

The Way We Must Live Every Day

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a true Christian life based on love, a good conscience, and sincere faith. It encourages believers to focus on abiding in Christ like a branch in a tree, producing fruit effortlessly through dependence on God. The message highlights the simplicity of the Christian life, urging individuals to trust God, keep a clear conscience, and rest in His plan for their lives.

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Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:5, John 15:5, Hebrews 4:9, Galatians 3:14

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Description

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Transcript

For many Christians, I have found through the years, including myself in the early years, being a true Christian was a matter of following a lot of rules. And if I followed those rules and I convinced myself I'm happy and God is happy with me. But through the years, I've discovered that that is actually going back to live under the law.

The law had many rules. And if you followed those rules, sorry, if you follow those rules, then God is happy with you. And if you didn't keep one of those rules and you feel condemned and feel guilty.

Now, I believe there's value in that. I believe there's value in that, but we need to grow up so that we don't condemn ourselves because we didn't follow a rule or don't congratulate ourselves when we've kept the rules. For example, one of the good rules we can have is to read the Bible every day.

And it's very, very important for new believers and particularly those who don't know the scriptures, to develop that habit. Because that's the thing that will give you a solid foundation in your life. And I'm very thankful that in the early years of my life, for the first six, seven years after I got baptized, I would read my Bible and study it many, many times a day.

I'd carry a pocket New Testament with me. And anytime I had a spare moment traveling in a bus or a train, I'd be reading it, reading it, reading it. And that's going back 50 years ago.

And that laid such a foundation in my life that it established me and gave me answers to many, many difficult situations I found myself in. There was always a word in scripture. So I'm not despising that.

But, you know, you can read the Bible in order to ease your conscience that, yeah, I read my Bible today. And I've done that too. It never helps.

It's a good discipline. We must discipline ourselves to read the scriptures every day. But I must get something from it.

I must meditate on it and ask God to speak to me. Man, Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. And that's not just reading the Bible.

It's hearing God speak to me through the Bible. That's the important thing. So I want to encourage you to do that.

It says in the first Psalm 1, that if you meditate on the word of God day and night, whatever you do will prosper. And that is a word that I've tried to live by for many years. If you're not familiar with it, Psalm 1 and verse 2, it's talking about a person whose delight is in the law of the Lord.

And in his law, he meditates day and night. He's not reading the Bible day and night, but he's thinking about it day and night. And remember, this is written at a time.

David wrote this 1,000 years before Christ. There was no printed Bible those days. How could a person read the Bible every day? They never had a Bible at home.

The only Bible was in the synagogue, and you could hear it on Saturday morning, the Sabbath day, when they went to listen to it. And they had to pay attention. And those who were a little more serious would go during the week, during spare time to the synagogue and ask the rabbi to read some other.

That'd be the scroll up there, and they'd read it. And then they had to keep that in mind and meditate on it. So think if you were living in those days, and you never had a Bible at home.

And if you're really serious about knowing the Bible, you had to walk up to the synagogue every day in your village, ask the rabbi to open up the scripture and ask him to read a few verses and try and keep that in mind. Go back home and meditate on it. Go back the next day.

I think Jesus did that probably from the age of five to the age of 12. And he was so serious about it that by the time he was 12 years old, he knew the scriptures better than the chief, the priests of his time. It was not just by reading.

It was meditating. This is a great tragedy in today's Christendom is people ease their conscience saying, I have read the Bible today. And if they didn't read it one morning, they feel guilty.

Well, I need to feel guilty if I'm not meditating on it. There are times when I've read just one verse and meditated on it and it's done more good to me than easing my conscience that I read a whole chapter. I want to encourage all of you to develop this very good habit of meditating.

It says here he meditates on it day and night, even though he does not have a printed Bible at home. How much more God can expect from us when we have printed Bibles at home? To meditate day and night does not mean that I'm always thinking about it because we got work to do. And I'm sure those people

were farmers and shepherds and they had other work to do.

And they had a lot of their mind was occupied with a lot of things in their world, just like ours. But in the midst of it all, the word of God was there at the back. We had a spare moment.

They would think about something. That's a very good habit to do in the midst of all our work, to develop this habit of, Lord, I want my life to be governed by the word of God, the word of God. And if we do that, we will find in different situations that God brings to our mind the right word for that occasion.

This is a tremendous blessedness that has come to me through many, many years and many, many situations. And I'm in a tough spot. And I say, Lord, what should I do here? And something that I read maybe years ago, the Holy Spirit brings it to your mind and that brings it to my mind at that time.

And I know the answer. So many Christians do not grow spiritually because they have not developed this habit. It must be a habit.

It's like eating our food. Eating our food has become a habit. Going to sleep at night has become a habit.

Many habits. Here's one very good habit that is elementary, and you may think there's no need to mention it, but I've discovered through the years when I see, even in our own churches, the tremendous ignorance of Scripture among people who have been with us for many years, who get all their spiritual food just by listening to the Sunday meetings or the weekday meetings. That's good.

But you shouldn't be getting all your food from there. You should be meditating on it. I mean, reading it every day and meditating on something.

You don't have to read long passages. What I used to do was read long sections. That was one of my daily readings, and then read a very short section to meditate on.

