

Setting Our Mind On God's Interests

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a mindset focused on God's interests rather than our own, highlighting the need for godly leadership and humility in serving others. It challenges individuals to seek revelation from the Holy Spirit, to desire to be shepherds of God's people, and to have the mind of Christ in all aspects of life, even if they have made mistakes in the past.

Duration: 1:07:06

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:1, 1 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Joshua 24:15, Judges 21:25, Matthew 16:23, Matthew 16:24, Hebrews 10:16

Topics: "Godly Leadership", "Humility in Service"

Description

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Transcript

I'm primarily burdened for those who are young and born again in our midst because you have your whole life ahead of you to live for the Lord. And if you start right and are consistent, even in 10 or 15 years from now, God can do some wonderful things through you if you allow him to prepare you. See, there's no country in the world, I think, where they're so keen on educating their children right from a young age, like India.

In western countries and all, they send the children to school only when they're five or six years old. Only in India that we send children to school when they are two years old. Because we want them to finish, go to college when they are 15 or 16 and finish a degree by the time they're 18 or so.

It's amazing. Nowhere in the world do people finish so early. What is the reason? Because parents are so keen in a country where it's so difficult to get jobs.

They're so keen that their children should get a good education. All of your parents are like that. I find the children of farmers and plumbers and taxi drivers are also like that.

Parents know that if we neglect our children, our children will end up as living in the slums like us. And they're so zealous to make sure that the children get a good job and get an early start in life. But I don't

find that same zeal when it comes to born-again people in their spiritual life to start early, to get to know God.

Why is that? Many of you who are so eager to get your children into good jobs and good education, there's nothing against that. We live in a country where it's difficult to get jobs. It's good to give a good education.

I encourage that. In fact, right from the time CFC started, I've always encouraged all parents to get their children educated as far as possible depending on the level of their intelligence and the financial ability of their parents. God determines that.

But I wish we would show the same zeal to grow spiritually right from the very early start to pursue education, spiritual education. And I wish you parents would urge your children to get spiritually educated also from a very young age instead of just leaving that to Sunday school or hoping that it'll work out. You don't allow your children to study like that, do you? I hope they will learn their ABC and I hope they learn mathematics.

No. You go after them. You check how they are doing every year.

How about it spiritually? And I believe this is very very important because there is a decline spiritually all over the world. And that's predicted in the Word of God. The love of many will wax cold as we approach the end and there's tremendous amount of deception.

The spirit of the world has become so much more powerful. It was much easier for me to bring up my children in 1975 than in 70, 72, 75 than it is for people today 40 years later because there's so many other temptations. So all the more you have to be careful that you fight the battle spiritually if you don't want to lose your children permanently.

And you may not realize you've lost them till they've left home. And then you will discover whether they're really standing for the Lord or not. At home you can think everything is okay because children are pretty good at fooling their parents.

But I'm also thinking of a lot of young people. I was just checking the CFC list the other day and I discovered there are 160 unmarried young people here. Can you imagine? Did you know there were so many? I'm not talking about married couples.

160 young people here. Can you imagine what a powerful force that can be for God if every one of them and that includes all your children also who are teenagers or above. What a tremendous power that can be for God if you can urge them.

It does not conflict with their education. It does not conflict with their sports or any such thing. I believe we need to be balanced.

Man is spirit, soul and body. So it's not that we're not like sannyasis or hermits who neglect the mind and body. No.

Balanced spirit, soul and body provided we recognize spirit is number one and our mind is number two and body is number three. Don't put the mind above the spirit. That is the way to destroy your children.

That's the way to destroy your life. If you place your earthly education above your spiritual education, I can prophesy today you're on the broad way that will destroy you finally. It may take a long time before you

discover that you're destroyed but it'll be too late to turn back.

So my duty is only to warn you. God himself doesn't catch us by the neck and make us go the right way. He shows us the way like Moses told Israelites.

Here's the path of life and here's the path of death. Choose this day which way you want to go and I said in this choice our mind plays a very very important part. Very very important.

You know the only time Jesus called one of his disciples Satan. You know that was in Matthew 16. Let me point show you that place.

Matthew 16 where when Peter said to Jesus and Jesus said I've got to go to the cross. Matthew 16 21. I have to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed and be raised up on the third day and Peter took him aside.

Verse 22 and said God forbid it Lord. It says he rebuked him. Can you imagine rebuking Jesus Christ? That's how bold Peter was.

It shows us something of the humility of Jesus that Peter felt he could rebuke him because Jesus made himself so equal. You know there are people you would be scared to rebuke but Jesus was not like that. He made himself so equal with his disciples they were not even scared to rebuke him.

Of course it was completely wrong but he rebuked him saying never Lord. That is never going to happen to you. Of course he was in love.

He said I'll defend you. Nobody will touch you. But he didn't recognize that Jesus also said he'll be raised up on the third day.

I mean I think we should all be ready to die if we could be raised up the third day. Sure it'd be a great experience going out of the world for three days and coming back but Peter didn't think of that and he didn't realize that this was necessary and he turned around and said to Peter verse 23, get behind me Satan. It's the only time that Jesus ever called a person directly Satan.

