourself and be free from honor-seeking in praying? By praying. How will you get free from seeking honor in testifying? By testifying.

That's why some of you have not got free from it after so many years. Because you don't pray. You don't testify.

And the devil manages to shut your mouth. But I know that from next week onwards, it's going to be a rush for the pulpit and a rush for prayer. You know, do you remember the time when those Sri Lankan brothers came here for a conference some years ago? How nobody got a chance to go and testify because you couldn't beat them.

Those people who were converted, just one year or so, they used to rush. The young 12-year-old boys would rush to the pulpit to give their testimony. And boy, nobody in CFC stood a chance.

CFC people were still sitting and judging themselves while these people are out. These people are out giving testimony and getting light on themselves. So be like that.

Brother, you didn't answer the question, the secret of your Christian life. Yes, that was the question that you asked. You are a very sharp reporter, sister.

That's true. What you say is absolutely right. He asked me that question.

I didn't answer it. Tell us your name. Jacqueline.

Jacqueline. Which paper do you represent? Chennai. Oh, Chennai news.

Okay, fine. Okay. You know, I can't really say, I am not trying to be humble, but I am so conscious of so many things in my life where I am working out my salvation that I can't talk as if I have got some secret to my Christian life.

I really feel that God has been tremendously gracious to me, immensely merciful and I seek to be merciful to others. At the same time, if they do something to me, I am merciful. If it affects the church, I have to be strict.

I want to be a lion in the pulpit and a lamb outside the pulpit. Jesus was a lion and a lamb. But an awareness of my own failings and my own wretched flesh in which there dwells no good thing.

God, I tell you, God keeps on making me aware of that in so many situations. So many situations, I keep on discovering, Oh Lord, when will I ever... These are not necessarily conscious sins, but you know, unconsciously you hurt somebody, unconsciously you say something which is not wise or do something. I live with a lot of remorse, not discouragement, not condemnation, but a lot of remorse and sorrow particularly when it has affected other people.

Some decision as an elder, I have to take decisions. I brood over it a lot. I say, Lord, was that absolutely right? Was that Christ-like? It is a tremendous struggle and that keeps me on my face before God and God gives me light.

I will tell you honestly, my life is one of continuous repentance. Every day, God gives me light on so many un-Christ-like things in my speech. I am almost never happy with the sermon I preached.

I feel that there is something there which is left out or something that could have been more anointed and I am constantly burdened by... I read the Acts of the Apostles and say, Lord, we are nowhere near the way those apostles lived and I am burdened about seeing God work mightily. I can say that to me, if there is a secret at all, it is the fact that I have sought for light on my own life from God, very seriously, every day. And God gives me light and I am immensely thankful to God when he gives me light on myself because I can judge myself without getting discouraged.

I will tell you honestly, I never get discouraged. It is years since I got discouraged. I never condemn myself but I am repenting all the time.

Can you understand that? To repent all the time without ever getting discouraged, without ever condemning myself because I believe the blood of Jesus. But it also helps me to have low thoughts about myself. And then I have been the recipient of tremendous grace.

One other thing, God has told me, when I say that, I mean in my heart, never evaluate yourself by the success of your ministry. That means my ministry, the blessing on my ministry is no indication of my life. My walk with God, you know, there are many who cast out demons in Jesus' name.

The Lord says, depart from me, you workers of iniquity. So ministry, you know, many people, other people evaluate me by the success of my ministry. God said, let them do that.

But you don't evaluate yourself by the success of your ministry anytime. Evaluate yourself by your walk with me in purity. And that's where I see my need all the time.

Because my great passion in life is to be like Christ. Stani, would you like to say something also? My life is ordinary housewife's life. So I face the things which most mothers and sisters face.

And I face each day with what it comes, like someday maybe an extra load, somebody may come to me for some help or some phone call may come. And I ask the Lord for help and say, Lord, today you give me

strength to do what and wisdom to do what I should do. And sometimes I used to, I mean, when I was younger, I used to imagine myself doing great, I mean, great things like in a medical profession or big things.

But God has helped me to come down, to be content with the circle which He has put me in. And He has helped me. And I find that dependence on the Lord has been the thing which He has taught me and my greatest need and I thank God for that.