You can't meditate on a long section. That is, I would read a long section to know the Bible, the story of the Bible, the truths in the Bible. Then that was one part of what I did in a day.

And the second thing I did during the day was to read just a small part and meditate on that, particularly in the New Testament. So I want to encourage you to do that because you'll find that life changes. Man shall live, capital L-I-V-E, by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

It's the answer you'll get in times of temptation. You know, Jesus was not different from us. He was exactly like us, and he had to go through the same procedure to have God's word in his mind.

And that's why in a time of temptation, how did he get the right word to speak to Satan? The Holy Spirit brought that into his mind. When the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread, he said no. I live by the word of God, not by bread.

And the devil tempted him, quoting a scripture, saying the angels will protect you if you jump off from the roof of the temple. He said no. There's another scripture which says you shall not tempt the Lord your God.

How did that come? The devil would like to tell you that was because he was God. But no, Jesus did not use his powers as God when he was on earth. That's the one truth that revolutionized my life.

Because always I'd say, oh, but he was God. That's why he did that. He was God.

That's why he knew the scriptures. No. He came to earth as a baby knowing nothing.

But he disciplined himself that by the age of 12, he really knew the scriptures. And that's the thing that challenged me when I was a young man. I said if Jesus could know the scriptures between the age of 5 and 12, to go to a synagogue and hear the rabbi tell him, tell him repeatedly and know it, if I spend seven years with the Bible in my hand, I can know it.

And I want to tell you this has been the foundation of my life. It's helped me in numerous situations. It's helped me when people come to me for advice.

It's helped me in different situations in my life. And I want to encourage every single one of you. Now, this looks like an elementary lesson.

It's actually the kindergarten lesson in the Christian life. But I find that so many Christians haven't gone through this kindergarten lesson properly. Please develop this habit at least from today of meditating on something in scripture every day and go systematically through the New Testament especially and say, Lord, speak to me, speak to me.

And during the day, try and remind yourself. I mean, if it helps you, some verse that speaks to you, write it on a slip of paper and keep it in your pocket. And once in a while, take it out during the day in the middle of your work.

One minute. I'm sure you can have a one-minute break or even a half-a-minute break in the middle of your work. Take out that verse and read it and put it back into your pocket and meditate on it while you're doing your work.

You know, it's a wonderful thing about meditation scripture that while I'm doing something practical, I can have a mind on scripture. This is very, very important. And the promise here in Psalm 1 is, this is the thing that blessed me, that Psalm 1, what is the promise? Verse 3, whatever he does, he will prosper.

I wanted that. I said, Lord, I want a life where whatever I do must prosper. I don't mean financially.

I'm not talking about making money. I'm not talking about prospering in the stock market or some stupid thing like that. I'm talking about my life becoming spiritually rich and blessing other people.

That's true prosperity. And that comes through meditating on God's word and turning away from sin. So isn't that a good promise to take hold of as you begin a new year? One month is over.

Whatever he does will prosper. I say, Lord, I want it. I want to spiritually prosper every single day of this.

I don't want to miss a single day of this year. I want to prosper every single day. God is a good God.

He doesn't make life difficult for us. He's not asking you to sit and read the Bible the whole day. He wants you to live by his principles.

The purpose with which God's given us his word is not for us to become Bible scholars, but so that we understand the principles of the Christian life by which we can really live and prosper. God wants us to prosper spiritually. Okay.

Having said that, I mentioned earlier how we can live by rules. I mean, this can become a rule or read the Bible. No.

Meditate on it and let that become part of my life. So in a day when there are so many people with so many teachings and all that going on, I want to turn with you to 1 Timothy in chapter 1. What I said at the beginning right now was just a sort of an introduction. But here's something I want to share with you from 1 Timothy chapter 1. You know, this is Paul's writing, one of his last letters to Timothy.

And in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, Paul is unburdening his heart to the man who's going to take over his ministry. And Paul knows that he's not going to live much longer. So he wants to instruct Timothy in fundamental things that Timothy could pass on that message to others.

And 1 Timothy 1 verse 3, he says, I urged you upon my departure from Macedonia to remain at Ephesus and instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines. So in the church in Ephesus where Paul had spent three years, there were people getting up and preaching strange doctrines a few years after Paul had left. That's how it was.

And, of course, part of the reason was people didn't have a Bible those days. There was not much printed matter for people to read of Paul's writings. But still, even today, there's so many strange doctrines.

There's strange doctrines among the Roman Catholics. There's strange doctrines among the Methodists, Episcopalians, Charismatics, Pentecostals. There's strange doctrines everywhere in every single group, how to know what they are.

And it says here, in those days, teach the people, verse 4, not to pay attention to myths. That means false stories and endless genealogies, all types of study of different things. Genealogy means the list of names, ancestors, and all that.

And all this gives rise to mere speculation rather than the furthering, the administration of God, which is by faith. They must occupy themselves, it says here, with the things that will lead to spiritual growth. And having said all these things, just avoid all this.

Now, what I want you to notice, especially is verse 5. What is the ultimate goal of all our teaching? What is the ultimate goal? Paul is writing to Timothy. When you preach, make this your goal. Teach people to make this their goal in their life.

Number one, love, not just love, love from a pure heart. From a pure heart, love. So we could say there are four things here.

