

# Three Stages of Spiritual Growth

by Zac Poonen

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in receiving God's blessings and growing in our spiritual lives.*

**Duration:** 57:53

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:2-3, Genesis 13:10, Psalm 119:11, Ezekiel 36:27, Matthew 6:33, James 4:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of receiving and internalizing God's word. He compares this process to a baby effortlessly swallowing mashed food, highlighting the simplicity and ease of receiving God's truth. However, he cautions against merely accumulating knowledge without applying it, likening it to collecting unused checks. The speaker also discusses the role of fathers and mothers in sacrificially providing for their families, drawing parallels to God's provision for His children. Overall, the message encourages wholeheartedness in receiving and applying God's word, emphasizing the freedom and relief found in relying on God's grace rather than striving under the law.

---

## Transcript

I want to turn today to what we looked at last week from Genesis in chapter 12. You remember I said that God's purpose is, as we've been considering in our last two sessions, that God fills our hearts first with his spirit and then through us, makes us a blessing to other people. And every single one of us can be that.

You know, I'll tell you something, you have not accomplished your life's purpose on earth if that doesn't take place in your life. You know, if you don't allow God to bless you and make you a blessing, you have frustrated the purpose with which Jesus died for you on the cross. And it's good to realize it now, when we can do something about it, rather than, you know, stand before the Lord in the final day and discover something which surprises us.

I mentioned many times that I have prayed to the Lord that he will not give me any surprises, that I will not get any surprises in the day I stand before him. Because I'll feel terrible when I stand before him and discover there were certain things I should have done. When I should have done, I mean perhaps just trusted him more.

Not talking about me doing something, but trusting him more so that he could do something in me and through me. So I want to encourage all of you to pray that prayer. Lord, don't let me get any surprises at the judgment seat of Christ.

I'd like to know right now, before I leave this earth, and not on the last day before I leave the earth when it's too late to do anything, the earlier you discover it, the better. I'll tell you honestly, I wish I had known all the things you hear now when I was a young teenager. It would have been so much better, but I discovered some of these things through trial and error over a long period of time.

But that doesn't mean that some of you who are hearing it as teenagers will necessarily allow God to do more in you than he's done in me, or more through you than he's done through me, because it doesn't depend on what age you hear it, it depends on how wholehearted you are. You know, you can be so sluggish that even though you know the truth, it can be just something that resides in your mind, and you never use it. And knowledge that comes into your mind that you don't use, and that you keep on accumulating, is like somebody sending you a cheque every week, and you keep on accumulating those cheques for many years in your house, till they get outdated, and you don't use any of them.

You can say, theoretically, I've got all these 500 cheques, and each of them is 100,000 rupees. What's yours? Knowledge is like that. When you get a cheque, what do you do? You cash it immediately.

That's what we're supposed to do with God's promises, the things we read in his word. When I read a word like, the Lord says that the blessing of Abraham is for me, that the Holy Spirit is determined to bless me and make me a blessing, and I'm the only one who can hinder it. You can't hinder me from being a blessing to the world.

You can try as much as you like. All the demons of hell can't hinder me from being a blessing to the world if God determines that he's going to do it. And all my enemies who hate me and are jealous of me can't hinder me.

It's impossible. Because of one reason. Because Almighty God is greater than all of them.

I mean, that's simple truth. I wish we could understand that. You know, when people complain that so-and-so is doing this for me, and so-and-so is doing this against me, and so-and-so is scheming against me, and the devil's hurting me here and hurting me there, I have one word to say to all of them.

Your God is so small. Your God is so small. He can't handle a human being.

He can't handle a demon. Whatever God is that, you better read the Bible. Because the God of the Bible is the one who created the universe, who runs the universe.

And I'll tell you this, I believe this with all my heart, and I'm not just saying it in some type of empty boasting. If all the people in the world, every single one, seven billion, including all of you, turn against me and fight against me with all your heart and scheme against me and plan to hurt me and kill me or do whatever you like, and all the demons in hell also join, there are millions more there, it won't touch me. The hairs on my head are numbered.

That's how I live. What I want to say is that's how you can live also if you will have the same faith. You don't have faith, you'll get nothing.

What I'm trying to tell you is that you're missing something by not believing and trusting God to do something in you and through you. It's not a question of ability. Don't sit back and say, oh, Brother Zach has got more gifts than I have.

It's got nothing to do with gifts. God can give you ten times more gifts than he gives me. It's got to do with faith.

Always we try to put the blame on something else. Oh, he's got gifts I don't have. He's got opportunities I don't have.

It's got nothing to do with all that. Just stop taking the blame yourself and say, I don't have faith. Or, I love my money more than I love Jesus Christ.

I love my job more than I love Jesus Christ. I love my advancement in the world or my plans for the future more than I love Christ. I love my wife more than I love Christ.

