

# Young People, Accept God's Training

by Zac Poonen

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*The Christian life requires preparation, self-discipline, and a willingness to overcome desires in order to achieve spiritual maturity and make progress in our faith.*

**Duration:** 59:47

**Scripture:** Genesis 39:9, Hebrews 11:24

**Topics:** "Faithfulness And Discipline", "Spiritual Maturity"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making hard decisions and taking the path of faithfulness and discipline in various spheres of life. Drawing examples from biblical figures like Joseph, Moses, and David, the speaker encourages young people to reject the allure of worldly honor, sinful pleasures, and wealth, and instead choose the path of serving God wholeheartedly. The message underscores the significance of standing firm in faith, making sacrifices, and being disciplined in order to fulfill God's plan for their lives.

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## Transcript

In every sphere where young people participate, they know that there's a lot of preparation required if they want to accomplish anything. For example, if you want to get a good job, you start from kindergarten and spend, maybe from the age of five to the age of nearly 25, 20 years studying all types of things before you get a good job. And you're willing to go through that.

There are people who drop out after they finish 10th standard. Most of you didn't drop out. And those who drop out, you know that they don't get such good jobs.

The same way in the athletic field, people who win the marathon or 100 meters or long jump or anything in athletics, they practice for years. If there's an Olympics coming, for four years they'll be practicing and only that one event, because they want to get the gold medal. So, in every sphere it's like that.

For the people who go to play basketball or soccer, the great stars that you read of in the papers, they're all people who have spent hours and hours and hours in secret preparing, preparing, preparing. And then out there they go and play and they accomplish something. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, 1 Corinthians 9 and verse 24 onwards, he says, don't you know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize.

Run in such a way that you may win. Now, whenever you read Paul's letters, you must ask yourself to whom is he writing? And this particular letter, 1 Corinthians, was written to the most carnal bunch of baby Christians there were among all the churches to whom he wrote in the New Testament. That means they were so immature.

You read in 1 Corinthians 3, he says, I can't even speak to you like grown-up Christians. You're all babies. And he tells them, you guys should take your Christian life more seriously.

Think of those people who run in a sport. Only one receives the prize. And that guy wants, he doesn't want a silver medal.

He wants the gold medal. You know, a person who's really serious is not happy with even a silver medal. He wants the gold.

I mean, some people would think it's a great honor just to represent your country in the Olympics, even one of the heats. But a person who's serious says, I'm not interested in just representing the country or participating in the heats. I want the gold medal.

And they work hard at it. And so, but he says, you can run, even though you're so many Christians in Corinth, every one of you can get the first prize. That's the point of that verse.

There, only one receives the prize. But all of you can run, and all of you can come first. But your attitude must be, I want to take the Christian life as seriously as that marathon runner.

Every day he gets up and runs and runs and runs and runs for four years. That's how he wins the prize. You see him standing up on that pedestal as the first prize winner.

And you don't realize that behind that is years of sacrifice and self-denial. And he wouldn't eat all types of food that would increase his weight. He would go to the gym and build up his muscle.

He would run. For what? He says, just to get, in those days, it was a olive wreath. Nowadays, it's a gold medal.

And he says, we, we are going to get something that's imperishable, far more important than an Olympic gold medal. I don't know whether all of you believe that. That there's something far better than an Olympic gold medal that we can get.

If we win this race, if we run in a way that we will win. And all of us can win. That's the great news in verse 24.

In those games, only one person wins. But here, all of us can get a gold medal. And they exercise self-control in all things.

Verse 25. You think that marathon runner or that hundred meters sprinter doesn't like chocolates and ice cream? He'd like to have it every day. I don't think I've ever met a human being who doesn't like chocolates and ice cream.

But he knows that if he keeps eating that, he'll be so heavy that he'll never win the prize. So even though he's drawn to it and everybody else is gobbling it up, he says no. Because he says, I've got a goal.

Those guys don't have a goal. They just want to enjoy themselves. I want to win a prize.

And I wonder whether you young people live like that, in the midst of a world where everybody just wants to enjoy themselves. They don't have any sense of purpose. The Christian life is a race in which you can win.

And Paul says at the end of his life, in 2 Timothy 4, 7, I have finished the race. He says, now there's a crown waiting for me. So how did he get it? He says, run, verse 26, in such a way, not without aim.