I want to say one more thing. You know, one of the unfortunate, not unfortunate, but one of the serious things when you are in responsibility and in a position like I am is, people tend to take something you say and sometimes it becomes a law for them or sometimes they use it as an allowance. One has to be very careful these days because even a few sexual scenes, even one, ten seconds or so, lot of today's movies have that, can pollute your mind, it can remain there forever, be extremely, extremely careful.

There is hardly anything that comes out of western countries today which is, they put that in, without any connection to the story, just to pollute people's minds and we have to be very, very careful. You know, our life is like to be like a sharp sword or knife for God. Don't let it, don't say the knife is there.

Is it becoming blunt? Is it becoming blunt? If blunt is anything you do or see, blunting your spiritual edge, then what do you gain by it? Find a relaxation in something that does not blunt your spiritual edge or does not pollute your mind. There is a question here. I do not come from a close-knit family and because of this I am not able to handle friendships and relationships.

Can you advise? Yeah. You know, I don't know brother or sister, Jesus came from a home. You know, Jesus became like us.

Have you ever heard in your life of anybody who was born in a cow shed? Even in the slums, nobody is born in a cow shed. I have never in my life heard of a human being born in the midst of cows and donkeys with all that tetanus around. Doctors say that the thing that a woman should be careful about when she gives birth is tetanus.

Anti-tetanus injections they give to every woman when she is delivering. And a cow shed is the place full of tetanus. Imagine Jesus being born over there.

Why was he born? Why did God choose that? Because he had to come underneath everybody. Why did he allow Jesus to suffer the shame of being considered an illegitimate child? Because they would say nobody knows who his father is. Have you noticed in some places, he says, Oh, he is the son of Mary.

When they were happy with him, they would call him the son of Joseph. When they were angry with him, they would call him the son of Mary. You know, the very subtle way of insulting, saying we don't know who his father is.

Notice that in the Gospels. You read that in Luke 4, son of Joseph when he was happy with them. Or when they despise him, Mark 6, Oh, this is the son of Mary.

So, he faced that because there are so many illegitimate children in the world who don't know who their father is. They were born in adultery or they were born through their parents having premarital sex or something like that. Okay, so what? Jesus understands that.

And then in the same way, Jesus came from a home where he had four brothers and at least two sisters. You read that in Mark 6. And they didn't understand him. So, in a sense, he was a lonely person.

Not at all close-knit. Maybe the others were close-knit. But Jesus was like a lonely person.

Why? Because he needed to understand someone like you who comes from a family which is not close-knit. And he understands. What I want you to see is Jesus is the closest friend that you can ever have.

Because he understands everything that you have gone through. Maybe you lost a father when you were young. Or you lost a mother when you were young.

Jesus understands that. I don't know what age Jesus was when Joseph died. The responsibility fell upon him.

But many many circumstances of your life, he understands even if nobody else understands. And don't make the circumstances of your life an excuse for not doing what the Bible tells you to do. You know, psychologists will say, Oh well, we understand.

You were abused in childhood. Or your mother died. Or your father died.

So, that's forgivable. Rubbish! That's for people who don't know God. Once you make an excuse, like I told you in the beginning, like Adam, the moment you make an excuse for your sin, there's very little hope for you.

But take the blame 100% for your sin, there's tremendous hope for you. Don't ever ever ever listen to the psychologists who say, Oh that's because you were abused as a child. Or that's because you became an orphan.

Or that's because you're from not a close-knit family. You know, these are all ways by which the devil wants you to feel sorry for yourself. And do you know that feeling sorry for yourself is a sin? It's like committing adultery.

Why should I feel sorry for myself? When I've become a child of God in the midst of multitudes of people who are going to hell, why should anybody here feel sorry for himself? When you're a child of God, God's blessed you with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, you come to a church where you heard such wonderful truths, and you feel sorry for yourself? That is because you're listening to psychologists. And people who talk, say, No, I'm a child of God. Okay, God, my circumstances are not the very best, so what? But I can overcome that and become a greater overcomer.

Supposing you're from a non, not a close-knit family. And you overcome that handicap. And you become a zealous Christian.

Do you know that you have overcome something which a person from a close-knit family could not, did not overcome because they were not tempted in that way. So you become a greater overcomer. The result is, one day, God will use you to bless somebody who is also from a difficult family situation.

And you can say, Brother, I understand your situation very well. Sister, I understand your situation because I'm from that type of situation myself. So if you've gone through that, or supposing you're an orphan, had no father and mother, and you didn't feel sorry for yourself.