That's the reason. But your wife and your job and your boss and the money in the world have not done one million to what Christ did for you. So who should you love more? You think you'll love your wife and your husband less if you love Christ? Not at all.

I'll tell you honestly, you'll love them more. Because you never lose anything by loving God with all your heart. Nothing.

And the little money you have will be a blessing to you if you love God first, put him first. But all the millions you have will be a curse to you if you put that first. So it's sensible to put God first.

You know, I'll tell you this, honestly, if I'm the most selfish person in the world, who's only interested in myself and my family, you know what I do? I put God first. Because that's the best thing I can do for myself and my family. Aren't we all selfish? I'll tell you what you should do.

If you want to bless yourself and your family, put God first. Open your being to him and say, Lord, I'm never again going to love anybody or anything more than you. Your life will be supremely blessed and happy.

So we read in Genesis 12, remember what I've been saying many times and Charles Finney used to say, that you've got to say something ten times before most people understand it. I'm saying it for the third time. So you know what the next seven messages are going to be on.

The Lord says, Genesis 12 verse 2, I will, that's what I want to stress. The old covenant was, you shall, you shall, you shall not, you shall not. But here it is, I will, I will, I will.

You see how wonderful it is when the responsibility is taken by somebody else. I mean, if my little boy is trying to fix his cycle, which the wheel came off or sponsored or something and he's struggling, he doesn't know what to do. If I tell him, listen, son, I'll do it.

Ah, what a relief he has. Dad's going to do it. Great.

He can go and sit and relax. That's exactly how I feel to be freed from the law, which told me, you shall, you shall, you shall, you shall not, you shall not. Here I am struggling, struggling, struggling, struggling.

Like my son trying to fix his cycle, he doesn't know what to do next. And then I tell him, listen, leave that, I'll do it. What a relief.

And that's exactly why the devil never wants you to enter the new covenant. He wants you to live and groan under the law all your life, struggle, be miserable, make your wife's life miserable, make your husband's life miserable, make your children's life miserable, make the lives of the brothers and sisters around you miserable because you live under the law. Instead of being a blessing, you'll be a nuisance and a problem and jealous of others and ungrateful, etc., etc., every wretched thing that we got from Adam, which he got from the devil.

I can't understand. Well, I can understand. The devil's blinded people's eyes, that's all.

If only our eyes were open to see the glory of the new covenant, and that's what I feel my main calling in life is to proclaim the glory of the new covenant. There's no doubt about it. It's changed my life to understand what Jesus did for me.

We talk about New Testament. What is New Testament? It's a new covenant, a new agreement that God has made with man. I will bless you and you will be a blessing.

And all the families of the earth, verse 3, will be blessed through you. Means that every single human being I meet, it's not literally all the families of the earth because I don't meet them, but all the ones I meet, all the ones I contact through some means of communication. And nowadays there are so many means of communication.

In the old days it was just speech, and then it became letter, and then it became telegram, and then it became telephone, and now we have the internet, which you reach the whole world and you don't even know whom you are blessing. Imagine that we can be like that. Bless the whole world.

It's really true. All the families of the earth who want to be blessed can be blessed through you if we have faith for it. I believe that.

I don't believe it's got to do with how much money we have or how many contacts we have. It's got nothing to do with that. It's only got to do with one thing.

Do you allow, listen to this, it's only got to do one thing. Will you allow God to bless you? Will you say, Lord, I don't close any door in my life to you. Every door in every part of area of my life is open.

You knock, I'll open immediately. I don't have to think about it. I'll open.

Whatever you say, give up, I give up. I don't have to think about it even for a second. You tell me to do something, I'll do it.

Tell me give up something, I'll give it up. I give you my word, Lord, I love you more than I love my children, love my parents, love my family members, love my job, love anybody in the whole universe. You're going to be first.

That's the meaning of worship. Whom have I in heaven but thee, there's nothing on earth I desire beside thee. Yeah, that's worship.

When you do that, you worship God. And if you can say that, Lord, really, I'll tell you this. There is absolutely no limit to the rivers that will flow through you because Jesus said that.

He who thirsts comes to me and drinks, keeps on drinking and believes in me. And I get a very good definition of faith there. Faith is like drinking water.

Is there anything easier than drinking? It's the first thing that a baby learns before it learns to talk or walk or do anything on its own. There's one thing a baby learns to do on its own without even being taught. That's to drink.

And Jesus took that. The first thing a baby does without even being taught. That's the thing Jesus said, come to me and drink.

That's faith. In other words, faith is the first and the most easiest thing that a believer can have. It's just like drinking.

It's coming to God. You don't have to do anything. You don't have to produce.

The baby doesn't have to produce the milk. It just drinks. And so we come to the Lord and we keep on drinking.