We begin with a pure heart, and from that must come love, and a good conscience. Now, a pure heart is different from a good conscience. You need to understand that.

And a sincere faith, that means a faith without any hypocrisy, without any pretense. So, let's just think about that for a few moments. Beginning with a pure heart from which love must come.

The difference between a good conscience, which we'll come to a little later, and a pure heart is this. A good conscience means my heart, a conscience is part of my heart or my spirit. A good conscience means my heart is not convicting me at any time of anything I've not confessed.

As soon as I'm aware of a sin, I'm confessing it immediately, and it's cleansed. My conscience is clear. My conscience is good.

If I've hurt somebody, I ask his forgiveness. My conscience is clear. If I haven't asked his forgiveness, my conscience is not clear.

So we've got to begin, we've come to a good conscience. That's important. But before I come to that, a pure heart is different from a good conscience in this sense.

A good conscience is a heart in which no sin is there. A pure heart is one in which nothing is loved except God himself. A pure heart is one which loves God supremely.

It's not just a good conscience. A lot of people have a good conscience. If I've hurt anybody, I ask forgiveness.

If I committed a sin, I confess it immediately. If I have a bad thought, I confess it immediately. Yeah, that's good.

We've come to that. But begin with a pure heart, which is a heart which has no place in it for anyone but God. I'll tell you why I say that.

It says in Romans 8 that the reason why God gave us the Holy Spirit, I mean, one purpose of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8 and verse 4, is so that the requirement of the law, let's read from verse 3, Romans 8, verse 3, what the law could not do. And then we'll come in a moment to what the law could not do. Because it is weak because of our flesh.

God did. How did he do that? By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, he condemned sin, he judged sin in the flesh. On Jesus, when he died on the cross, it was judged.

The purpose is, now see, that requirement of the law, which could not be fulfilled until now, can now be fulfilled in us, who walk according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Now we come to what is the requirement of the law, which the Holy Spirit seeks to fulfill in us. That we can see in Jesus' reply to somebody who asked him, in Matthew 22, 36, whose teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? What does the law really require from us? And Jesus said, I'll tell you in one sentence.

You shall love the Lord your God, Matthew 22, 37, with all your heart and with all your soul and all your mind. And he says, that's like a coin. You've got to turn the other side and see that side also.

You've got to love your neighbor as yourself. That is the requirement of the law. Let's get it very clearly.

God created man, and this is his requirement, that his heart should love God supremely with all his heart. It's like when you fill a vessel completely with something, there's no place in it for anything else. There's no place in my heart for anything or anyone else other than God.

That's why Jesus said, even if you love your father or mother, you love your wife or your husband more than me. He said, you can't be my disciple. It's because many people don't take these commandments seriously, that all their life, their Christian life, they are struggling.

They're climbing up, falling back, climbing up, falling back. They never seem to make much progress in their Christian life. They never have revelation from God when they read the word.

It's a dull routine. I mean, even if they leave some dead church and come to a good church, where we love one another and care for one another, great. But if you don't love God with all your heart, if there's something in your heart other than God, something you're interested in other than God, you're The ultimate goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart.

That's the number one thing that Paul says. He says, all the other things, there are so many strange teachings, but don't let that lead you astray. From the number one thing, love from a pure heart, a heart that has no place in it for anyone, anyone or anything other than God.

And people say, what about loving my wife and children? You love your wife and children much more faithfully and much more sacrificially if God is the one you love the most. If you don't love God the most, your love for your wife, I assure you, will be selfish. You will love in the eyes of the world, but it will be a very selfish love because you are still in the center.

You may do so many things. In the eyes of the world, you may be a very loving husband, but you don't really, deep down, you love yourself. The only way to eliminate that is to love God more than you love your wife, more than you love your husband, more than you love your children, more than you love, and more than you love your brothers, more than you love anyone else.

That's the way God made us. So that's where we begin. The first commandment is you shall love God with all your heart.

There's no place for anything else. With all your mind and all your soul, our ability to do our work with our mind will be much better if I love God with all my mind. That doesn't mean I have to think about God all the time.

No, I don't think about God all the time. No, I do 101 other things during the day. But my mind is God's.

I will not let some thought which is contrary to the love of God come into my mind. As soon as I come there, throw it away. I don't want it.

But I'm not thinking about God all the time. To love God with all your mind doesn't mean that. It means God is a supreme, important person in every area of my life.

And I want to ask you, dear brothers and sisters, is that true in your life? Is it true? You do your work much better. You don't have to be a full-time Christian worker to do that in your secular job where you may have to spend ten hours in your office being occupied with your work in your office. You'll do every part of that work much better if God is the supreme desire and affection of your heart.

Even as a wife or a mother looking after your children, you'll do it much better if you decide God is going to be the supreme desire and affection of my heart. If you can say, like the psalmist said in Psalm 73, 25, By whom have I in heaven but thee? And there's nothing and no one I desire on earth beside thee. I believe that's one of the greatest expressions of our love for God.

I remember as a young Christian I got gripped with that verse in Psalm 73, 25. If you don't know that verse, you must remember it. That's one verse you must keep in memory all the time, Psalm 73, verse 25.