The only time. Once he told the devil himself in the temptation, get him in Satan. But this is the only time.

He never even called the Pharisees Satan. He called them vipers and generation of vipers and humbugs and all that but Satan the one whom he loved the most he called Satan. He loved all of them but the one who betrayed him Judas Iscariot on the day of his betrayal he put his arm around him and said friend are you betraying the son of man.

I learned something from that that though like the Bible says in Revelation 3 19 those whom the Lord loves he rebukes and the more strongly the Lord loves us the more strongly he rebukes us and I would say to you my dear brothers and sisters when you read the scriptures if you have not heard a rebuke from the Lord I would say to you you have never heard God at all. You can imagine God is speaking to me, God is speaking to me. Tell me how many times have you heard God rebuking you? Never? Then you are imagining that you are hearing God because those who really hear the Lord, I hear the rebukes of the Lord pretty often.

To me that's one mark he loves me. He doesn't want me to miss out on even a small little thing. So those whom the Lord loves he rebukes and the more he loves them the more strongly he rebukes them.

Get behind me Satan. I believe it was something like this that made the Apostle Paul feel at one time I'm the chief of sinners because he got so strongly rebuked and he said boy I can't imagine there's any sinner in the world worse than me. Have you ever felt like that? If you really know the Lord sometimes you'll feel like that when the Lord rebukes you about something and you wonder Lord I'm going to CFC but I wonder if there's a sinner who's worse than me.

So what is the reason why the Lord said to Peter get behind me Satan? He said to him you are a stumbling block to me. So two questions. When does when do we begin to behave in a satanic way and be a stumbling block to the work of God in our life or in the church? It says here here is the reason your mind is set on man's interests not God's interests.

Here was Peter his whole way of thinking was along human interests and not God's interests. He was thinking of human comfort and human pleasure and ease of living and all that and not God's interest and that is when he became a stumbling block and you begin to think more and more like they unconsciously even though you love Jesus just like Peter loved Jesus you can be a stumbling block to the church. You can be a stumbling block to God's work and you can be a stumbling block to your own spiritual growth and to the entire work of God and if you live close enough to Jesus you will hear him say get behind me Satan.

But if you don't live close enough you may not hear that voice. That's the danger that I can have my mind set on human interests and come along to CFC regularly and never hear the Lord rebuke me. That's tragic.

Thank God that as soon as Peter began to set his mind on God's interests the Lord came down hard on him so that he got a jolt and woke up and you should be thankful. I want to be thankful if the Lord comes down hard on me as soon as he finds my mind a little towards my own interests. Not after I've gone on my own interests for 10 years and then I don't want to hear the Lord rebuke me then after I messed up my life and messed up God's work in my life and what he wants to do through me for 10 years.

I want to know it at the first step. Are you eager for that? Are you really eager? Then you'll have hear something today that'll help you. You're really eager to know that as soon as your mind is moving away from the things of God and the interests of God to your own human interests you want the Lord to rebuke you immediately and not with gentle words and say oh my dear child this is not the way.

No but with strong rebukes that make you sit up and say Lord am I the chief of sinners in the whole world? That type of rebuke if you've never felt that type of rebuke I would say you've never heard the Lord at all. You're imagining God spoke to me and God spoke to me. I've heard thousands of believers say that and I know it's all rubbish because when I look at their life I find they're completely set on human interests.

What do you mean the Lord spoke to you? Didn't the Lord speak to you that your mind is set on human interests? It's all a deception what is happening today and because we don't allow our mind you remember the mind is what Jesus said here. Why have you set your mind? What direction is your mind thinking? And that is what determines whether we get what the Bible calls discernment. One of the greatest needs today in the spiritual life is discernment.

What is of God and what is not of God? I'm not talking about the knowledge of good and evil. Murder is evil. Thinking dirty thoughts is evil.

Speaking angry words is evil. I don't mean that's a low level. It's good but that is a tree of knowledge of good and evil.

You can go to the Sermon on the Mount for example and make the Sermon on the Mount a better tree of knowledge of good and evil than the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments is a tree of knowledge of good and evil. Murder is bad.

Adultery is bad. Bearing false witness in court is bad and not honoring your parents is bad. Idolatry is bad.

That's a knowledge of good and evil. Then you come to a more refined knowledge of good and evil which is Sermon on the Mount. But I say lusting after women is bad and getting angry is bad.

Not loving my neighbor is bad. I've got another list of things I must avoid and I try to carefully avoid all that and I think I'm okay. But if I pray and I tell other people about it that's bad.

And people do all this and they don't have discernment. Absolutely not. You know when I see the number of... I mean you heard me speak about this for years.

I never get tired of speaking about it because I'm seeing the number of people are deceived. Even in the city of Bangalore. Christians.

The number of people who are deceived by television evangelists who are just collecting money from people. And what surprises me is not what they do. What surprises me is the millions of people who sit there and don't have any discernment.

Or the millions of believers who turn on their TV sets to watch this entertaining program without discernment. And who send money to these people which is like exactly the same as putting money down the toilet and flushing it out. Same thing.