And what happens finally, not only satisfies us, but makes us a blessing to the world. So I want to turn to a New Testament example, New Testament passage that relates to this. It's in 1 John chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2, verse 12 onwards.

See, verse 12 to 14, he talks about three levels of the Christian life. And if you really go all the way with God, and I'm saying that to every single person here, you don't have to be a full-time worker. You don't have to be a man.

You don't have to be a grown-up person. In other words, you can be in a secular job all your life. You can be a woman and you can be a child.

This is for you. Three levels of the Christian life and God wants us to complete, come to the last level before we leave the earth. We better hurry up.

What are those three levels? Number one, we're like children. That's where we all begin, like babes. I'm writing to you, little children.

Then I'm writing to you, fathers. I'm writing to you, young men. In verse 14, I've written to you, fathers.

I've written to you, young men. And the last part of verse 13 again, children. Twice he repeats three levels, children, young men, and fathers.

You know, the Bible is not like a book of mathematics. That's why it doesn't go one, two, three, one, two, three. I like it.

It deliberately mixes up the order sometimes so that these mathematical, logical people get a bit confused. Good. It's written for babes.

But here's the three levels to think more clearly. Children, young men, fathers. You know, that's how we are.

It's an illustration from normal life. Somebody's born a child, he becomes a young man, then he becomes a father. Now, spiritually, that is, it's used as an illustration of how it should be with us.

And you can be a child, spiritually, even though you're 80 years old, physically. Now, a lot of people I met like that, 80 year old physically, and they're like babies, spiritually. Why do I say they're like babies? Because they're always complaining, grumbling, murmuring, making demands on others, and dirtying their diapers.

By that, I mean committing sin. They still don't know how to keep themselves clean. They get upset and angry.

You know that when bad words come out of your mouth, it's just like baby dirtying a diaper? I hope you'll keep that picture all your life. Oh, I dirtied my diaper again now. Oh, again, five times a day, dirtied my diaper.

Look at the words that came out of my mouth. Babies. You don't get angry with a baby.

You just hope it'll grow up. That's all. It's sad when they're 20 years old and still wearing diapers.

I tell you it's sad. You'd feel sad if your son was like that. God is sad when you're like that.

When the words that come out of my mouth come out of your mouth, I like the filth that comes out of diapers. You think it's clean? Is it something you're proud of? Do you think babies are proud of what comes out into the diapers? Are you proud of the words that come out of your mouth sometimes? That's babies. You need to grow up.

From there we come to young men. You know, young men are folks, and that includes young women too, who are strong and zealous and full of fire. And then we go to fathers who are mature.

So, we can say, it says here about children, two things about each of them, really. Little children, first of all, verse 12, your sins are forgiven. The second thing it says about children is, in the last part of verse 13, you know the father.

What it says about young men, it's almost similar in both statements. In the middle of verse 13, I've written to you young men, because you overcome Satan. And then, towards the end of verse 14, I've written to you young men, because you're strong.

The word of God abides in you, and you have overcome Satan. What does it say to fathers? Fathers, verse 13, I'm writing to you fathers, because you know him who has been from the beginning. That is the father, but the father from all eternity.

And, again in verse 14, it really says the same thing. I've written to you fathers, because you know him who has been from the beginning. So, I see here, children, they know the father just like a little child.

You know, a two-year-old knows his father. And the fathers are those who pattern their life after the heavenly father. It's two different ways of knowing the father.

One is to know the father like a little two-year-old knows his father, who takes care of me, hugs me, blesses me, provides my need, cleans me up when I'm dirty. I hope your fathers do that sometimes, your little children. And don't leave it to the mothers.

And that's how little children know their father. You take care of them, provide for them, and comfort them, wipe their tears. There are some Christians who only know God like that.

Oh Lord, I'm so thankful that you care for me, you provide my need. Whenever I'm in trouble, I run to you. And that's about the only time I run to you, really.

It's like little children. I mean, they're busy going here, going to their friends, playing cricket, this, that, and the other. All types of things.

When they're in trouble, daddy or mommy. That's a child. You know, people who turn to God only when they're in trouble.

And the rest of the time, they're just having a lot of fun on the earth. And they're so thankful there's God. You know, there are a lot of people sitting in CSC like that.

They don't run away. They come to God. Every time they're in trouble, they come to God and say, God, we only have you.

They're like children. And then there are, when they never seem to overcome Satan, the oppression of Satan in their life, etc., etc. In other words, their sins are forgiven.

You know, that means their diapers are dirty. They got it clean. Doesn't the baby feel nice and clean when diapers are changed? That's exactly how many Christians feel.

I'm so happy. In other words, we can say their whole attitude of a child is receiving, receiving, receiving. And it's good.

We need to receive forgiveness of sins. However old you are, you need to receive forgiveness of sins when you sin. To receive from God is a good thing.

Children are the gift of the Lord. That's a good thing to receive. So God blesses us in so many ways.