It's a great verse. It's written by a psalmist who said my foot almost slipped when I compared my life with that of others. But then he discovered God is good, Psalm 73, 1, to those who are pure in their heart.

But when I didn't understand that, my feet almost slipped when I looked at the prosperity of the wicked. And it's so easy for our feet to slip when we think of how well it's going with others and so many problems we have. But he said it all disappeared when I came to this place, Psalm 73, 25.

I came to the place, he says, the psalmist, that I'm going to desire nothing on earth but God. And when I get to heaven, I'm not looking for the golden streets. I'm not looking for mansions or crowns or freedom from pain and suffering and all the things people look for when they go to heaven.

I'm looking for God. I'll tell you honestly, the early days of my Christian life, I thought going to heaven was a great thing. I'll tell you honestly, speaking before God, I have zero interest in going to heaven.

Absolutely zero. My desire is to be with Jesus Christ. He's the passion of my heart.

And I even told the Lord this once. I said, Lord, if you're in hell, I'll spend eternity with you in hell. With all the fires burning around me and the worms biting me, if you're there, my heaven is there.

My heaven is not in a geographical location where everything is comfortable and easy and nice. No, my heaven is Jesus Christ. And that's when, for me, heaven has begun already.

I'm really speaking the truth. Dear brothers and sisters, your life will be radically changed if you decide to love God with all your heart. It's not a strain or a burden.

Far from it. Do you think Jesus' life was a strain or a burden? His life was the most relaxed life that anybody ever lived. He had no anxiety in his mind.

He could sleep peacefully at night. He had no bitterness against anyone. Nothing.

Because he loved the Father with all his heart. And he never, never wanted to do anything that displeased his Father. He loved God with all his heart.

And when we say that is the first commandment, it's like God saying to us, I want to make you like Jesus. I want to make your life like the life of Jesus. And the secret of his life was that he loved me with all his heart, God says.

Come there. Come there. Determined to get there.

Examine your heart and say, Lord, are you first in my life or am I living by rules? Yeah, I must pray a few minutes. I must read the Bible a few minutes. And I must go to church or attend some Zoom meeting at least once a week, if possible, twice a week.

You're not going to be happy following the rules and you ease your conscience. I've done it. No.

I don't live by rules. I did once upon a time. It's good to live by rules if you're a thoroughly undisciplined person.

Then do make a rule to read the Bible every day. And if you're not, if you're careless about church, then do make a rule to attend a Zoom meeting at least once or twice a week. But you shouldn't be satisfied with that.

No. Lord, if there's a moment in my life where I don't love you with all my heart, I have backslidden. That's the rule I've made for myself anyway.

Anytime in my life when I don't really love God with all my heart, I'm not saying I can't do other things. I can do 101 things, secular things, earthly things. You can enjoy a good meal.

You can do so many things. But if it's not leading you, if it's, if you're not loving God with all your heart, then all of that is just, I wouldn't say a waste of time, but it's not Christianity. So, let's begin with that.

Love from a pure heart. Let's pursue that with all our heart because Paul says, through the Holy Spirit, that is the ultimate goal of our instruction. That's what we're aiming at.

I'm aiming to be, to have a love from a pure heart. And he says, keep comparing that with all the other teachings that people are giving. It's not worth it.

And then secondly, let's get back to 1 Timothy 1 and verse 5. And a good conscience. See, before getting that, I just want to say the second part of the love from pure heart is, love God with all my heart and love your neighbor as yourself. That's also part of love.

Jesus said, when they asked him for one commandment, he said, I can't give you one commandment. I have to give you both together because they're sort of stuck together. You cannot say you love God with all your heart if you're not done the other part of it, which is loving your neighbor as yourself.

And it's like a coin. If it's only printed on one side, it's counterfeit. And that's why John says in his letter, if you're not familiar with that verse, in 1 John 4, it says, if you say you love God and you don't, if you love God, then you must love your brother as well.

And if he says, a man says, 1 John 4, 20, I love God, but he doesn't love a brother. He's a liar. He's not a believer.

Because if one does not love a brother whom he can see, how can he love God whom he has not seen? This is the logic in 1 John 4, 20. How do I know I love God with all my heart? I love my brother. There's so many weaknesses in him, so many things wrong in him.

Maybe he irritates me in different ways or his mannerisms bother me. But that's okay. My mannerisms must be bothering God, but he still loves me.

And I have to love him, and that is the proof that I love God. So I think in that connection of a word written about Jesus when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, Acts chapter 10. You know, I did not grow up in a Pentecostal or a charismatic church.

And to tell you honestly, I'm very thankful that I did not. Because if I had grown up in a Pentecostal or charismatic church, I would have been brainwashed in my mind about what the fullness of the Spirit was. And once you're brainwashed for years and years and years and years, you grow up in that sort of church for 20 years, and then to come to what is the true understanding of being filled with the Holy Spirit would be very difficult.

So I never was in my entire life, I was never a member of a Pentecostal or charismatic church, but I read the Bible and I knew that I had to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and I did not have this Pentecostal charismatic background. And I discovered so many things in scripture, what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I discovered that you don't have to speak in tongues to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not at all. And so many godly men have never spoken in tongues, and Jesus himself never spoke in tongues, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. At the same time, I didn't go to the other extreme, because I saw God had given that gift, and so I must not be against that gift.