I'll tell you this. If you send money to these televangelists it's exactly the same as putting that money in the flush in your toilet and flushing it down. No difference.

Absolutely no difference. So what I'm concerned about is this tremendous lack of discernment among and particularly among people who say they are spirit filled. Which spirit? Speaking in tongues.

What tongues? And you don't have discernment on what is right and wrong? Because the mind has not been renewed. In the new covenant the promise of God is turned with me in Hebrews in chapter 10. Hebrews in chapter 10.

Now many of us may have avoided all these television evangelists and sending money anywhere to them. I mean some of you may not be giving money anywhere. You think you're free from... that's another type of deception.

But in Hebrews 10 it says here. This is the new covenant the Lord says verse 16. Hebrews 10 16.

I will put my laws upon their heart and on their mind I will write them. That is the tree of life. That's different from reading in a book.

This is bad. That is good. Whether 10 commandments or the Sermon on the Mount is good.

I believe we should keep the Sermon on the Mount but I can't. A lot of people can keep it mechanically. Mechanically.

I do this. They don't do this and they don't have discernment. Whereas when God writes his law on our mind that's a different experience altogether.

And you know Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You know that well-known statement. The first statement Jesus made in his ministry when he was speaking to the devil.

And I believe that's the foundation of the Christian life. Man shall not live by bread alone, by food or by any of our earthly needs to live but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. As I meditated on that I thought how did Jesus practice it? I mean the best way to do it is the way Jesus himself did it.

When Jesus got up in the morning he didn't have a Bible to open. Not only Jesus but for more than a thousand years, for 1400 years when believers got up in the morning they had no Bible in their home. How do you listen to the word of God every morning? The man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth.

Have you ever thought of receiving the word of God without a Bible? Or just what you heard on a Sunday but you don't have a physical Bible to read and your whole life you've never read the Bible but you've only heard the sermons and the meetings. Imagine, supposing I've often thought about that, supposing we were a first century church. A first century church would be say 20-30 people meeting in a house.

Nobody has a Bible. Even the preacher doesn't have a Bible. Imagine having a meeting like that.

I really believe we could have some spiritual meetings. I'm not saying they should try it because we are not at that level of maturity. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit if you want to do it first of all.

Otherwise it'll be just cleverness. But I can imagine a spirit-filled group of 20-30 people in the first century, a really powerful church meeting together in the first century who had heard the apostles now and then and had received the word of God. The Holy Spirit had been keeping on instructing them and they come together for a meeting.

Nobody has a Bible and one person gets up and shares. He can't quote exactly. There's no chapter reference and even the quotation may not be exactly the same.

You find, for example, even in the New Testament, some of the quotations are not exactly like in the Old Testament. So sometimes we are particular. It must be quoted exactly and we say, see this word, what does it say and all that.

It's all intellectual stuff. It's good to see it. But if that becomes the major part of some of you who preach, that is your message.

You haven't understood what it is to live by the word of God, to have your mind open to what God is saying. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. See to have God's law written on our mind is very different from studying and memorizing Scripture.

Memorizing Scripture is very good. But there's a lot of difference between that and God writing his law on our mind. I can have Scripture in my memory, which is different from God writing on my mind.

Let me say that again. Scripture in your memory is not the same as God writing his law in your mind. Because when God writes his law in your mind, it changes your way of life.

Whereas there are people who can quote Scriptures like anything, who know so many Scriptures, who still love money, who still lust after women, and still get angry, and still tell lies. There's a lot of difference between memory and mind. Remember that.

It's good to have Scripture in your memory. Because Jesus quoted Scripture from memory when he said, man shall not live by bread alone. But to live by the word of God, what the Lord told Peter was, your mind is set on your own interests, not God's interests.

And as long as your mind is set on your interests, let me tell you in Jesus' name, you will never get discernment. No matter how many times you come to CFC, even if you've been here for 30 years, you will never get. Discernment doesn't come by study.

Discernment does not come by understanding the truth. It is by having your mind set on God's interests. And that is what it means for God to write his law in our mind.

I can't do it. My nature from birth is to seek my own interests. Every child is like that.

You put two children together with toys, and each child will grab the best toy for themselves, or the best food for themselves. We are born like that. I mean, as we grow up, we get a little more civilized, but it doesn't make us stop seeking our own interests.

We say the important thing is not toys and food. The important thing is to make a lot of money in the world and get on. Our mind is set on our own interests in very subtle ways.

But at the same time, we want to appear spiritual. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, to ask God to give you an honest evaluation of your true condition, not your Bible knowledge, which is memory. Forget that.

But your mind. Is your mind set? Set means it's fixed. It's like these pillars.

You can't shake them. I want my mind to be set like that on God's interests, and nothing of my my own interests. I'll tell you this from the little experience I have of more than 50 years, that if you do that, God will take care of your interests, and he'll do it much better than you can do it yourself.

You don't lose out by seeking God's interest. Not at all. The rich ruler whom Jesus said, go and sell everything that you have and come and follow me.

Come and follow me. The same words he said to them were what he said to Peter. He told Peter also, go and get rid of your fishing net and come and follow me.