Say, Well, what can I do if my father and mother died when I was small. That's not my fault. But I thank God my Lord picked me up and I'm a child of God.

I'm a happy person. Imagine what a tremendous ministry you'll have to so many orphans in the world. Telling them, Don't feel sorry for yourself.

I was also from that type of situation. And see what God did with my life. But if you feel sorry for yourself, and listen to all these psychologists, and feel sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, you'll just waste your life.

So, believe that everything, handicap that you have in your life, is an opportunity to overcome something that will make you a greater overcomer. Which another person who does not have that to overcome, will not need. We can have that first.

In my day to day life, without my knowledge, I start thinking highly of myself. Then suddenly I realized that I was thinking highly of myself. How can I overcome that? I don't think you can ever overcome that.

Except by practice, over a period of time. You know, it's like, the best example I can use is, supposing I have lived in this house where I've lived for 30 years. And supposing next month I shift to another area.

And one day I'm driving down Wheeler Road. And I'm thinking of something else and I take this turning. And I've gone in here and say, Hey, this is not my house now.

And I turn around. That's what happens in our thought life. We have always taken certain turnings towards high thoughts, selfishness, sin.

And then sometimes when we are not careful, we are little careless, we take that turning again. But it's accidental. And as soon as you realize it, you turn back and say, I'm going to buy a new house.

That's my old house. I'm not going to go back there again. You don't have to feel condemned about it.

Over a period of time, you'll automatically, even when you are unconscious, find your way to your new house. But it takes time. It's because you are a young Christian and that old house is still pretty close to your present stage of development.

Gradually, it becomes less and less and less. And sometimes, you know, pride for example, spiritual pride, comes in a moment. Particularly when you have done something really well, you feel a little proud about it.

It could be saying something, it could be sharing something that blessed others, it could be playing a musical instrument, it could be anything. And you feel proud in a moment, but immediately you say, hey, that's not the way Jesus went. If you turn from it as soon as you are aware of it, I believe that's a good sign.

Because you can say, in a sense, you were unconsciously going in that, you didn't deliberately want to go there, you unconsciously went there and suddenly you pulled yourself back. That's a good sign, that you pulled yourself back. And gradually, it will become better and better, as time goes on.

But don't get, two things should never take place in any of your life. Self-condemnation and discouragement. There is a no entry sign on those two roads.

Please remember, no entry sign, follow the traffic rules, discouragement and self-condemnation. No entry. One way only.

That means people can come out of it, but no going into it. Okay. We have some questions, I think, they seem to be along the same line, so I'll read them out.

It says, you talked about thoughts wandering while praying. It also tends to wander while reading the Bible. What do we do? And then there's the same one on the same line.

When I pray, I get some distracting thoughts. And I'm not sure that my prayer is going to the Father, that he listens to me. I get doubts that it's going to someone else other than Jesus.

What should I do? And on the same lines, when I pray, I get some wandering thoughts and I feel that I'm not praying to God and that my prayers are going somewhere else, other than to Jesus. Maybe it's the same question, I think. What should I do to be sure that Jesus is the one I'm praying to and that he's listening? And on the same line, the Bible says to lift up holy hands.

Does it speak only to the brothers? How do you remain humble always? Yeah, see, wandering thoughts is part of the, because we have a flesh. And, I don't know, maybe you I haven't come to that stage myself yet, where I can concentrate, even for any short length of time without sometimes I can, sometimes I can't. I've just got a flesh.

But wandering does not mean into sin. It's usually into things that you're supposed to do today or tomorrow or, in fact, I found if you want to remember something, just kneel down to pray and the devil will remind you of all the things you're supposed to do. It's usually things like that, that distract you and something else you're dealing with or, it's not necessarily sinful things, but I say, okay, to me, I believe that the Lord understands and He knows we are human, He knows we are in flesh and I feel that we don't have to worry too much about it.

Like I said, you take the wrong turning and you pull yourself back. What do you do if you took a wrong turning? Once you realize it's a wrong turning, turn back and take the right road. You don't condemn yourself for the rest of the day.

Oh, that day I took the wrong turning. Okay, you took a wrong turning. How many times, even in traffic, we sometimes don't know the way or accidentally miss the road.

Then we have to turn back and we waste some time. It's okay, it's not such a serious thing. I believe that if we are sincere, then we can be sure our praying and prayer is going to Jesus.