It is a gift God has given. Paul said, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you, but I never use it in public. So if Paul could say he thanked God for that gift, so I'm not going to be against that gift.

I want to be open to that gift, and God gave it to me. I was thankful for it, but it did not become everything for me, just like my little finger. It's like saying, I speak in tongues.

I have a little finger, but you can live without a little finger. You can live with four fingers in your hand, but I'm not going to cut off my little finger. It's very useful sometimes.

So that's the balance I got because I did not grow up in a Pentecostal church. I'm very thankful for that. So I discovered many things in Scripture.

For example, Romans 5.5. The Holy Spirit fills my heart with the love of God. Let me turn to that first. We talked about our heart being filled with love for God.

Well, here it is, how God does it like this. Romans 5.5. The love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who is given to us. So the love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

And I see that as meaning three things. First of all, the Holy Spirit assures me that I am a child of God, who is immensely loved by God. That's very, very important.

See Romans 5.5. The love of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. So that means, first of all, three things I want to say. First of all, that my foundation is that God loves me intensely in Christ, just as he loved Jesus.

The Holy Spirit pours that truth into my heart. God loves you, my child. God loves you.

Your father loves you. He's your dad. He loves you just like he loved Jesus.

Thank you, Father. That love is poured out in my heart. Then on top of that foundation, he fills the Holy Spirit again.

It says here, the Holy Spirit fills my heart with love, love for God, love for Jesus. He has to do it. I say, Lord, I love you with all my heart.

And thirdly, on top of that, the Holy Spirit helps me to love unlovely people and all the people around me. So not just that I don't hate anybody. That's a negative statement.

I mean, if you say that you don't hate your wife, that's not a great thing. Love is something positive. So in that connection, I want you to turn to Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10, where it speaks about Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts, Chapter 10, we read, you know, Peter was speaking to Cornelius, and Cornelius knew nothing about the Bible. I mean, he was a God fearing man, but he was not a Jew. He was a Roman centurion, military man.

And Paul speaks to him about being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's the very first time when he preaches the gospel. And he says, I'll give you the example of the one who was anointed with the Spirit, Jesus of Nazareth.

Acts, Chapter 10. Please turn to Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10, and Verse 38. This is a great passage.

It tells us how, what happened to Jesus when he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. And power. The thing which so many Christians are seeking for.

I want the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to be anointed. What was the result in Jesus' life? It was a love for people that the Father gave him.

Flooded with love. The Holy Spirit filled his heart with love. Commandment.

You love God with all your heart, and you love your neighbor as yourself. He went about doing good, and delivering people who are oppressed by the devil. The world is full of people oppressed by the devil to a greater or lesser extent.

They're not demon possessed. He's not just talking about demon possession. Very few are demon possessed.

But oppressed by the devil. Every single home on earth is oppressed by the devil in some way or the other. That's why there's so much anger in so many homes.

That's why so many wayward children. That's why so many husbands and wives fight. Because the devil is oppressing them.

Even Christian homes. And Jesus went around delivering people who are oppressed by the devil. This is our calling.

To go and bless people. You may never cast out a demon. You may not have any gift to cast out demons.

Forget it. But you can deliver people who are oppressed by the devil. All around you are people oppressed by the devil.

God wants to fill your heart with love. You go about. Jesus was filled with the Spirit.

He went about doing good. I've often thought that's a great thing. If that can be written on your tombstone.

After you end your life. This man went about doing good. And delivering all the people around him.

Who are oppressed by Satan. What more do you want? He didn't become a great preacher. No.

He didn't have the gift of preaching or teaching. But he went about doing good. He had a testimony that he did good.

To people. Who can't do that? Little children can do that. He went about doing good.

And setting people free. Who are oppressed by condemnation. And guilt.

And anger. And so much. He just went about blessing them.

And setting them free. I've often thought about that. And that was the proof.

It says in Acts 10:38. That God was with him. If God is with me.

And I want God to be with me all the time. I will go about doing good. I will do good in my home, first of all.

I will do good to other people whom I meet. Especially to those who do evil to me. I say, Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit.

So I can do good to them. That is to have a heart filled with love. That is a love from a pure heart.

So we spend a lot of time on that. Because that's the most important thing in 1 Timothy 1. And verse 5. Love from a pure heart. Let's get back to that now.

1 Timothy 1. What is the goal of all the preaching and teaching? To get everyone who hears us in the church. To love from a pure heart. If you have accomplished that.

You have reached the goal. In teaching. And if you make that your goal.

And if you are seeking to get closer and closer to that goal. You are going on the right track. So we are trying to show the path that God wants us to walk on this earth.

I must get closer and closer to love from a pure heart. And then let me move on. And a good conscience.

Very, very important. I stressed it earlier. Let me repeat it again.

A good conscience means at no time should I have something telling me. You have done something wrong. And you haven't said it right.

You hurt somebody. And you did not ask his forgiveness. Or you haven't forgiven someone.

Who hurt you. That's also a bad conscience. Somebody hurt you.

You didn't do anything. You were good to him. But he hurt you.

But you haven't forgiven him. You still got that little. You think about him at night in bed.

Why he treated you like that. And it bothers you. A conscience is not clear.