In other words, children are those who experience the first part of Abraham's blessing. That is, I will bless you. When can you receive the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Not when you're a father.

When you're a child. Do you know that you can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a baby spiritually? They were all babies on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached to them. You can receive the Holy Spirit today, right now.

That's not for fathers. No. It's for babies.

It's something you receive. Just like a baby receives milk, drink. Come to me and drink.

That's what Jesus said. That is to receive. You can't be a blessing to others before you receive.

Jesus said, you drink from me and then the rivers will flow. So the Lord has to bless us first. When the Lord said, I'll bless you, he told Abraham.

That's the stage of children. All that children do is receive. You ask a child, where do you get those clothes from? Got it from dad or mom.

Where do you get that food from? Dad and mom. Where do you get your education from? Dad and mom paid for it. Everything.

Where do you get the cycle from? Oh, dad, mom. They have nothing which they earned and bought. Everything is received, received, received, received.

And we all are like that. We all came into the world like that. And spiritually, that's how we begin.

We begin like that. And I tell you, every preaching that tells you that God will bless you is absolutely right. The only thing, it keeps you as a child forever.

That's what I'm against. I'm not against it. I believe that God is a God who blesses us spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically too.

Sure. Materially. I believe in a God who blesses us materially, physically, but that's not primary.

Even spiritual blessing is not primary. Because as long as we are receiving, receiving, receiving blessing, you're like a child. Supposing you're 40 years old and you still say, no, I'm not getting anything.

I mean, I'm not earning anything. Then you must be a beggar. Because you're 40 years old and you're still dependent on other people for your clothes and your food and a place to stay and everything.

You don't earn one cent, one paisa yourself. I think some of us would have a serious problem if we were like that. Aren't you happy that you're not a beggar, always dependent on others? I mean, when we are children, it's okay.

It's okay. It's perfectly all right for a 10-year-old to say, everything I got is from somebody else. But it's pretty serious if you're at the age of 40, you still say, I haven't earned anything myself.

I just depend on others to take care of me. That's exactly the condition with many believers. What is right when you're 10 years old is serious when you're 40.

And then what's right to receive when you're a spiritual child is wrong if you stay on in that state of childhood for a long time. So, are we against receiving? No. We receive, we receive, we receive.

But we say, we got to learn to give. And fathers. You see, if you look at the life of a father.

When I say fathers, I include fathers and mothers, please remember. When I say young men, I include young men and women. It's just instead of saying that every time, please remember, I'm talking about fathers and mothers combined.

So, what are fathers and mothers like? You take the life of an average father and mother in any home who's got small children. The whole day they're giving. What is that dad going to work so hard in the office for? Is it to enjoy himself with all the money he earns there? Oh, no.

It's to pay the rent. For whom? For his family. It's to provide food on the table.

For whom? For his family. To buy clothes. For whom? For his children.

And a good father and mother will almost spend very little on themselves. They'll spend the minimum on themselves unless they are some of these good-for-nothing selfish parents who only think of themselves. I'm not talking about them.

I'm talking about those who are real fathers and mothers who care for their children. Who will give their children good food and deny themselves and eat simple food themselves. And so a father is giving, giving, giving, giving, giving, blessing others, blessing his children, blessing his... with all types of things.

He's blessing to others in his home. So he's moved from being a child to a father. You know, when he was 10 years old, he was receiving, receiving, receiving, receiving.

Now he's 40 years old and he's giving and giving and giving and giving. You see how the child has become a father? How the one who kept on receiving a blessing has now started giving, giving, giving. All of us are doing that in our home.

If you are grown up, it's not only Christians. Look at all the non-Christian fathers and mothers. Don't they do the same thing? Sure.

Nature is like that. I mean, all over the world. So, what the Lord is saying is something similar to that can happen in the church.

That in the church, which is like a large family, children are born spiritually, they're born again, and they receive and receive and receive and receive, and then they must grow up to the place where they start blessing others. They're not now thinking of only receiving, receiving, receiving. They're thinking, now I've got to be a blessing to others.

I've got to give and give, be a blessing to other people. Now I want to ask you whether your mind works like that, or are you going to be a child forever and ever and ever? How long? And as I said, you can be 80 years old physically and still a child spiritually. And you can be 18, 1-8, 18 years old physically, and be a spiritual father and mother, blessing others who are younger than you.

There are millions of people younger than 18 in the world, just by the way, in case you didn't know, to whom you can be a blessing. There are millions of people in the world who, even though you're 18 years old, who know less about Jesus than you do. In this city, you don't have to go outside Bangalore.

Among your friends, among those who know you, you can be a blessing to them. You can be a spiritual father and mother when you're 18, 1-8 years old, and you can be a spiritual baby when you're 80, 8-0 years old. It's got nothing to do with physical age.