We don't have any feeling. I don't know how you have a feeling, it's going to some other place. How do you know it's going to some other place? We pray and we don't have any great consciousness that Jesus has heard me or we live by faith and faith is one of those mysterious things which we can't really explain.

But as you grow older and you walk with the Lord, if you are sincere, that's the only thing I've said to myself. Lord, am I sincere? Am I judging anybody else? Am I thinking that I'm better than? You know, I'll tell you honestly, there are some times when I have shucked my eyes and imagined the judgment seat of Christ and people being called up for rewards and I have pictured everybody in CFC getting a reward before me. I say, Lord, it's possible it will be like that.

The first will be last and the last will be first. And how do I know? There may be lots of people sitting in CFC who are far more sincere than I am. I may be more gifted, but rewards in heaven are not based on gift.

So, it's sincerity. So, it's good always to live in low thoughts about ourselves. And if we are sincere, God will listen to us even if we don't have any great feeling of it.

We pray and you know, God loves sincere people. And if you are sincere, there's a song, one of the hymns in English, prayer is the soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed. That means whether it's spoken or not spoken.

It's the soul's sincere desire. If you have a sincere desire even if you don't say it, that's a prayer to God. And very often I have found that in my life.

I never prayed something but it was my desire. And God answered it. I can say that was an answer to prayer.

But did you actually pray it? No, I didn't. That was my desire. Okay.

When we seek God for an answer, how can we know that the answer is from God or just an idea from our brain? How can we make up? Okay. When I pray for example for healing and I take medicine or go to surgery and I'm healed, I thank God for the doctor and I thank God for the medicine. But I say God healed me.

Why do we pray over our food? Because we believe that it's God who gives us physical health. And this food, but I He uses food. He uses medicine.

But we thank God for a safe journey. It's a scooter that took us from one place to another but God preserved us from accidents. So, in the same way we recognize that even if we have used means, it's God who answered that.

So, in every situation the question was Yeah, the other is an idea. If I ask God for something and I get a thought, how do I know it's from God? I believe that if it is from God, there will be a peace about it. Romans 8.6 says the mind of the Holy Spirit is life and peace.

And if you find an upsurge of life in you and a peaceful rest in your spirit when you think about that particular course of action, that is usually an indication it is from God. If there's a restlessness when you think about marriage to somebody or taking that job or something, the restlessness that means it's not usually from God. And as you pray about it, the restlessness increases.

Then it's not from God. But if the peace increases and the circumstances around also are suitable to that direction then you take it. There's no voice from heaven.

That is how I've usually found God's will in my life. And whether an idea is from God or when I read scripture something speaks to my heart, if it helps me in my life then it's definitely from God. These are some of the ways in which we know.

And of course we can also get confirmation by consulting with older, mature believers concerning a decision. Okay, we'll stop with these three. And it's one is I think that Zak has answered that what is your view about modern day Christian rock music and along with that in our colleges, classmates crack a lot of

dirty jokes.

How should I respond to someone who cracks a joke of me at my face? It is pretty awkward to keep silent. You see somebody makes fun of me I think the right thing to do is laugh. I enjoy it.

It's at me. But if you're making a joke of somebody else some of the dirty jokes. Okay, I'll come to that.

If making a joke at somebody else I don't think it's right to laugh because that person should know at least that I don't laugh at something which is humiliating him. You know, we are sometimes many Christians, even in fun sometimes say things. We have to be very careful.

I know God has judged me on that. Sometimes I say something in fun about somebody and afterwards I've gone home and I thought about it. I said, Lord, how did that person take it? Did that person get hurt? I mean I said it in fun but did that person get hurt? I said, Lord, please help me.

I never want to hurt another person with a joke. When it comes to dirty jokes I wouldn't act like a holy person or you fellows are sinners but I would try to make it clear, well I'm really not. Let them think I'm a dumb sort of person who can't understand the joke.

And you know that I don't really laugh at something dirty which makes fun of God or if it makes fun of God, you know I say, excuse me brother or my friend, I don't think it's wise to make fun of God or something dirty. I say, well, I'm not really. He must know that I'm not interested in it.