See, there must be an aim. The hundred meters runner's got that finishing line in front of him. The marathon runner follows the route.

He doesn't wander here and there. Even a glass of water they're drinking on the run. They don't stop to drink a glass of water, these marathon runners.

They're always, their aim, I've got to get to the finish line. And so he says, I also am running, not without aim. I discipline, verse 27, my body and make it my slave.

The Living Bible paraphrases that in a very beautiful way. It says, I make my body do what it should do, not what it wants to do. My body wants to do a lot of things.

But I tell my body, you're not going to do that. I'm the boss here. If you look at your life, many of you young people, you may discover you're not the boss in your body.

Your body is the boss. Telling you what it wants. You say, okay sir, I'll do that.

Then another day it says, I want this. You know it's not good for you. You say, okay sir, I'll do it.

You're not the boss in your body. You think you are, but you're not. Your body is your boss.

Telling you what to do. Even when you know it's not good for the body, you still do it. If a father allowed his child to do whatever they want, he'd have a messed up child when the child grows up.

That's why parents don't allow their children to do whatever they want. We know that very well. If you allow your body to do whatever it wants, it'll be like that messed up child when it grows up.

And over a period of time, you'll have no control over your body. You'll become an undisciplined and pretty useless Christian. Paul says, even though he's such an apostle and called by God, he says that doesn't make a difference.

I may be called, I may be gifted, but if I don't discipline my body and make it my slave, in other words, I have to decide who's the boss. Is my body my slave? Or I am the slave of my body. If there's work to be done and my body says go to sleep, I say, no, you're not going to go to sleep.

You got to finish this. And if you're careless in things like that, for example, you know that you should spend time reading the scriptures. And I'll tell you from my own experience.

I got married when I was 28 and a half. And once you get married and you have children, it's almost impossible to spend a lot of time studying the Bible. Unless you're a useless husband and just leaves all the job to your wife.

You can't be that. So the best time to get to know the scriptures, if you want to be useful to God later on, is when you're young, boy or girl. Afterwards, you won't get time.

And I'll tell you honestly, most of the scriptures that come to my mind when I speak or when I counsel people is what I studied between the ages of 19 and a half and 28 and a half. Nine years I was single after I was born again. And those are the years I saturated myself in studying God's word.

All my spare time, I'd carry a little pocket New Testament, stand in the bus stop and read it. Sit in the bus, everybody's looking around here and there, I'd read the Bible. That's how I got to know it.

God rewards hard work. The Lord told Adam, by the sweat of your brow, you can eat your bread. Same way, you can apply that to get the bread from the Bible.

You have to sweat, you have to work hard. God never rewards lazy people. You can sit in CFC and acquire a lot of knowledge.

I mean, you hear so many things from the pulpit here that you probably know in your mind much more about biblical things than perhaps all other young people your age in Bangalore or even in India. But that doesn't mean you know the Bible. You're hearing things.

Why do they have chemistry in the class and in the laboratory? Physics in the class, in a physics lab, where you experiment. If you only study in the class, you won't really understand chemistry or physics. So the Christian life also, just an academic study, you will not, it's like learning swimming on a blackboard.

So mere knowledge of scripture from hearing in the pulpit is not as great as reading it yourself. So tell your body, I've got to study the scriptures and I'm not going to let you do things that's going to hinder me from that time. And the other way you can waste time is by a lot of useless gossiping.

There is a place for fellowship and I believe it's a wonderful thing when I see young people of CFC, brothers mingling with each other and sisters meeting together. But if you're talking about spiritual things, that's great. You can talk about a few secular things also, that's all right.

But don't let that become so, take so much of your time that you don't have time for God. If fellowship with other like-minded believers becomes more important than fellowship with God, you are not going to be ready for the work God has for you in your life. So make your body do what it should do.

And there are so many passions in our body when we are young and I had the same passions like you. But I found that studying the scriptures and kneeling down and praying in my room, on my bed and seeking God and being active in some type of Christian work and fellowshiping with other believers protected me from so many temptations when I was a young man. And that has saved me from so much regret that I would have had if I had played the fool in my younger days.

Be very careful in your relationship with the opposite sex. Very careful. Because we live in a world where everybody thinks it's okay.