And it will not be clear till you forgive him. And you know, don't go by feeling. I have discovered in this matter of forgiving people who hurt us.

That you can never remove the memory of a person's wrong from your mind. That is impossible. Because the blood of Christ does not cleanse my memory.

It cleanses my heart. Sometimes I wish, Lord, I wish you would get rid of so many things in my memory which are rubbish and garbage. Which in my unconverted days I accumulated so much garbage.

And some of it is still in my memory. What to do? And the Lord says, don't worry. Your memory cannot pollute you.

That was a great deliverance for me to know that. That your memory cannot pollute you. It's a heart that pollutes you.

It's your attitude towards those things that you remember that can pollute you. But that thing itself cannot pollute you. Did you read something, did you read some rubbish in your olden days? Okay, it's there in your memory.

What to do about it? You can't do anything about it. But it will not pollute you. In fact, it will make you stronger if you resist it every time.

So, I say this because some people feel guilty. Oh, I still remember that that person did harm to me. You remember that all your life.

But you can still have a forgiving attitude towards him. So, what I used to say is, I say, Lord, I'm not going to live by my memory. In my heart, I have forgiven that person.

And I have forgiven this person. And I have forgiven this person. And I think of different ones who have hurt me or harmed me through the years that I can remember.

And I say, before God, I say, Lord, before you, I say, I forgive him. I forgive him. I forgive him.

And the books are closed. All accounts settled. And I'm not going to let the devil torment me anymore about that by saying, oh, you haven't forgiven him because you remember.

I remember that all my life. But I have forgiven him. Absolutely.

So, don't let memory taunt you. Don't let the devil taunt you by saying, you remember that. I remember a lot of rubbish all my life.

What can I do? But I don't meditate on that. I don't have control over my memory. I wish God would cleanse my memory.

But God in his great wisdom has kept the memory of evil there. You know, we can remember things we did 50 years ago. And I think one reason God keeps it in our memory is so that we are careful that we don't put any more rubbish into our memory.

You know, one of the dangers, if God had not only cleansed our heart, but cleansed our memory as soon as we are converted, we keep on doing wrong things. Because when you say, oh, I can cleanse my memory, I ask the Lord to cleanse me. But he does not cleanse your memory so that you are more careful about what you put into your mind in the future.

So, I discovered why God in his great wisdom does not cleanse my memory. It's there. I remember it.

But it doesn't make me dirty. It's just a memory. It's like that I remember 2 plus 2 is 4. So what? And I remember some evil thing that I saw somebody else do.

It's there in my memory. I saw that guy hitting that fellow. Okay.

But I'm not affected by it. So I can't do anything about my memory. But I can do something about my heart.

I'm mentioning these things because I used to, in the days when I was not clear about these things, I used to condemn myself unnecessarily. So what set me free? I'm telling you what will set you free. A good conscience.

Make sure you have forgiven everybody and make sure you have asked forgiveness from everybody whom you have hurt. This is very, very important. There must not be a single person on earth whom I have not forgiven.

And there must not be a single person whom I have hurt, whom I have not asked forgiveness from. Even your wife or your children or someone lower down in society, someone in your office. Wherever you had opportunity.

Maybe there are some people you hurt. You don't even know where they are. Well, you can't do anything about that.

Wherever you have opportunity, you must ask forgiveness. This is very, very important. I've come to see that many, many Christians do not make progress in their life because of this one area.

I've been stressing it more and more and more in the last one year especially. Forgiveness. Forgive others and ask forgiveness.

Because I've come to see so many people that their foot is on the brakes. They're pressing the accelerator. They get challenged in a meeting and they press the accelerator, but the foot is on the brakes.

The car is screeching as it goes along and doesn't make much progress. And what are the brakes they are pressing? They haven't forgiven somebody. They haven't asked forgiveness from someone.

Get your foot off the brakes. You'll find your car suddenly shooting forward. Keep a good conscience.

Money matters. Very, very important. Try your best, my brother, sister, to avoid debt.

I have followed that rule strictly in my life. That in my entire life, I can say my wife and I, we married 52 years. We've never been in debt for a single day.

And we were far poorer than any of you have ever been. I can say that when we got married. We were extremely poor.

So poor we did not have money to rent a house. But we decided we will never buy anything that we could not afford. We lived with old clothes and made something ourselves for our children when they were babies, my wife made.

Because we couldn't afford to buy even clothes for our baby. But because we needed money and we didn't have it. And the Bible says, oh, no man anything, Romans 13.8. So I say it's more important to read the, to obey the Bible than to get fancy clothes for our children.

So we never did it. We decided we'd never borrow. And boy, as I look at it now, I'm so thankful.

You know, God takes note of it. When you make a sacrifice in order to obey his word. He remembers it.

He'll remember it for years and years and years. That in order to please him, you denied yourself something. And we denied ourselves numerous things.

And I thank God I had a wife who cooperated with me in that self-denial. Who never said, let's borrow money and do this. Never, not even once.

We can't afford it, we don't get it. And little by little, God, I mean, today God has blessed us with so much that I'm overwhelmed. But it was not our seeking.

It was the blessing of God and different things. But never did I borrow. Never did I beg.

Nor did I steal. Beg, borrow and steal. Things that people do.

Avoid it, brother, sister. Keep your conscience clear. If you have little, live with little.