Let him think whatever he thinks. It says in church, how could I, I think it means how could I relate or ministering with boys and girls is 1 Timothy 5 2 possible today? That is treat the younger women like sisters? Is that what you are talking about? Treat the younger and the older women like mothers? 1 Timothy 5 and verse 2, the older women as mothers, the younger women as sisters in all purity? Yeah, that I mean scripture is valid for all times. And so I believe that's possible today and I believe we should treat sisters in purity but because of the prevailing atmosphere, you know in Paul's time it was much easier.

Culture itself prevented people from and in the villages in India it's somewhat like similar to what it was in those days. But because of the freedom there is nowadays between boys and girls, you have to be very careful in relationship with sisters, young sisters particularly very very careful and you must keep a certain restraint that you know that you say always Lord keep me in purity and I would say that one way in which you can know there has been impurity in your relationship even in a meeting with other young brothers or young sisters is what you dream about at night. You know if you are really faithful in walking with God God will warn you by some dreams you get at night which indicate that within the last day or which in the last week you were a little impure.

You don't have to feel condemned over that dream. But that dream is a little warning from God. Be careful in that area.

Because dreams are your subconscious got a little message from your behavior. You may justify yourself by saying I didn't mean anything and you may sincerely believe that and our culture is ok. But your subconscious got a little message.

I know what you wanted and there is a little impurity there. And the subconscious says ok I will feed it back to you in your dreams. And you get it in your dream and you know that that was not totally pure.

Take that warning. Take that warning and say God forgive me, forgive me. You know God has protected me from so many dangers by dreams.

I will tell you honestly. So many dangers in relation to the opposite sex by dreams. I remember God gave me some, I don't remember was it 15-20 years ago.

He showed me in my dream three not all in one day at different times, three sisters in our churches whom the Lord said be careful of them. They were born again sisters. And I said Lord I will do that.

And as soon as I saw that I said yes I have to be careful of these. So if you are serious you will find that God warns you in a dream not necessarily of a particular thing but where there has been slight impurity if you are really serious about purity God will warn you. And then you take that warning and that holds you back from much more serious sin.

To me it's like I used to get sometimes little tosses from my scooter where I never hurt anybody and I never broke a bone or anything but the little toss would warn me be careful slow down a bit. So it's like that the Lord says in human relationships also between boys and girls the Lord is saying slow down slow down. You are getting too close for comfort.

You know these mottos written at the back of auto rickshaws. Keep your distance. Very good word for brother sister relationships.

Keep your distance. Keep your distance. This relates to what we heard in the last session.

Last we asked Razack and Sistani what would be the last words they would speak to young people and Razack spoke about fixing our eyes on Jesus. Together with this somebody has asked how do we fix our eyes on Jesus in a practical way. And last question that we can end this youth conference which I'm going to ask what brother Razack and Stani to what would you say to young people of our churches committed Christian young people who face a future particularly in the life that we are in the end times and we don't know what the future holds what word would you like to give to young people of advice or encouragement or exhortation and we want to print this what we heard in the last you know people put famous last words I think it was very worthwhile thinking about what we heard from brother Razack and Stani and Stani shared about being honest submitting regarding sisters now you know what would be a word that you would give to this generation that's growing up as they face a future which we don't know like we sing we don't know what the future holds okay concerning the first practical ways of looking and fixing our eyes on Jesus you know to think that Jesus was made in everything like you and was tempted in everything like you so in practical terms whenever you are tempted with anything whatever your circumstances he didn't have your circumstances he never rode a scooter he never played football he played other games I'm sure but he never faced the temptations you face but he never faced the circumstances you face but he did face the temptations you face temptation to seek your own pleasure to enjoy yourself instead of pleasing God etc and to think that Lord what did you do in a similar circumstance in Nazareth when you were tempted like I'm being tempted right now or not you know there's a very famous saying what would Jesus do I don't usually ask that question but I would ask this can I do this in fellowship with Jesus which is a better question can I do this in fellowship with Jesus or can I not do it I have to sort of keep Jesus away from this particular thing I'm going to do or where I'm going now can I take Jesus along with me watching this movie can I take Jesus along to watch it or this habit can I do it say Lord let's you and I do this thing together and then you suddenly get a light that Jesus I can't do that along with Jesus I have to sort of do it on my own then I've taken off the yoke from my neck and say Lord I'm going off on my own now for a little while I'll