Peter said, sure. Jesus told the rich young ruler, go and give up what you haven't come and follow me. He said, no.

That man could have been like Peter. Look what he missed out. And wherever he is today, go and ask him today whether he regrets his decision.

Go and ask all the people who have left this earth, those who've gone to hell, and even those who've gone to heaven, if they don't regret the times in their life when God told them to set their mind on God's interest and they thought, no, no, no, unless I seek my own interests, who will take care of me and my family? And that was the decision which ruined them. I hope we have people here in CFC who are not just wanting to go to heaven when you die. I think a person who wants to become a Christian only to go to heaven when he dies is one of the most selfish Christians you can think of.

It's like a child in a home, the father, think of a father who's a maybe a laborer, working hard day and night, going early morning, carrying bricks and doing everything to educate his children, and all that he, the mother goes to work and they work hard and think of a child there who enjoys all that and has no sense of gratitude to make life easier for his parents, but only wants to think of himself and complains when his father can't buy this or that for him. That's how a lot of Christians are. After all that the Lord has done for them on the cross, they can only think of, will I go to heaven when I die? I'll tell you this honestly, you are totally unfit to be in CFC, totally 100% unfit to be in this church if your only aim in the Christian life is to go to heaven when you die.

I'm not interested in gathering a single person who wants to go to heaven when he dies. I told the Lord that. Lord, I will not go anywhere to get people to heaven when they die.

Those evangelists who want to do that can do it. I will not do it because I don't think you came here to do it. You came here to make disciples.

He gathered people who were disciples. There were lots of people who wanted to go to heaven when they die in Jesus' time. He didn't call them.

He drove them away. He said you got to eat my flesh and drink my blood otherwise you don't have any life in you. Don't you think those people wanted to go to heaven? Of course.

But he drove them away. Jesus had a tremendous ministry of driving away people who only wanted to go to heaven when they die and I want to have that ministry too. To offend them, drive them away, get them offended and even if they sit in CFC to be perpetually disturbed by hearing the message.

Jesus is only calling disciples. He said go into the world and make disciples of all nations and that's what we are doing in India. And a disciple is one not perfect.

There's nobody's perfect but who wants to look at the footsteps of Jesus and follow him. Who wants to have the same mind that Jesus had. And Jesus' mind was not always set on how to make more money, how to make more money, how to be more famous, how to have a little more pleasure.

No. See the mind of the average person on earth is set on money, pleasure which is usually sex and food and sleep and honor. These are usually three things.

It's pretty simple. All as we grow up, I mean from as we grow up our mind becomes more and more like that. Particularly when you start working.

Now there's nothing wrong in earning more money. Let me tell you that when the cost of living goes up it's good to look for a good job and that's another thing I always taught people. If you have two jobs choose the one with the better salary.

Provided you don't lose out spiritually. There's no virtue in choosing a cheap job. No.

Unless you're going to lose out spiritually in some way. You know you go to some place and there's no fellowship and you lose out altogether. But otherwise I always say earn the highest salary possible, get the best education possible by all means.

But don't let that be primary. Let that be as important as the fact that you got to wear some clothes. Sure.

And so I'm not saying that but if our mind is set on that and you know when it is, particularly you know if you have more than enough for your family's needs and you still want to make more and more and more and you want to neglect your children and send your wife to work because you want not because you're trying to survive but because you want more and more and more. You know where your mind is set. Or the other thing is pleasure.

A lot of people their mind is set on pleasure. In the world it's like that. The bible says don't be conformed to this world in your mind.

What does that mean? Turn with me to Romans 12. In Romans in chapter 12 we read Romans 12. I've always said the equivalent of paying the tithe under the old covenant is Romans 12 1 and 2 in the new covenant.

In the old covenant it was I urge you brethren by the mercies of God present your tithe 10% of your flock 10% of your grain to God. That's old covenant and the vast majority more than 95% of Christian pastors and preachers and churches are preaching that. I urge you brothers and sisters pay your tithe and over your tithe your offerings.

You know the meaning of tithes and offerings? Tithes is 10% offerings is above that. This is the deception going on leading people back to the old covenant and the result is they live in the old covenant defeated by sin. But in the new covenant I urge you brethren by the mercies of God not tithes and offerings but your body and your mind.

Offer to God your body and your mind that is the equivalent of tithes and offerings in the old testament. Never forget that. Present your body a living sacrifice to God because God's not interested in your tithes and offerings.

He owns the whole world. He made them do that in the old testament first of all to free them from the love of money and also to make them pay the Levites who were not doing any work because they had to look out of the temple. There's no temple today so there are no Levites.

But present your body a living in a holy sacrifice that's number one and then don't be conformed to this world in your mind but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. So that's the second thing. So what the old testament were very particular about giving that tithe.

I have to be very particular that I've given every part of my body to God and that my mind is not conformed means shaped. You know like when people make a mold of something to make some piece of shape of something they make a mold and pour the hot liquid into it and comes out in that shape. So that's a very common thing in factories.

They make a mold and then you want something in that shape that's how they make it. Statues and all that. So here it says the world has got a mold and it's always trying to pour you into that mold and you come out that shape.