It's got to do with how much you open up your being to the Lord Jesus Christ when he says, I stand at the door and knock. You say, Lord, come in. Then, you know, your heart is like a house with a thousand rooms, and he will not enter one room without knocking.

Jesus is a gentleman. He doesn't force his way into some area of your life if you don't want him. That's why he doesn't disturb you one bit when you use all your money for yourself and don't care for him.

Has he ever disturbed you? No, because he's a gentleman. He's knocked many times at that door of your finances. You say, no, I'd like to run this room myself.

He goes away. He may knock again after a month or so. You say, no, just leave me alone, Lord.

All the rest of the house is yours. This room is mine. He leaves you alone.

And I'll tell you, after a few years, he won't knock there again. He wants to run that room himself. And that room will be the darkest room in your life forever.

Because he, Jesus, brings light. Maybe your reading room, the books you read, or the room which you have your television in. You don't want him to come there because you are watching certain things he won't like.

He'll knock a few times, but after some time, he'll just leave you. Have you noticed how now you can see some dirty movies and you don't even feel disturbed about it? Is it because, you see, you have graduated? No. The Lord stopped knocking.

He stopped knocking at that door. He tried a few times and you didn't want to let him in. He's left you.

I mean, he's still there in the house somewhere. But that room, some rooms in your house are dark. And you have chosen to keep them.

Your mind, for example. I remember when I was young, and I was doing well in my profession in the Navy. And I realized God had given me a good mind.

And I was 21 years old and I said, Now what am I going to use this mind for? I can either use it for God, or for myself. That's my choice now. He knocks.

And you say, No, I... I'll give you a little bit of time here once in a while. You can visit this room, but you can't control this room. My mind is for myself.

With my mind, I can make money. I can become famous. I'll tell you honestly, I could have done both.

But I'm thankful I didn't go that way. I asked Jesus to come in and use my mind to make me understand Scripture. Which so many theologians and preachers and professors had made so complicated to people.

And I said, Lord, you've given me a clear mind. Let me use it to understand Scripture so that I can explain Scripture to educated college graduates and to simple villagers equally. But Jesus could speak to God.

And I decided to give my mind to Him. And I'm so thankful. You've got a good mind.

Many of you sitting here, I know you've got a very good mind. And the proof of it is that you do so well in your profession when you apply your mind to it. Have you ever thought of allowing Jesus to make use of that mind for His kingdom? For His glory? That you could devote your time a little more to the study of the Scriptures.

Let Him in, let Him in. It's our choice, you know, whether we want to ultimately be a spiritual father and mother and be a blessing to others, or whether we grow up to the ripe old age of 80 and remain a baby, dirtying our diapers, and still drinking, drinking, drinking milk, drinking milk, drinking milk, drinking milk, with a feeding bottle in our mouth at 80 years old. You can choose that way if you want.

I did not want it. So you see, John speaks about those who are children, who are receiving, receiving, receiving, receiving, and fathers, who are giving, giving, giving, giving, giving. And you ask any father or mother sitting here, or anywhere in the world, would you rather become a child all over again? Or would you rather be a father and mother and have children? I think all of you parents will agree that having children is a bit of a nuisance as well.

It's a blessing, I know, but it's also a bit of a nuisance. It takes a lot of our time, and takes a lot of our patience, takes a lot of our money, and takes away a lot of our sleep. I could list a lot of other things like that it takes away.

But how many of you who have children would say, Yeah, I'd rather not be with children. Not one. It's worth it, right? All the lost sleep, lost money.

Think of how rich you'd have been if you had no children. Think of how much sleep you'd have got if you had no children. Think of how patient, how peaceful your life would have been at home if you had no children.

You want that life? You say, No. Give me the children with all the problems associated with it. I'll tell you, you have become a father and mother, physically.

You know, you can be a spiritually also a father and mother like that. You can pull out of responsibility if you like. You know, like there are some fathers who don't care for their children.

They don't provide for them. It's very sad. I mean, there are very few like that in India perhaps, because our culture is more family oriented.

But in many Western countries, I've actually read of a father who was holding a child. It's a true story. It's unbelievable but true.

And watching television, and this, some movie he was watching, and this child was, small babies, a few months old, bawling and screaming, and he couldn't hear what the television, he banged the child's head against the wall, and the child died. He could watch his movie. You believe there are fathers like that? It's unbelievable but true.

Totally irresponsible. They only think of, ah, it's a nuisance, that child. I want to watch this TV program.

You know, spiritually, how many people there could be like that sitting here? You, you are horrified when you hear a story like that. Oh dear, how would anybody ever treat a baby like that? Because he wanted to enjoy himself. He didn't want the nuisance of a child disturbing his watching a TV program.

Is it possible that spiritually you're like that? You don't want to be a father, father spiritually because you just want to receive. You want to be blessed all the time. You don't want to take any responsibilities in the church.