A boy and a girl are like two magnets in the opposite polarity. It's very difficult for them to come close and not touch. I used to try that experiment in physics lab.

See how close can I bring these two magnets without touching it? Invariably they'd touch. If you keep it at a distance, they won't touch. But once you get a little close, those magnets tend to pull.

Boy-girl relationships are like that. North and South Pole. Very dangerous because once you touch, you don't know what's going to be the next step and a girl has got more to lose than a boy.

A boy also loses, spiritually. But a girl can lose things physically too, which is very dangerous. You've got to be very careful.

So you've got to discipline your body and there are a lot of things you may like and you may be drawn to someone. Be careful. Keep those desires under control until the time comes to consider marriage.

Otherwise, you can be forgiven. But you will live with lifelong regret. Even though you're forgiven.

Do you want that? Do you want to be just forgiven and live all your life with regret? Oh, I was so careless. Just once. There are many, many people living with that regret today.

You can be saved from that. If you're just a little careful. And it's just a matter of a moment and a lifelong regret.

So be very careful. Why has God allowed these passions in our body to start when we are 13 years old? When God knows that we are not going to get married until we are 28, perhaps 15 years. We have these sexual passions rising up, being attracted to somebody in the opposite sex.

That's because God wants you to overcome it before you get married. If those desires started rising up in you only when you're 28, you'd never conquer it. But God gives you 15 years to battle it and conquer it before you get married.

You'll have a wonderful marriage if you've conquered it before you get married. So don't give up on that battle. No matter how many times you fall, get up, get up and say, I am determined.

Nobody wins without falling. You'll fall. It's like learning to ride a bicycle.

There's nobody in the world who's ridden a bicycle, learned to ride a bicycle without falling. There's nobody in the world who's learned how to swim without fearing he may drown, going under and coming up. Everything we learn, nobody's learned mathematics without making mistakes, even multiplication.

When you first learned it, you made mistakes. But you didn't get discouraged. If you got discouraged, you wouldn't be where you are today.

Everything in life, a child learns to walk by falling. So don't get discouraged because you fell. Get up and run again.

Get up and get up and get up. And like that child learns to walk, you'll be an overcomer too. But you have to recognize, to give importance to the desires of your body to make it your slave.

Otherwise, Paul says here in verse 27, even though I'm a preacher, I can preach to others and the final day, I'll be disqualified. You know, like these Olympic races, you come and you breast the tape first and then it's discovered that you crossed over into the other lane somewhere when you were running. Sorry, you're disqualified and somebody else gets the medal.

Even though you came first, because you didn't keep the rules along the way. You cut into a lane or didn't stay in your lane or something like that. So Paul says, I can finish wonderfully in the eyes of people.

Everybody thinks I came first. God says disqualified because you didn't keep your bodily passions under control. So keep that in mind.

And when we are young, God allows us. God will train us. The book of Lamentations.

Do you know where Lamentations is? It's just after the book of Hezekiah. Have you found it? Did you find Hezekiah? Lamentations chapter 3. It's after Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 3. Sorry, Lamentations chapter 3. You must know the books of the Bible by now.

If you've been in CFC for one year and you don't know the books of the Bible, you go home and hang your head in shame and say, Lord, I'm thoroughly ashamed. I don't even know the books of the Bible, where they are, and I'm in CFC for one year. There are young children who are taught to read, to know the books of the Bible.

To know where to find the books of the Bible. So you should know it. Lamentations chapter 3, verse 27.

It's good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Or as the Message Bible paraphrases it, it's a good thing when you're young to stick it out through the hard times. Stick it out through the hard times and don't run from trouble.

Verse 30. Take it full face. The worst is never the worst.

Why? Verse 31. Because the Master will never walk out on you and fail to return. If He works severely with you, Verse 33.

He also works tenderly. Verse 32. His stockpiles of loyal love are immense.

He takes no pleasure in making life hard, in throwing roadblocks in the way. So let me read that whole section to you in the Message translation. I'll start from verse 25.

God proves to be good to the young man who passionately waits for Him. To the young woman who diligently seeks Him. It's a good thing to quietly hope for help from God always.

It's a good thing when you're young to stick it out through the hard times that come in your life. Because that prepares you for the future. When life is heavy, are you finding that? And hard to take? Go off by yourself and enter the silence of God.

Get alone with God. Bow in prayer. Don't ask any questions.