come back after half an hour then you know you're wrong whatever people may say and whatever other young people may say oh it's alright we're living in 21st century but you know you got to give up Jesus at that short time so you got to think now I mean is that something that you can do in fellowship with Jesus very good question to ask yourself this is a practical way of fixing our eyes on Jesus and the other thing in relation to today's what I would say to young people is do you know the great need in our churches which many of us have been praying for older people is a second generation of leaders we need second level of leadership third level of leadership and where is that got to come from not from we don't have bible schools churning out pastors who come and take over churches we don't have that it has to come from within the church where have all the leaders in all our churches come from from within the churches so in another few years where are the leaders going to come from from some of you sitting here where are all the wives of the leaders going to come from some of you sisters sitting here don't you think you should take your calling seriously I mean God may want you to be an elder in a church one day God may want you to be an elder sister in a church one day well you got to prepare yourself now it takes a long time study God's word prepare yourself and once you get married I'll tell you the number of people I have met who tell me what I already knew that once you get married you don't get much time to study the word it's true almost all the bible knowledge I have today factual knowledge not talking about revelation revelation you get all through life but factual knowledge of the bible almost all the bible knowledge I have today is what I knew before I got married almost all of it 90% of it so if you don't study the bible in your single days I tell you you have missed some of the most important periods of your whole life now I want to say to all of you who are single you don't know what opportunities you are missing by not devoting yourself to the study of God's word please please please devote yourself to it you know I have met some people in other churches who are so devoted to the study of the word and I said boy why can't we have some people in CFC like this you know there's a lot of ignorance of scripture in our midst because many of us are not seriously studying the word and I want to encourage you study the word be prepared for the coming days God wants to raise you up to be leaders and there may submit to the authorities in your church I mean if they are going astray don't follow them but if you find really godly men whose example and whose ministry blesses you follow such examples and don't be critical of every little thing you know I have seen people in our church who come to this church and they are critical and critical and critical they don't last very long it's not the spirit of Christ I mean if you can do something better than what those elders are doing it's like to me it's like these people in the stadium criticizing the 22 footballers on the field ah he should have kicked it there he should have kicked it there it's all very easy to say that when you are sitting in the stadium you get out on the field you wouldn't know where to kick it at all you may kick it in your own goal so it's very easy to sit in the stadium and say he should have kicked it there and he should have kicked it there and to sit in the meeting and say that chap is boring or you try getting up and speaking I tell you even to speak 10 minutes without boring people is difficult so don't just criticize pray for people and judge yourself and don't just be critical elders are trying to do a good job they may not do a perfect job but support them and particularly if a man is a God fearing man to whom God has borne witness for many many years God has borne witness to some brother or sister I'll tell you in your own interest respect such people it will go well with you so that's my advice to you yeah and take responsibility in your local churches I grew up by taking responsibility you know that I would try and share God's word with a few people not part of the church meeting I'd go to some home and say can I share something with you or maybe in your place of work your sisters you meet somebody and try to be friendly with that person and you know bless them in some way give them a gift and then give them the gospel Jesus always was the friend of sinners before he asked the woman in Samaria for a water can you give me a glass of water so we need wisdom then opened up her heart to the gospel so say Lord I'm not capable like other people but I'm available can you say that to God

can all of you say Lord I'm available please prepare me for what you have for me in the future many times when I come to the meeting and I sit there this verse which is written there I look at that and that's like the message for me and if we judge ourselves we will not be judged and when I sit here and I hear the word of God I say Lord I want to judge myself when I sit here I don't want to look at this word is for so and so young person or so and so older person but that word is for me and I think that has been like a secret for me whatever word I hear whatever situation comes across my path I take it to judge myself and I just want to say really funny thing which happened at home you know my husband has got a machine to give him a little exercise and I used to think I don't need any exercise because I'm doing all the work if he does like you know like me he starts like watering the plants and things like that but he is allergic to plants and dust but I was a little critical in my spirit thinking like I don't need the exercise and he used to say you can also exercise but I thought I don't need the exercise and that boastfulness was coming in my heart I didn't realize it and I was very busy cleaning up my house for this conference and for my guests and my children and all and I climbed up on the stool and had such a bad fall and the Lord taught me see you have the spirit of boastfulness and judging others and you need to humble yourself and you are proud that you are working so hard and every situation I want to take like that even that fall or success or whatever take it in a way where I judge myself and say Lord I need to take it and I want to hear what you want to speak to me in this situation yeah thank you very very much so good that we can have examples who are honest and sincere and we see reality we really thank God let's express our thanks and appreciation by giving them a good hand

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