And even if you sign up for something in the church, you don't turn up to do that. Because you're watching something interesting. You're just like that father.

What's the difference between you and that father? Absolutely none. The only thing that father gets arrested by the police and you don't. That's all.

You see, we, we don't become a blessing because we don't want to. It's too much of a nuisance. You know, if you take a, a couple who are considering marriage and show them a video, all the things that married couples have to go through.

You know, the thousands of diapers they have to change. And then another baby comes along. And all the problems with standing in long lines to get even entry into the kindergarten for the child.

And all the problems in life. I think they'll say, listen, I think we better not get married. We'll just be friends. yeah. It's such a nuisance. But thank God that he doesn't allow us to see all that before we get married.

We think marriage is just, ah, I'm in love with this girl or this boy and we're just going to have a wonderful time. Well, that's fine as long as you don't have any children. Man, even those who don't have children.

I know a lot of people who say, honey, love, darling and all that for six months and then they can't stand the sight of you and some names I don't want to mention here which they use towards each other. Yeah. So, it's because we want to receive and receive and receive and receive.

And there's a blessing in receiving, but you know that verse which says, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Jesus said that in Acts 20 verse 35. It's more blessed to give than to receive.

And that's a father. Child is receiving, that's a blessing in that. A father is more blessed because he gives. He thinks of how he can bless others at personal sacrifice. Is there a single father or mother here who has blessed their children without sacrifice? Not one in the world. You cannot bless your children without personal sacrifice.

It requires a lot of sacrifice to have children. And if you have many children, it requires a tremendous amount of sacrifice to take care of them. Tremendous amount.

So, in this, when we think of what the Apostle John speaks about children and fathers, you know there's an in-between stage, young men. So, let's look at these three. What does a child do? A child, according, a spiritual child, I mean, the first thing he knows is sins are forgiven.

And that's where we all got to begin, as children. Thank you Lord for the blessing that my sins are all blotted out. And if you haven't got there brother, you can't proceed.

You're not even born. Maybe you're still in the womb. But you're not born.

When you're born again, your sins are forgiven. Your entire past life is blotted out. It's something like, you know, when a baby is born, it's linked to its mother with a thing called the umbilical cord and it's cut.

Finished. The old connection is gone. Can you imagine a baby still living with that umbilical cord? They don't even do that in the jungles.

It's cut. Its connection is gone with the old life. I want to ask you, is your connection gone with the old life you had before you gave your life to Christ? Was there a cut? Or you say, it's painful, the scissors.

I mean, these are all good friends of mine. It's like the baby saying, you know, for nine months I got all my food from this umbilical cord. It supported me.

It cared for me. The Lord said, Cut it! I don't know. It's so hard.

You don't want to give up your old friends. You don't want to give up your old associations. You don't want to give up your old habits.

Okay, then hang on to the umbilical cord. That's it. There has to be a cutting to be born.

And now, as long as you're not born, that's fine. But I mean, you know, if you stay too long in the womb, you die as well. I hope you know that.

Nobody stays in the womb 18 months and lives. Maybe a few weeks more, but not too long. And I'll tell you this, if you reject what the Lord is saying to you, to repent, and turn, and give your life to Christ, after some time, you'll just be like a dead baby in the womb, sitting here and listening, because you don't want to cut something.

You don't want to be born. So you better hurry up and make that decision, perhaps this morning. Say, Lord, I've decided, I'm going to give my life to Christ.

I'm going to turn from my sins and everything. I'm going to cut that old umbilical cord, no matter how much good it did to me all these years. I'm going to cut it, Lord.

And maybe you have to cut your relationship, not that you stop loving your relatives and parents, but if they're going to hinder you from following the Lord, you've got to cut it. Sure. And that's really the best thing for a baby, because you'll be born.

And so baby receives forgiveness of sins. My past life is gone. The Holy Spirit does that.

The Holy Spirit is the one who does that. He's the midwife who cuts off the cord. And he says, your sins are forgiven.

You're a child of God. You've turned to the Lord. You've come and said you're a sinner.

You deserve nothing but hell. Christ died for you and rose again. You received him.

You're forgiven. You're received. Then the other thing is a child knows the Father.

That's the other blessing you can have. As soon as you're born, you know, the mother and father pick it up. The first thing the child has is a mother and father.

It's wonderful. Security. It's not just helpless out in the world to take care of itself.

You're not just, God hasn't just forgiven your sins. Okay, take care of yourself. No.

He is a father. And you know him as one who rejoices in you. You know, real father.

I don't mean these types of bang their babies head against the wall because they want to watch some TV program. I'm talking about a real father who would sacrifice anything, who would destroy the TV and keep the child. That type of father.

We need that. And who will pick up the child and you know, the gleam in his eyes when he sees his child. That's, God is like that.