Just wait for hope to appear from God. Don't run away from trouble. Take it full face.

Because what you think is the worst is not the worst. Because the Master will never walk out on you without returning. If God works severely, He also works tenderly.

He's got stockpiles of loyal love for you which are immense. Remember, God doesn't take any pleasure in making life hard for you. He'll never throw roadblocks in your way.

Everything is to prepare you for the future. See, if you've seen anything of military training, it's really tough. They make you run so much and climb so much and crawl so much and they make you tough because you're going to fight in a war, in a battlefield where you don't have comforts.

And Christian training is like that. It's like a military training where it'll make a man out of you. So, God allows you to go through tough times to make you a spiritual man.

And those tough times may be that older people misunderstand you. Maybe people tell false stories about you. And you get all upset and disturbed.

You have failed. Get up. And next time it happens, pass the test and say praise the Lord.

They said bad things about Jesus too. It doesn't matter. So, it's good for a young man to be under the yoke.

God's discipline. Can you tell me the names of the first three kings of Israel? Who was the first one? Saul. Second one? David.

Third? Okay. Out of these three, who ended up bad? Saul and? Solomon. And David was called a man after? God's own.

Why was there a difference? Can you think of a reason why David turned out different even though all of them lived to about 70 years of age? And I think all of them became kings around the age of 30. Or Solomon a little younger than that. But why did David turn out different? I'll tell you.

Because he had a rough time in his youth. If you read in 1 Samuel 9, you read that Saul grew up in a very rich home. His father was a wealthy man.

I want to tell you, don't envy young people who grew up in wealthy homes. Whose parents can afford to give them everything they want. That's the way to ruin young people.

You're very fortunate if you grew up in a poor home and you had to struggle. Even in the world, they recognize that through struggle. People who come up through struggle are the ones who accomplish great things, even in the world.

And it's certainly true in the Christian life. Because, particularly in our younger days, we've gone through struggle and difficulty and we can't afford to get all the things other rich people can get. Don't feel jealous of them.

You're luckier than them. Wait 20 years and see what their condition will be, what your condition will be. If you take it properly.

But if you spend your life complaining, you'll be worse than them. So if you happen to grow up in a rich home and your parents are foolish enough to give you everything you want, you've got to discipline yourself and have more wisdom than your parents. So that you control yourself and discipline yourself.

You know, I was working in the Navy and we used to get a huge salary as a naval officer. But I would discipline myself in what I would spend on myself. I said, I don't need so many clothes.

Why do I need so many clothes? I just have a few two or three pants and shirts and wash them and minimum required, whatever it is. I'm not making a number here. I'd always keep it to a minimum.

Why should I waste money on so many fancy clothes? If I went out to eat somewhere, I'd find some cheap restaurant. I'd never go to an expensive restaurant, even though I could afford it. Because I say, if I save a

little money there, I can give it to God's work.

That's what I did. In my entire time in the Navy, I never went to an expensive restaurant. I'd find some clean place, but inexpensive.

These are little things. God notices it. I mean, I didn't do that to hoard up money for myself.

I say, I can give some poor people, maybe buy a Bible for somebody. I would buy Bibles for lots of people and give it to those who couldn't afford it and give money to poor people, poor brothers and God's work. You see, many of you young people earn so much money, you don't realize it can destroy you.

It can, if you're not disciplined. And the same way if you have, if you're indisciplined in the way you spend time and you think that God's giving you money so you can spend it all on yourself. Learn to be disciplined and careful.

And you sisters also, if you learn to be disciplined now when you get married and you don't earn much, it'll be very easy. I'm very thankful that I married a wife who grew up in relative poverty and so it was easy for her to live with me in the days when we had very little, which is the early days of our marriage. There was no difficulty there.

We could live with very little. And then later on, I mean, today we are fairly well off, but we still live in a simple way at home. We don't waste unnecessarily.

It's very good to learn disciplined habits when you're young. It'll help you all through your life. I'll tell you.

And it's the ones who've learned discipline whom God can do something with. It says if you're faithful in little things, God will entrust much to you. But if you're unfaithful in the small little things of life, God will not entrust much to you.

So David grew up in difficulty. Saul grew up in wealthy homes. Solomon grew up in the palace.