What is that? You begin to think like them in relation to money, in relation to sex, in relation to sleep and in relation to honor and position. It's a particular shape the world has in the mind and says don't let the world squeeze you into that mold is what one paraphrase says of this verse. So the only way to avoid that because we live in a world where everybody, you go to the office and everybody's talking that language of that mold.

Everybody and you have to inwardly resist it, resist it, resist it otherwise you'll unknowingly begin to accept some of that. It's very easy you know. You live in the midst of people who are always using foul language.

Unconsciously you may use it. You live in the midst of people who've always got one set of values, one set of values and every day you go to work they're talking about that, talking about that, talking about that and you get that. Whether it's in the area of money or sex or honor.

What are the people in your office seeking for? All your fellow workers. Money, sex, higher position and honor. There is a way in which God wants us to earn that.

He wants us to earn an honest living, earn our money that way by never telling a lie, never cheating anyone. Yeah it's very very important that we don't follow the world in any of these areas. That we for example don't give a false statement about, there's a thing called leave travel concession.

I remember in the navy also used to give us when you travel somewhere on duty, you could always give a report on your leave travel concession and you could always, a lot of people tell lies on that, make a lot of money for themselves which is unrighteous. Or they you know there's the black money there is in the when selling and buying houses. There are people in CFC doing that, I know it.

They can conceal it. From whom? From me. I'm not God.

Who are you concealing it from? Do you think you won't have to answer to God in the final day for that? You think just because you've cheated the tax authorities, God has also been fooling you into fooling. I tell you every single paisa you cheated somebody off, you will answer to God in the day of judgment. You better settle it before you leave this earth.

I mean you won't hear such messages everywhere else because the pastors themselves are doing it in other places. But you'll hear it here. If you don't want to hear it, find another church where you can sit comfortably and go to hell.

But here we will not allow you to do that. This mindset on money, do unrighteous things. It doesn't matter.

Nobody sees. Everybody does it. Everybody does it.

Well everybody's going to hell. You want to go there too? So this business of everybody does it is no excuse. Be careful.

Don't let the world squeeze you into that mold. We got to resist it. We got to resist it.

We got to teach our children when they go to school and learn all the filthy stuff from their friends. We got to cleanse that when they come. When they come home.

If you don't do that, you'll be polluted. I remember when my children were schooled. This is long ago when it was not so bad.

Every day when they came home, my wife would ask them, what happened today? Go through their whole day with school with them to make sure that they didn't get polluted. That they didn't learn bad habits and bad words. Do you do that with your children? Do you know that they're acquiring bad words? I remember once when one of my little boys came and used a word and he didn't even know what it meant.

I said, do you know what that word means? He said, no dad. Somebody in school used it. I said, well I'm not going to explain to you what it means.

But I never want to hear that word again. It's evil. It's unchristian.

That's all you need to know. But if we don't check up on our children, they will develop and you'll be responsible. Fathers, bring up your children in the instruction of the Lord and that's part of it.

And we live in a world where they're acquiring all types of wrong values. Wrong attitudes to the opposite sex when they are in fourth, fifth standard. Can you imagine? And who's there to correct them? I hope you are.

Are you raising another generation to follow Jesus like you're following the Lord? Or is the next generation going to lose out because you were not strict? I hope you are. And I hope your mothers are. Because I say mothers because the fathers are at work and the children come home from work.

Who's going to take time with them to check what happened that day in school? Do you check their bags to see what books they brought back? I used to check my children's bags when they came home. When? This is 40 years ago. What sort of books did they bring back from school today? Somebody may have given them some book.

There are worse books today. And in those days, I would check. Was there anything in their bag which they didn't take from school home to school today? And if you're not strict as a father and mother with your children, I can tell you they will go astray.

Because the tendency of nature, you know in the world, in a field, you look at a field today, the tendency of nature is not towards a garden but towards a wilderness. That field will not naturally become a garden, beautiful garden. It's a wilderness.

You go by somebody's house and you see a beautiful garden of flowers and plants and all that, that didn't come automatically. That came through planting, nurturing, watering. You go to another fellow whose field is like a wilderness, that came naturally.

He didn't do anything. And so if you don't do anything for your children, that'll be a wilderness. If you see children growing up like flowers and beautiful, somebody worked on it.

You know that. You see that when you see a garden. It's exactly the same with our children.

It's very, very important. The world is trying to squeeze our children into its mold. And if you keep waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, it'll be too late.

You've got to start when they are one. One year old. Slowly, slowly you train them in different, different areas.

It's the responsibility of parents in these days especially. I tell you it was much easier for me 45 years ago. It's much more difficult for your parents today.

You got to work much harder. Take time for it. Very, very important.

Don't let this world squeeze you into its mold. But let your mind be renewed. And the way to renew our mind means to think like God thinks.

That is the meaning of God writing his law into my heart. Now today it is so wonderful. I told you in the early days they never had a bible.

Boy are we blessed that we have a bible in so many different translations and paraphrases which bring out different aspects of what God said. I'm just delighted. I'm delighted that God's given us his word like this.