I believe there's a gleam in God's eyes when he looks at me. Do you believe that? Or do you say, Oh no, no, no, I am pretty filthy. He can't be looking at me like that.

Maybe for you, but not for me. Rubbish. What is that little baby done for the father that the father should be so excited? You say, because I've done so much for God, he's delighted in me.

Okay, that's different from, you know, you see a grown-up son who's done 101 things for his father. The father's delighted in him. But what is that newborn baby done for the father? Tell me.

As the father looks at this baby, he knows this baby is going to be a nuisance for me for the next 18-20 years. And this baby is going to mess up his diapers at least for the next 2-3 years. And this baby is going to demand, demand, demand, demand.

Now, there's a gleam in his eyes. Do you believe there's a gleam in God's eyes when he looks at you? You must believe that when you're a child. When you're born again, that you've got a father.

The Holy Spirit comes in and says, Daddy! Have you felt that cry in your heart? Looking up to God and saying, Daddy! I'm not an orphan. A lot of orphans in the world, but I'm not one of them. And you're not one of them if you have accepted Christ.

That's the blessing of being a child. Receiving. You can receive, receive, receive.

Everything. The Bible says, Every spiritual blessing in heavenly places is ours in Christ. You know, think of a child who's born to a billionaire.

As soon as he's born, the billions are, he's an inheritor of all those billions. If the father and mother die the next day, you know who will get those billions? That one day old baby. That's how we are when we are born again.

I become an inheritor to all of God's wealth. I mean, you understand for your children. It's true.

If you're really a child of God, that's true. As far as God and you are concerned too. Every spiritual blessing is yours.

Then we go on from there. Before we become fathers, there's this intermediate stage. And that's why people never become fathers.

That's what I want to tell you. And this intermediate stage is where you allow the word of God to abide in you. Verse 14, last part.

God's word gets deep inside you and you overcome Satan. You know, if you don't get past this, you'll never be a father. And I think that's the reason why some people never become fathers.

You know, when it's a baby, when you're a baby, it's so easy. You don't even have to chew the food. Isn't that wonderful? Everything is mashed up.

You don't even have to 3-4 months old and you just swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow. Even if you have one or two teeth, mummy still mashes up everything. You just swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow, swallow.

You never have to bite anything and chew anything. Just drink and drink and drink and swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow. You know, it's like people who come to the meetings here and swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow everything they hear.

They don't reject it. They like it. They say, well, that was a great message.

you know the money that is nice tasting food I'm coming again next Sunday for some more nice tasting food swallow swallow swallow swallow I said do you ever take the Bible and try to choose some of that yourself and eat it no no no I like coming to CFC where I can swallow and swallow and swallow and swallow well you'll never grow up that way you need to get some teeth or you have got some teeth but you're too lazy to chew think of people have been in this church so many years and they've never got up here and said one thing that they got directly from God's Word till today oh they will do every single thing to arrange things for the conference sweep the floor do this this isn't work day and night but spiritually babies I told you you can be 80 years old physically and spiritually

a baby why is it because God doesn't give no it's because we're lazy it's because we don't get to God's Word young men what does it say the Word of God abides in you and you overcome Satan you know why you can't overcome Satan because you don't have the Word of God abiding in you Jesus had all of God's Word abiding in him by the time he was 12 and later on 18 years later when he was tempted by the devil he took out one word and said it's written another temptation he says it's written another word and then another temptation to God is written that's just three examples you can take 300,000 times when the devil came to Jesus he'd have taken out 300,000 verses written sorry end of temptation well we get tempted by the devil with this that and the other and we don't have any word in our in

our heart because the Word of God is not abiding in us do you know the difference between abiding in a home and visiting a home can you think of that can you think of homes where you abide that is where you live and where you visit I want to ask you does the Word of God visit you or live in you which is it I mean right now the Word of God is visiting you is it going to live in you that's another thing here it says the Word of God lives in you that means you've made your home the home for God's Word say hey God's Word this is your home you're going to live here not just visit an hour on Sunday morning and say bye see you next Sunday that's how many people are God's Word oh yeah they never tell God's Word not to come in God's Word knocks at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning but I hope you go

away at 1130 also we're not expecting you to stay here forever then we'll never be strong so that's the thing to overcome to overcome God's Word in us and Satan comes and tempts us and we stand against Satan and we overcome you know you can be an overcomer you are strong because the Word of God lives in you you allow it to come you allow it to live there you don't forget it by next week you meditate on it you hear something on Sunday morning and you go back and you think about it you meditate on it you read God's Word you meditate on it it becomes your part of your life it's in your it's your home it's the world God's Word is found a home in your heart David said that in Psalm 119 thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you it's the same principle Psalm 119 I