And the end result was terrible for both of them. But David, he was a poor man's son. And even after he was anointed king, for 10 years, he had to be on the run because Saul was out to kill him.

He was in caves. I don't know where he got his food from. He'd hide in one cave and run to another cave and always, once he had to act as if he was mad to save his life.

You read these stories in 1 Samuel. One of his enemies caught him and they said, hey, this is the guy who killed Goliath. And he acted like a madman.

And the king said, this guy's mad. Get rid of him. That's how he escaped.

Imagine a chap who went through all this in his younger days. Finally he became king. And he did so well.

From the age of 30 to the age of 50. Wonderful king. But when he became 50 years old, he said, now I can relax.

We read in 2 Samuel, the time when kings went to battle, chapter 11, he stayed at home. And he was sleeping in the afternoon. And when he got up from bed, at least he should have knelt down and prayed.

No, he didn't. He walked out on the terrace and looked at some woman bathing on the other side and he fell into sin that messed up his life. One event, it came because he relaxed.

The time when every king went to battle, he told Joab, I'm taking a vacation now. You go. That was his downfall.

If that one day he had gone to battle, instead of staying at home, you'd never have heard of David and Bathsheba. That story. You know, sometimes all it takes is one day that you take one decision.

And that's your whole life thereafter is ruined or messed up. God can forgive you. Did God forgive David? Of course he did.

God forgives everybody. But you still messed up your life. And his children suffered because of that.

He killed Bathsheba's husband. His one son murdered another son of his. But all, you know, we reap what we sow, even when God forgives us.

God can forgive us completely, but we will still reap what we have sown. For example, you watch dirty pornographic pictures when you're young. And you watch them secretly, whatever it is, and it goes into your mind.

And you know, sexual images stay in your mind forever. The things that you study in college, you forget. You wonder why.

Why is it in examination time I can't remember? Where does that sexual image stay? Because there's something within you that's drawn to those images. There's nothing within you that's drawn to physics and biology and all that. So we've got to be careful about those things that our body has got a desire for.

And those dreams will haunt you for years. That's why you've got to be careful. You can't do anything about the past where you've ruined your mind.

But be careful in the future that you don't put more rubbish into your mind, because it'll be there. I'll tell you something about memory. What you put into your memory, you can never take out.

What you put into your stomach will be washed out. Even poison can be washed out. But know this one thing about memory.

What you put into your memory can never be removed. You say then, why don't I remember people's names and why don't I understand certain physics problems I studied in school? I'll tell you, because you don't have much interest in them. And those things have sunk to the bottom of your memory and it's very difficult to pull it out.

But things that concern sex and money, those things are very attractive to us and they are uppermost in our mind always. You know, like oil. You see the oil floating in a curry, which is where you use a lot of oil.

You see the oil floating on top. It's like that. It's things that are in the uppermost part of our memory that quickly come out in our dreams and make us think about it frequently.

There are certain things which you are attracted to in our life we are drawn to. You've got to be very careful about putting things like that into your memory. Sinful things I mean.

So allow God to take you through difficult times in your younger days. Submitting to parents when you're living at home can be a very difficult thing. It's not easy because the Bible says we've got to honor our parents.

At the same time, we've got to be disciples and not some of you are from non-Christian homes. I realize it's extremely difficult for you. I've never known that and I really appreciate believers in our church who come from non-Christian homes.

I remember once visiting a non-Christian home, a strongly Hindu home. The place was full of idols and religious music and such an oppressive atmosphere. I said, boy this is what some of our young believers have to face who live in such homes.

It really made me appreciate that. But well, you have to fight a greater battle. That greater battle will make you stronger than the Christian who lives in a home where they're singing hymns all the time.

You'll turn out stronger because you're battling all the time at home as well. So don't think that's a handicap. The people who go through the tough times, they come out as stronger Christians.

I've seen that. People have personally made a decision to come to Christ and their parents were non-Christians. They turn out very often to be stronger Christians than many whose parents were believers.

Unless those parents really brought them up well. So don't be discouraged if your home situation is tough. That'll make you a stronger Christian.

And always speak respectfully to your parents, especially when you have to disagree with them. Whenever you have to disagree with your parents, first of all let your introduction be, Dad, Mom, I love you so much. I really appreciate all that you've done for me from the time I was a baby.