And I wish all of you would really go into the scriptures and say, Lord please show me what is your mind. Paul says in 1 Corinthians in chapter 1, chapter 2 sorry. 1 Corinthians 2. What is written in the scripture? Paul says here in 1 Corinthians 2, 7 we speak God's wisdom in a mystery.

The hidden wisdom. He says to the Corinthians, when I came to you I could not come with all that wisdom when I came to you but I told you only about Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2 verse 2. Now some people take that as a great verse.

Oh I will only know Jesus Christ and him crucified. That's like saying I will only know ABC. That's the ABC of the Christian life.

That's good to begin like that. But Paul tells that that's because chapter 3 verse 2 there is milk. I couldn't give you anything more than milk because you're babies.

I know Jesus Christ died for my sins. That's baby food. It's milk powder.

But he says those who are mature verse 6 there we speak wisdom. When I go to the believers in Ephesus I can tell them more than Christ and him crucified. I can tell them how we were chosen before the foundation of the world.

I can tell them how we are raised up to sit in the heavenly places in Christ. But I can't say that to you Corinthians because you're babies. So we speak God's wisdom to those who are mature.

But verse 6 it's not a wisdom with this world can understand. No. It's a hidden wisdom.

It says in 1 Corinthians 1 that God has chosen verse 27 the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. So it's not by human cleverness that we understand God's wisdom. Remember that.

And our human cleverness and it's like mind and spirit. Our mind has to be influenced by our spirit. But if you don't allow the spirit to influence the mind then you got human wisdom.

That cannot understand the things of God. Bible says here in 1 Corinthians 2:14. A natural man cannot accept the things of the spirit of God because they are foolishness to him.

He cannot understand them. You need divine wisdom to understand why God has said certain things in scripture in a certain way. If you don't understand it in God's way you will take it and become a legalist.

I'll give you a little example. See the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11 the first 16 verses about why a woman should veil her head because she's the image and glory of God and man should not veil his head because she's the image and glory of man. Man should not veil his head because he's image and glory of God.

Now there are millions of Christians in the world where women don't veil their head at all. They say that's not important. That's human wisdom.

But then there are other people who make this such a law that they judge anybody who doesn't do it. That's another human wisdom. You see you can fall over the cliff one side or fall over the cliff the other side.

It doesn't matter. The devil doesn't matter whether you become a legalist or a worldly person. But divine wisdom is to understand why God has said it and why is it so important to do what God says but to do it in the spirit of Christ not in the spirit of legalism which just comes down hard on people.

You know there are churches where they urge the sisters to wear white or not wear any jewelry. Now my wife and I don't wear any jewelry at all. We never believed in it.

For our understanding of scripture that is what scripture teaches very clearly. We've understood that right from the beginning. But we don't force that on others.

No. You follow your understanding of scripture. To me it is crystal clear.

If it is not crystal clear to you God doesn't hold you responsible. What I mean is it's a question of you can have a truth and you can hold it in a very worldly way and make life miserable for other people. The bible says do you have the truth keep it yourself and present it but don't force anybody to do it.

So here the natural man cannot accept the things of the spirit of God. It's foolishness to him. He cannot understand them verse 14 because they are spiritually appraised.

You cannot understand. I'll tell you this please listen to me. You will not be able to understand the scriptures if your mind is not set on the things of God.

If your interest is not in the things of God. If your interest is partially in the things of God and partially in the interest of things of man you will interpret the same verse in a way that will suit your convenience and not the glory of God. I remember one some brother up in Maharashtra one of the villagers asked me brother Zak he I mean he knew my stand on jewelry and ornaments and all he said these villagers here they all wear gold bangles that is part of their not glass bangles sorry glass bangles that is part of their culture here and now when they come for baptism should I ask them to remove their glass bangles.

Glass bangles are probably two rupees I said no don't do that that's not our message we're not here to change their whole way they dress in their community to show them that there's nothing immoral or worldly or unclean about that so let them keep it and go and baptize them. Don't be a legalist. See there are things like this where a mind can be set on something which we must do because God's word says

that.

We have to be free from legalism. We have to interpret spiritual things spiritually. When you come to the word of God if you allow God to write his law upon your mind you will understand the word of God according to the spirit.

Let me give you an example from Jesus' own life. When Jesus was in heaven as the second person of the trinity he gave a command to Moses from heaven which is written in the books of Moses in Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy that a woman caught in adultery must be stoned to death. Who gave it? Jesus gave that command to Moses.

It's written in scripture. When Jesus came to earth the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery and brought her to Jesus and said they didn't know this is the person who gave the command. They thought he was a man.

They said Moses told us such a woman must be stoned to death. What do you say? Jesus knew very well that he's the one who gave that command. What do you do when you yourself have told someone to do something and now you're asked whether you will go by that law which you made or not.

I tell you it takes a man like Jesus to say I change that law. Most of us will be such legalists that we stone the woman to death but not Jesus. He lived by the law of love and he knew why that law was given way back in those days because he wanted people to take adultery seriously but he was not interested in stoning women to death.