Be thankful. Be content with such things as you have. Never, never, never compare yourself with somebody else.

Some relative of yours who is much better off than you. Well, praise the Lord. God bless him.

Let him have even more. But I'm not in competition with him to have more than him. I'm not in competition with anybody in the world.

No. It's very easy. Don't be in competition with other people in the church.

Don't be in competition to preach better than them or do something better, to get more honor than them, to be respected. All this is rubbish. Garbage.

See it as garbage. Then you won't seek for it. Keep a clear conscience in this area.

Forgiveness. Money. Very important.

And keep a good conscience. And as you do that, you'll find God leads you to higher things where you say, Lord, I want to keep my thoughts pure. I want to battle, battle, battle until my thoughts become pure.

Don't ever give up that battle. Don't say, this is hopeless. I'm falling again and again.

You say, Lord, if I fall 50 times a day, I'm going to confess and repent 50 times a day until it becomes 40 times a day and 30 times a day and a day is going to come and I'm going to be free from all this dirty thinking. I'm going to be pure in my mind. Keep your conscience clear.

Fight that battle. That is the goal of our instruction. Love from a pure heart and a good conscience all the time.

Is it possible to live like that every day? Look what Paul says in 1 Corinthians. It's a word that's challenged me. 1 Corinthians in chapter 4. I say, Lord, I want to be able to say this every single moment of my life.

1 Corinthians 4 verse 4. I am conscious of nothing against myself. Nothing. All his life he lived like that from the time he got light and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

I want to live conscious of nothing. I mean, unconsciously, I may be doing something wrong. I'm sure unconsciously I'm doing many things wrong.

But consciously, God only checks you in your conscious life. Your conscience tells you about your conscious life. The unconscious part of it, God will reveal to you little by little as you're faithful in your conscious life.

And that's why he says in the same verse, 1 Corinthians 4. I'm conscious of nothing against myself. That means in my conscious area of my life, I'm absolutely clear before God. But, Paul says, there's an unconscious part of me.

Therefore, I'm not acquitted. God doesn't say not guilty completely. But the Lord examines me in that area, but he does not condemn me because I don't have light on it.

It's only what I'm conscious of that God asks me to confess. I cannot confess unconscious sin. I use the example of a piece of an ice cube.

If I put an ice cube in this glass of water, you know what will happen? Ten percent of that ice cube will be on top and 90 percent will be underneath. That's how ice cubes are. Now, that's a picture of my conscious life and unconscious part.

What is beneath the surface? I mean, if this is a colored liquid, I wouldn't be able to see what's underneath. I just see the top ten percent of that cube of ice. That's my conscious life.

And this is dark water, so I can't see what's beneath. But if I take a knife and slice off that top ten percent of that ice cube, what will happen? That little bit of it that's hidden will come up. I'll get a little more of the ice cube will become visible.

Then I can deal with that. That is spiritual progress. I deal totally with whatever I'm conscious of.

And when God sees that, he gives me as a gift, almost, a little revelation on the unconscious part of my life. Then I can deal with that. It may take years for me to deal with it.

But as I deal with it, then a little more comes up. That is the meaning of he who has this hope of becoming like Christ when he comes, 1 John chapter 3 verse 3, purifies himself, purifies himself as he is pure. That's what it means to keep a good conscience.

It's a progressive thing. You may have had a good conscience last year, but your conscience should be more sensitive today than it was last year. Because a little bit of that ice cube has come up because you've dealt radically with the top part of the ice cube that is above the surface.

Okay, we've got to move on. Ask God to give you more revelation on that. And the third thing, love from a pure heart.

Second, a good conscience, 1 Timothy 1 and verse 5. And the third is a sincere faith, a genuine faith. And faith is not such a difficult thing. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Faith means a simple trust. And to me, here is the best definition of faith that I have got for myself. I like to think in word pictures.

I find that Jesus used parables, and when I use word pictures, it helps me to understand faith. What's the picture I get about faith? The word picture I get is from John 15 and verse 5. A branch abiding in a tree producing fruit automatically. That branch is helplessly dependent on the tree for the sap to flow in.

That's a picture of the Holy Spirit. The helpless dependence on the tree. That's faith.

It's the branch saying, I can do nothing by myself. I can't produce a single fruit if I'm cut off from the tree, even if I'm a little distance away from the tree. Finished.

I must be deeply in the tree. That's why Jesus said, abide in me. Without me, you can do nothing.

Faith is to say, without you, I can do nothing, Lord. But like Paul said, with Christ, I can do everything. These are the two sides of the coin.

John 15, 5, and Philippians 4, 13. Without Christ, I can do nothing. Turn the coin over.

With Christ, I can do everything. Both must be there. That's faith.

Without Christ, I can do nothing. John 15, 5. With Christ, I can do everything that God wants me to do. Philippians 4, 13.

And that means I have faith that if I depend on Christ, fruit will come. See, the branch doesn't have to struggle to produce fruit. It just remains there.

This is faith. And I want to say to you, my dear brother, sister, however weak or foolish or ignorant or stupid you think you are, God wants you to bear fruit. Fruit doesn't mean that you become a great, well-known preacher or anything like that.