Don't think I'm ungrateful. I wouldn't be alive today if you didn't take care of me. Times when I was sick as a baby, you took care of me.

Say that to them so that they know that you really value them. And then say, but Dad, this thing you're asking me to do is against my conscience. Please don't ask me to bow down to this idol.

Please don't ask me to marry this unbeliever. Please. I love you and respect you.

It hurts me to say no to you, but I have to say it. Because even you will acknowledge that God is above you. And I understand that God telling me that I must marry someone of like mind.

Otherwise my life will be unhappy. So when your parents encourage you to marry someone who is not really a godly person, you ask them, Dad, Mom, do you want me to be unhappy all my life? I will be. If I marry someone who's going that way and I want to go this way.

So, don't you want me to be happy? So that's why I say I want to marry someone who's of the same mind. You got to be very careful. I've seen people who are in CFC and who just went off to please their parents and I don't know where they are today.

But God will help you. Remember God is on your side to help you stand firm. We don't have to fall like David.

We don't have to be faithful for 20 years and then fall. We can be faithful to the end of our life. That's a wonderful thing about the New Testament.

Paul didn't start off and fall halfway through. He was a single man. He was probably about 30 years old when he was converted.

What are the sexual passions in a young 30 year old? And he was never married. He died when he was 67 or so. 37 years through all the rough times of youth.

He had the same passions that you and I have. He fought it, fought it, fought it and fought a good fight he says at the end of his life. I fought a good fight and I'm sure part of that fight was with sexual temptation.

He said I finished my course. I fought a fight. It wasn't easy for me but he says now there's a crown waiting for me.

Turn to that verse and you should be able to say that at the end of your life. 2nd Timothy 4. 2nd Timothy chapter 4 and verse 6 he says the time of my departure has come. Verse 7 I have fought a good fight.

I have finished the course. This is the only race worth running. And I've run hard right up to the finish and I've kept my faith.

Now what's left? A crown of righteousness which the Lord will give me in that day. He knew that he was not disqualified. He had kept the rules and he finished but it was with a fight.

It was a fight and a race. The Christian life is like a battle and like a race and you should be able to say at the end of your life I fought a good fight. Maybe in the past so far you haven't fought a good fight.

You're relaxed. Maybe you haven't taken the race seriously. You haven't trained for the race.

But you're going to do it from today. Right? I'm going to say I'm going to fight a good fight from today. I'm going to really take this race seriously.

I'm going to train. I'm training for the marathon. I'm going to discipline myself.

Not read stuff that's going to pollute my mind. Not look at stuff on the computer that's going to pollute my mind or on my phone. I'm going to keep my mind pure for the Lord.

Just like you won't put sand into your petrol tank of your scooter or car. Would you do that? Put some sand in and then wonder why the engine is always messed up. When you put pornographic images into your mind it's like putting sand into your petrol tank.

Well, if you have problems then you've got to clean it out. It's easy to clean out a petrol tank but you cannot clean out your memory. It'll be there forever.

The only thing you can do is make those thoughts sink right to the bottom and put better thoughts on top. Thoughts of God's word. Meditation on God's word.

Then those other thoughts will sink to the bottom and they won't trouble you so much because there are many other thoughts pressing them down. Don't let them come up again by occasionally again going and looking at something dirty. Fight a good fight and finish the course.

Think of this wonderful young man called Joseph. You know the story. There's no need to look at it.

You read in Genesis 39. He was far away from his parents. In a far country.

No Bible. No fellowship. No Holy Spirit.

No church. Nobody to preach to him. He could sin as much as he liked in the most wicked place on earth.

And then tempted by a woman trying to attract him. You know what he told her? You should be able to say that. Genesis 39.

It says she pestered him day after day. Potiphar's wife. But he said in verse 9. Genesis 39.9 How can I violate the trust of your husband? And how can I sin against God? How can I do this great evil? Imagine a young man probably around 20 years old.

The passions of youth. Nobody to catch him. He can sin secretly.

Have you been in situations like that? Where you went out with a boy or went out with a girl. And you could do what you wanted. Maybe just a little bit.

Here was a young man. He said no. He didn't have the understanding you get in CFC.

That teaches us, you don't need all the CFC understanding and messages to be kept from sin. You just need to fear God. If you don't fear God, all the knowledge of CFC will not help you to stay away from sin.