He came to save people and the father in heaven was not at all interested in stoning people to death. So he told them he was without sin. Throw the first stone and everybody left except one man who was without sin who was qualified to throw the stone.

He could have obeyed the command he made right there. It was the second command which is the one who's without sin can throw the stone. Okay here's now the second command.

The one without sin throws stone. He disobeyed that also. I like that because he loved people.

He didn't go by the letter. He went by the spirit. I'm giving you an example.

Now you know if you're a carnal person you'll take that example and take all types of verses in the bible and say I don't have to obey that. Exactly. That's how you'll fall into the pit and go to hell.

You need to have discernment. What does it mean to follow the spirit of the word? If you always seek to follow that you'll never be a legalist. Jesus was never a legalist.

I've seen so many good churches that have destroyed themselves with legalism. I've seen a lot of people who think they're very spiritual men and women. They follow some letter of the law and they look down on other people who don't do it.

So be very careful. The natural man cannot understand the things in spirit of God. Seek God to be open to the Holy Spirit and I say if you want God to write his laws on your mind remember the first law is this that you set your mind on the things of God's and on God's interest and not your own.

If your mind is not set on God's interest you will not understand scripture correctly. So that's what it means here. Let me read further in 1 Corinthians 2. There are many things verse 9 which your eye even if you read the scripture will not be able to see which your ear even if you're hearing is good will not be able to understand when you're hearing a message like this and which will not enter your heart.

Wonderful things that God has prepared for his children because God has to reveal them through his spirit. The word reveal is a new testament word. It's different from understanding.

Understanding is a human thing in the mind. Revelation is in the spirit. It's very different.

That's why I say you cannot understand the get revelation on scripture by going to a bible school. The bible school will teach you the bible like you go to school to study chemistry or mathematics or something. But revelation comes from the Holy Spirit and it's given to the humble.

Jesus said God has hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent and revealed them to babes. Babes are humble. So the more humble you are the more you get revelation.

Who will get maximum revelation among all of us here? Whoever is the most humble whom God sees. Not whoever is the most clever. The most clever will be able to produce messages and many points and impress people.

These are the wonderful points on this particular subject. 10 points on righteousness or 25 points on salvation. All that clever people can do all that.

But revelation that comes to people who are humble. Seek for revelation more than for bible knowledge. That's what will change your life.

And to get revelation say Lord I want my mind to be set on your interests. How can I promote your interests in my life? Not how can I justify myself with some scripture which can justify what I'm doing. Don't seek to find scripture to justify what you're doing.

Lord is this your mind? And another reason why we need that type of revelation is because there's a great lack of leadership. There's a great lack of men who are qualified to be leaders in the church nowadays worldwide. And also in CFC.

I mean all the CFC churches. It's very difficult to find spiritual men who can be leaders. Many of you have been here for so many years.

Men are you fit to be a leader today? You can criticize the elders here for all the things they do wrong. Tell me you've been here 25 years. Are you fit to be an elder? If not why not? Why not? What have you been doing these 25 years? You say God never called me.

God never called you because he saw your mind was set on your own interests. That's all. He'll never call you.

He'll never call you in a hundred years. Why is it that some of you don't take that responsibility to say Lord I want to do something for you? You can go visit a home and encourage them. You can talk to the young people and encourage them.

You can go to one of the weekly meetings and try and encourage people you meet there. There are many ways you can do something if you want to. Oh but it'll take time.

Of course it'll take time. Everything you do for the Lord involves sacrifice. But that's a lack today and in Christian history every movement has finally collapsed.

Every movement without exception because quality of leadership deteriorated. With every generation the quality of leadership deteriorated. Finally it became as corrupt as anything.

See for example they celebrated last year 500 years ago Martin Luther delivered a lot of people out of the Roman Catholic Church through proclaiming that salvation was by faith. And there's a church started called the Lutheran Church. But if Martin Luther came today he will not join the Lutheran Church.

I'm absolutely sure because they're not going the way he went. Then that church became corrupt and John Wesley started the Methodist Church. That is a mighty movement of God in the 1700s.

But if John Wesley came to earth today he will not join the Methodist Church because that's not going the way he started it. Here's an example of how things have gone down. Why? Because God wanted it to decline.

No. It's just like you read in the Old Testament. You read of the book of Joshua which is like the book of Acts.

Mighty man of God and kept Israel going in the right direction. Then he died and you read the book of Judges. There were a few elders who outlived Joshua and for a little time they followed the Lord and then you read the book of Judges.

The book of Judges is exactly like the history of Christianity. Decline and then God raises up a man of God and the Israel is revived a little bit. Again they declined.

Slaves of the Moabites and others and again somebody raises up. And the perfect description of the book of Judges is the last verse. Every man does whatever he thinks is right in his own eyes.

We have to learn from these things and I want to challenge you my brothers especially as a tremendous need of leadership of godly leadership in churches throughout this country. And I want to encourage you to please seek God and say especially you young people it takes 20 years or 15 to 20 years to make a leader. So you're going to start pretty early.

You can't become one overnight. God has to break you, humble you otherwise you'll get so swollen headed that you'll destroy yourself. But say Lord I want to be available to you.