It just means that you go around doing good. You'll be a blessing to others. You're a blessing to whomever you meet.

Abraham did not travel the whole world. He traveled a very limited area of the Middle East. And the Lord said, I will make you a blessing to all the families on the earth.

It's amazing what God can do. Even though your whole travel in your entire life may be in a very small area, all of us, I think, have traveled more than Abraham did in his entire life. He was in a very small area.

And God said, I'll make you a blessing to all the families on the earth. Just leave that to me. And even more so, it says the blessing of Abraham is for us today, Galatians 3.14. That blessing is for us through the Holy Spirit, to abide in him, abide in Christ and say, Lord, I trust you.

I trust you. I can't do anything by myself, but I trust you to produce in me that divine nature which will produce fruit in my life. You will work in my heart and you will make my thoughts pure and you will control my tongue and you will give me light as to what I should do.

I may not be able to accomplish the great mighty things that some man of God can do. His calling is different. I want to do my little part.

You know, 1 Corinthians 12 speaks about the different parts of the body. You know, our human body, we see what all wonderful things we can do with our hands, what all wonderful things we can do with our tongue. Amazing.

But then there are so many hidden parts of the body, in the body of Christ. For example, the veins and the arteries. Aren't they important? I mean, if one artery is cut, it's the end of your life.

An artery, and you never see it. It's inside. All the blood flowing through it.

Lord, if you make me an artery in the body of Christ, I just want to be a very good artery without any cholesterol stuck in it, preventing the blood flow. I want the blood to be able to flow freely through me. Just make me a clean artery through which the blood can flow.

Nobody sees your artery. There are mines of arteries and veins in our body. We hardly ever think of it.

So don't get discouraged if you are one of those who never get prominence and never get into the pulpit. Say, Lord, you decide which part of the body I should be. I'm quite happy to be there.

I'm going to trust you. I'm going to live by faith that you have given me exactly the gifts that I'm supposed to have in the body of Christ. I'm not here to determine which part of the body I should be.

1 Corinthians 12 is very clear that God decided. And he decided that before the worlds were created, what part you should have in the body of Christ. Think of the body of Christ like a human body.

The hands, eyes, tongue, ears, arteries, kidneys, heart, liver, so many hidden, there are more hidden parts than visible parts. Just like in a church, there are very few people who are visible out in the pulpit, and most of the members of the body are invisible. But those invisible parts of our body are very important.

So faith means, Lord, I trust you. I trust you to completely fulfill for me in my one lifetime whatever you set me for. But I'll tell you this.

If God meant you to be an artery and you want to be a visible tongue, you'll spend all your life and you'll be frustrated, and you won't accomplish what God wants you to be. Because you envy that person who's so much in public who gets honored. There you're seeking the honor of men.

So many Christians are seeking the honor of people in trying to have a ministry. Die to that. Lord, I want to be dead.

I want to be just what you want me to be. Then our life comes to rest. The Bible speaks about the rest of faith.

One mark of faith. It says in Hebrews 4, there's a rest we can enter into. That means like the Sabbath rest, in a way.

We don't struggle. We're not working. We're at rest in God.

There's a beautiful song that says there is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest near to the heart of God. That's the rest God wants us to have.

That comes by faith. Hebrews speaks about the rest of faith. When we have faith in God, we are completely at rest.

It means I'm not in competition with anybody else. I'm not trying to show that I can preach better than that person or praise better than that person or do something else better than that person or to be more recognized in the church than that person. All of this is thrown in the trash can.

I'm at rest in God. My Heavenly Father knows me and loves me, and I'm so happy in that. I'm not here to impress anybody in the world.

Now, if anything I've said you feel is too high for you, say, Lord, I make that my goal. I haven't got there, but that is my goal. Don't say it's impossible.

Make it your goal. If you haven't got there, never mind. You'll get there.

Speak the word of faith. I will get there. I will come to that life of rest.

There are 101 things in the world we cannot explain. A lot of sicknesses, for example. I have prayed for so many sick people in my life, and I tell you honestly, I don't know why God allows sickness.

I don't know why God allows accidents. I don't know why God allows so many things. There are a million things I can't explain.

But one thing I know, God is a good God. He's good all the time. He loves me, and he wants me to be good, even if I can't accomplish great things.

So faith doesn't mean I do miracles. No. That's faith as a gift.

I'm talking about faith as a virtue. George Moore had faith as a gift to take care of orphans. There are people who have faith as a gift to do healing.

I'm not talking about that. That's a gift. I'm talking about the fruit of faith, which all of us can have, which is simple resting in God as a branch in a tree with no complaints, perfectly happy if God makes me a small branch or a big one.

I just want to be resting in the tree and the Holy Spirit flowing in me. That is faith. The Christian life is not complicated.

It's very, very simple. All that I've said to you today was trying to make it simple. I pray that you will live in that simplicity and be blessed.

God bless you. So we bow in prayer. Heavenly Father, please help us to see the goal of all instruction in Scripture, love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a simple, sincere faith, dependence on you.

Help us, Lord, we pray. Not to be disturbed by strange teachings and doctrines and so many things people speak about. So many people stray from these things and have turned aside to fruitless discussion.

Your word says, help us to avoid all that. Bless everyone who has heard your word, we pray. And remind us of this again and again, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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