A little bit of fear of God is better than all this Bible knowledge. What did he have? No knowledge of the Bible. There was no Bible those days.

But he feared God. The little bit he learned about God from his father Jacob by the time he was 17 when he left home. And that kept him.

And day after day it says in verse 10, he would not listen to her, not just once. Again she said, come, come. He said no.

Again, no. And because he stood for the Lord, they accused him falsely and put him in jail. He said, fine.

For 10 years, he went through a rough time in the jail, but God had his eye on him. Do you think if God sees somewhere in the world some young man who nobody knows about standing for him saying, I will not sin, I want to fear God. Maybe he's an unknown poor young brother somewhere, but he's faithful.

God has his eyes on him. There's a young fellow who's absolutely true to me. I tell you, God will have great plans for that person.

Nobody will be able to suppress him. One day God will raise him up and accomplish great things through him, just like he did with Joseph. You must be one of those young men and women whom God sees in secret, faithful, unlike some of your friends.

You'll go through rough times. You'll be falsely accused. Joseph was falsely accused.

It was all part of his education. I've been falsely accused in so many areas. I was taken to court for 10 years by religious people.

It was part of my education. It all made me a better man, and trials will make you a better man too. The early years of our marriage, we went through so much financial difficulty.

I could not even rent a house. I didn't have money for rent because my income had gone down 85% when I left my job. I had to just live in one small room of my parents' house.

It wasn't easy. We struggled for two, three years. We struggled, struggled.

It was good for us. Never bought any new clothes. Even for our little son, we sometimes didn't have enough money to buy milk powder.

It was all good for us. Very good. We didn't know what the future lay ahead of us.

But it was good. The Lord was testing. In this struggle will you be faithful? And there were temptations.

Like, I got a scholarship to go for a free three-year Bible course in Canada. I said no. God has not called me to go to Bible school.

There was an organization here called FEBA, 1972. It was 40 years ago. They said, come, join us.

We'll make you a director. Free car, free telephone, free house. I said no.

God has not called me to sit behind a desk and raise money. I'm called to preach the word. Now when I look back, I can see God was testing me.

Will you go the way I called you or will you choose the easy path of money and comfort? You will also face it in different ways. Make the right choices. You know, when I look back on my life, I can say that it was a life full of many, many forks.

You know what a fork in the road is? You come and then you find a fork. One going this way, one going that way. Very important which one you take.

And you take the right one, you come to another fork. And you go further along the right path, another fork. And another fork.

And I can see that my whole life was just a number of forks in the road. And boy, am I thankful that I took the right ones. So you'll come to forks in the road where you can choose your own way, which is easy.

So all other believers will tell you, hey, why don't you go? It's alright, everybody does it. Or the more difficult path. The way that what Jesus would do.

And it may be difficult, it's a lonely path, but one day when you look back, you will see that that made all the difference in your life compared to the others who may have more money, more comfort, but will have more regrets in eternity as well. So learn from the scriptures. These young men like David, Joseph, Moses.

He was a little boy when he went to Pharaoh's palace. But he came out at the age of 40, rejecting three things. Turn to Hebrews in chapter 11.

Hebrews 11. When Moses was grown up, verse 24, Hebrews 11, 24. When Moses was grown up, there were three things he refused.

Number one, he refused the honor of the world. To be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Egypt was the world's superpower those days. And to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter was about the greatest honor you could get.

He said, no, I'm not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, I'm an Israelite. I'm from that slave community. Which king would want to acknowledge that I've come from a slave community? You know, in India, how people are so concerned about their caste.

I'm not from that low caste. I'm from a high caste. It's not only among Hindus.

It's among Christians in Kerala. Kerala's full of it. Which family are you from? And there are some family names that are big, well respected family names in Kerala.

They like to boast about it. And they know I'm a Malayali, so they ask me, which family name are you from? He said, I'm from Eden. My ancestor got thrown out from there.

And that's where I belong. But Jesus saved me. Sinner saved by grace.

Yeah. Be careful that he rejected the honor of this world. Secondly, he rejected the pleasures of sin, verse 25.

This is the one verse in the Bible which says there is pleasure in sin. But it also says it's a passing pleasure. Think of the pleasures of sin that you have had.

Any pleasure of sin that you have had in your past life. Has it lasted more than five minutes? Not even five minutes. Whatever pleasure of sin you had, think back.