think it's verse 9 or 11 God's Word have I hid in my heart that I'm not sin against God I can overcome Satan not only overcome sin but overcome Satan too and if I allow that to happen regularly regularly because I'm tempted by the devil and the lust every day we need God's Word all the time then I can move on to this third stage of being a blessing because I've dealt with all this satanic problems that I'm get attacked with and I know everybody around me is being attacked by the same old devil now I can be a father and the father is one who sacrifices and gives for others what's he gonna get in return nothing he's just gonna give and give and give and give and give he's not thinking of what he's gonna get in return he doesn't want anything in return he just wants to bless the

others have you come to that stage in your life brother sister spiritually where God's Word first of all given you forgiveness of sins then given you strength to overcome Satan now it's me is making you a blessing to

others more and more and more and more because your life is always thinking your mind is always thinking now how can I share this with somebody else how can I make a blessing how can I be a blessing to somebody else and I'll tell you something it doesn't always start with God's Word Bible says Elisha you know how he started out his life by pouring water for Elijah to wash his hands for many years he was known as a man who pours water for Elijah to wash his hands after he's eaten his food imagine getting it being known like that that brother what does he do where he pours

water for Elijah to wash his hands after he eats his meal I'm sure none of you would want to be known like that that's all you accomplished in life but that's how he started did you know he what he became he became one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament so when you think of don't think of starting off by giving advice to others leave that till later start off by doing something practical to help them something practical something physical something material to bless them if somebody's sick go and take some food for them that's practical much better than giving advice you don't believe me go and ask those people it's true when you think about hey is there somebody who has a need is there somebody perhaps whom I can help put their children through school or college somebody

helped me when I was you think like that somebody help me with money to help my children go to school and college now it's my turn to bless others do you ever think like that or such thoughts never come to your mind think think think think think and don't ever say I've done enough is there any father who says oh mother I've done enough for my children now no you keep on doing they get married and you still got to do things for them that's how good father and mother are where you a true father and mother never think in terms of their own inconvenience of their own comfort no they're always thinking how can I bless them even the children have grandchildren you think your blessing is a true father and mother is like that they're not thinking of their own game and imagine if you had a church

full of such people by what a church this would be everybody was thinking and I don't want to just go around giving advice to people let me bless people start with what is material first let me start like that and help someone somewhere somewhere someone physically in some practical way or give a little gift to a little child I tell you they won't forget you for the next 50 years because they'd be so surprised so there's a lot of things we can do to gradually become a spiritual father but we got to use our mind to think in terms of others Lord I don't want to remain a child I want to grow up to be a young man strong overcomer in my life and I want to move on from there even if I'm only 17 18 years old I'm going to be a spiritual father and mother don't I don't want to call myself like

that because that can make us proud that's going to be a God will make me that and that's the wonderful thing about Abraham's blessing God says I will do it okay shall we close with this one verse in Ezekiel which we saw the other day it's a great verse Ezekiel 36 it's only the second time I'm saying it I got to say it eight more times but we get it okay Ezekiel 36 the Lord says I will put my verse 27 I'll put my spirit within you and I'll you'll be careful I'll cause you to walk in my statutes that's in our own life and then I will multiply verse 30 the fruit of the tree and produce the field and so on you'll be a blessing wherever you go and I will verse 33 I'll cause the cities to be inhabited the way spaces we rebuilt etc the desolate land will be cultivated in other words you're a

blessing this desolate land of your life verse 33 will become like the Garden of Eden praise God but first 37 that's the verse I wanted to come to I won't do it till you ask me to do it for you I won't do it till you ask me to do it for you let's ask I'm waiting for them to ask me that there oh and I will increase their men like a flock I have asked the Lord for many many years Lord bless me make me a blessing do it do it from today

and say Lord I'll I'll tell you I will not make you keep you waiting outside any door of my heart or even one moment let you in immediately you can come and rule every area of my life I want light in every area of my life let's pray spar heads before God I believe God spoken to your heart this morning and I want to encourage you my dear brother sister please

respond to what you have heard and that one particular door where Jesus is knocking right now say Lord Jesus come in whether it's forgiveness of sins whether it's saying Lord I want to let God's word live in my heart from now on whether it is Lord I want to think a little more unselfishly in terms of the need of others around me who have less than what I have spiritually or any other way materially physically Lord don't just bless me make me a blessing I can't do it but you can do it do it in my life I'm open Lord whatever the cost to me whatever the cost in terms of money inconvenience time energy anything I'm determined and I'll tell you something you'll be a much healthier person if you allow God to make a blessing to others your preoccupation with yourself is what makes you so sick

even physically think a little more of others and you'll be healed of many of your sicknesses as well Heavenly Father I pray that you will apply the word to our hearts fulfill your promises for every one of us pour out your Holy Spirit upon us that it is these words will be true in our life and help us to grow up in Jesus name

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17131.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/three-stages-of-spiritual-growth/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**