I don't know what you may call me to be but I want to be available. There's nothing wrong doing that. Let me read this verse to you in 1 Timothy 4, 1 Timothy 3 rather.

1 Timothy and chapter 3 verse 3. It is a trustworthy statement. Let me tell you the first trustworthy statement 1 Timothy 1 15. You know this trustworthy statement 1 Timothy 1 15.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Boy what an important statement that is. Okay here is trustworthy statement number 2 chapter 3 verse 1. If anyone wants to aspire to be an elder it's a fine work that he desires to do.

How do you like that? It's a trustworthy statement. To desire to be a shepherd of God's people not for the reasons that a lot of people want to be today for honor and position and money and that's rubbish. That's a degeneration of what what it means.

But if you have a desire to shepherd God's people not for the title but because you want to help God's work and you start with the little children perhaps and you start with the young people and serve them and you don't want any honor you don't want any recognition you don't want anybody to admire you for what you're doing or recognize what you're doing. You say Lord I'm not interested in all that. I want to show my gratitude to you for what I can do for you.

I remember when I was a young Christian and I was only 23 and you know just converted baptized two years earlier and I couldn't have a ministry but I said Lord how can I show my gratitude to you for something and I couldn't preach and even in the church they wouldn't let me speak but I found a nominal Christian home home of one family inside the naval base and I met him and I said hey unconverted man and I said would you have half an hour once a week to study the bible I'd be happy to come and share with you he said sure this is just your family and if you don't want it once a week I'll come once a month no he said fine once a week we'll have it and he was very happy because he was in some dead church they were not getting anything so I went to his house every week on a particular day at a particular time and I shared with them they got converted and finally that man years later went out to serve the Lord and I was so excited when I heard that later on but imagine if I hadn't done that I wasn't looking for a big ministry in the church it wouldn't get to me I looked for some person whom I knew was a nominal Christian who was probably going to some dead church if you look for an opportunity you'll find it say Lord I want to do something for you and it may not be known and nobody in the church there which I was attending those days knew about it I didn't talk about it I mean gradually after a couple of years he started coming to that church that's another thing but when I was doing it I didn't want anybody to know I felt it's much better nobody knows about it let me quietly meet with them and gradually maybe one or two people from the neighborhood wanted to come too it's amazing what will happen if you say Lord I don't know much in those days how much do you think I knew I was baptized two years earlier two years after my baptism and I had never read my bible as a young man much uh how much did I know I could only share what I knew c.a.t is cat b.a.t is bat can I teach you that begin like that spiritually with the little things I know that Jesus died for me for you and we can try and fight against sin I hadn't overcome sinfully yet but I knew a little bit and how to hate it and what to do when I fall get up and confess and run again that's what I taught him every one of you can do something my brother and sister allow God to change your way of thinking not to be set on your own interests make that your prayer Lord I don't want you to say to me you are a stumbling block to me because your mind is set on your own interests is the Lord saying that to anybody here you are a stumbling block to me because your mind is set on your own interests and you got a whitewash of christianity over it say Lord I'm sorry I acknowledge my mind is set on that please change me allow the Holy Spirit to work in me to change me Lord I'm willing if you can just say I'm willing Lord that you will write your law upon my mind I'll tell you honestly my brothers and sisters I can honestly say and you may think I'm being very humble when I say that it's not false humility I really believe in the depth of my heart that I'm not better than any of you I can stand before God and say Lord am I speaking the truth because I know one thing my mind was just like yours but I asked God with all my heart to write his law on my mind by his Holy Spirit I would pray and cry out to God and say Lord I'm still seeking my own interests I want you to write your law on my mind and make me think like Jesus that's the goal we have that my mind will gradually become yeah let me just show you that one verse finally 1 corinthians 2 I wanted to show you this last verse 1 corinthians 2 Paul says we have the mind of Christ the last verse 1 corinthians 2 last

verse we have the mind of Christ I said wow if Paul can have that why can't I that's the secret ask God to give it to you seek and you shall find knock and keep on knocking it'll be open to you say Lord I want the mind of Christ in relation to money in relation to sex in relation to honor position everything in the world the most wonderful life that has ever lived on the earth was the mind of Jesus was the life of Jesus Christ and if you can have that mind you will have the most useful life you can live on earth even if listen to this even if you have messed up many years of your life that's the encouragement have you messed up many years of your life most of us have Paul did but yet God picked him up because he became a radical and wholehearted at one point and some of you who have messed up your life God can pick you up and say Lord from today onwards I'm really going to have the mind of Christ I want you to work in me I believe it'll be a turning point for you God's purposes can be fulfilled not only through your life and it'll be a turning point for the church in India let's pray our father we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to challenge and help and encourage young people here and many others Lord so that a generation will rise up even in our churches who are radical and wholehearted and seeking the things of God and the interests of God and being different from Christendom around them while everyone is everything is sinking into Babylon pray you'll preserve our churches Lord from that happen easily to anyone preserve us we pray raise up shepherds after your own heart who can preserve this church and all our churches in India and other places we pray in Jesus name Amen

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