You enjoyed it for a little while. It's gone. It's a passing pleasure, and that's why the devil fools you.

He tells you it's permanent. It's not permanent. It's a passing pleasure.

Regret is permanent. The pleasure is only temporary. Isn't that true today? You got years of regret.

The pleasure you got was just a few minutes. Moses recognized that, and you must recognize it too. The third thing he rejected was the wealth of the world, verse 26, the treasures of Egypt.

There's nothing wrong with being wealthy if you earned it honestly, without telling lies, without cheating, and using the abilities God gave you. God bless you. I hope you will earn a lot.

I always say that if you have a choice between a low-paid job and a high-paid job, choose the high-paid one if you don't have to sacrifice your conscience. I always encourage people to study as much as you can. Get a PhD if possible, so that you get good jobs.

You can earn a good salary. That's all fine. But don't make money.

You're God. That's the point. Don't, for the sake of the treasures of Egypt, compromise your conscience or do something where you don't have enough time for God now.

Have you heard the story of that businessman? It's probably not a true story, but it's a parable of this businessman who's very active in Christian work in the church. But his business began to prosper, and as the business prospered, he attended less and less meetings in the church till sometimes now on Sunday

also he couldn't come, every Sunday. He would try and come two, three Sundays, and gradually it became two Sundays a month, because business was slow.

Finally, one Sunday a month, one Sunday in two months, he would come to church. And the elders would see him, he says, yeah, I'll come, I'll come, very busy. One day, he had three sons, one day a poisonous snake bit one of his sons.

And the doctor, this is very bad, and the doctor said, I don't have much hope, because the poison has spread all over the body. And then he called for the elder of the church. So the elder was a wise man.

He said, please pray. He said, Lord, thank you for this snake. What I could not do in six months, this snake has accomplished in two minutes.

Made them think about you. Now send two more snakes to bite the other two sons also, and then heal all of them, so that they'll never have to be reminded again about you. It's a parable.

But learn a lesson from it, that don't wait till some calamity hits before you think about God. Don't pursue after wealth to such an extent that the spiritual things in your life get crowded. Moses made a decision, and he had been trained only for a few years by his mother at home, and he remembered it at the age of 40.

I don't want honor in the world. I don't want sin. I don't want money.

I want to live for God. You know, you wonder why Moses became such a great leader. Here's the secret.

You can be one too, brothers and sisters. You sisters, you're like that. God will give you a godly man as your husband one day.

And together you can have a ministry. Not a full-time ministry. I think the days for full-time ministry are over in India.

The best way to serve God today is earning your own living and being active in the work of the Lord where your job is only a means of supporting yourself and your main job is building the church. You have a great inheritance in CFC. I never had it when I was your age.

Nobody got up in a pulpit and taught me the things you heard here for the last years that you've been here. You're very blessed. To whom God has given more, he will expect more.

You can become very spiritual. You have heard things that I began to understand only when I was 35 or 40 years old. And you're understanding it when you're 17 or 20.

But I hope therefore you will overtake me spiritually. Because you're hearing it at an earlier age. But I don't think you will because I'm running very fast.

And I don't know whether you'll catch up with me. I hope you will. I sincerely wish you'll go ahead of me.

But you've got to run pretty fast if you want to go ahead of me, I'll tell you that. Spiritually I run pretty fast. So I want to encourage you to go that way.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Take some decisions while you're bowing before God and say, Lord, I want to take some hard decisions right now.

I can't keep them without your help, Lord. But I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit and help me to remind myself of these decisions tomorrow and every day. To daily remind myself I have to take up the cross.

That's the way all the great men of God and women of God have walked all these years. Daily reminder. This is the way I've got to go.

I'm not going to walk the way of other Christians. God bless you all. Heavenly Father, I think of these wonderful young people here.

Oh, how the devil would like to get them and mess up their lives. Please protect them. Help them to be true.

Help them to know, first of all, that they are your children, that you've got a plan for their lives. Their sins are forgiven and you've accepted them because you want to fulfill a plan for their lives. Help them not to get discouraged when they fall, but to get up like little children get up when they fall and learn to walk.

Please help everyone here, Lord. I want every one of these young men and women to grow up to be men and women of God. And I know that can be true if you're faithful.

Bless them. In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you.

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