

# (Youth Conference 2006) Be Faithful in These Little Matters

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being faithful, self-denial, and thankfulness in our lives, and how these qualities are essential for a Christian lifestyle.*

**Duration:** 57:05

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 2:30, Psalm 139:16, Matthew 19:16-20, Mark 10:17, Mark 10:21

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Spiritual Maturity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the idea that our lives are predetermined by God. He shares a personal anecdote about how he believes angels intervened to protect him on the road. The speaker emphasizes the importance of accepting and embracing the circumstances of our lives, just as Jesus did when he was born in a humble setting. He also discusses the story of the rich young ruler from Mark's Gospel, highlighting the qualities of respect and desire for eternal life that the young man possessed. The speaker encourages young people to show respect to their elders and warns about the temptations of sex.

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## Transcript

There is a very lovely verse which I often think of in relation to young people. It's in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10. I shared this once before at a meeting recently.

It's the story of the rich young ruler. We know that he was a young man and he came to Jesus in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10. Mark 10, 17, as Jesus was setting out on a journey, a young man ran up to him, knelt before him.

This is a very respectful young man. He wasn't one of those who was finding fault with Jesus. He was one who respected Jesus, knelt before him and he wanted to know, verse 17, how to inherit eternal life.

Think of the good qualities this young man had, respect, desire to know eternal life. And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God. You know the commandments, don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't cheat, you must honor your father and mother.

And he said to him, teacher, from my childhood I have kept all these things. How many of you can say that from your childhood you have honored your father and mother? That you have never cheated, never told, bore false witness against others. This was a remarkable young man.

And Jesus didn't say, no, you are telling a lie. Jesus knew he was a very God-fearing young man. And this is the word I want you to notice.

Looking at him, verse 21, Jesus felt a love for him. He loved him. I believe that's how Jesus looks at many of you who have grown up in God-fearing homes, most of you.

He looks at you and he loves you. And he tells you straight to your face, there is still one thing you lack. And in his case, it's because he had a lot of money and he loved it.

And we read here in verse 22, this wonderful young man, who could have become an apostle, who could have become a wonderful servant of God, turned away and went. He was sad. What a foolish decision.

Jesus looked at him and loved him. And he missed what God had for him. As the Lord says things to you this weekend, he looks at you today and loves you.

He is the same yesterday, today and forever. And you can turn away. He won't come after you.

He will let you go. We see here, Jesus didn't say, hey, hey, come back, come back. If you can't give everything straight away, give 10%.

Let's move up to 20% next year. No. If you want to be my disciple, you have to really be radical, wholehearted.

Make me first in your life, more important than your profession, more important than your family, more important than money, more important than everything. And you turn away and say, well, I've got friends, I've got interests, ambitions. The Lord says, okay, go.

He won't force you. He'll just let you go. I don't know where this rich young man is today, whether he finally turned towards the end of his life, perhaps.

Some people say, let me enjoy my younger days and when I'm old, I'll turn. Or perhaps he went to hell, but even if he didn't go to hell and finally repented on his deathbed or something, you go and ask him today, do you regret that decision you made that day? When you turned away and the Lord loved you and offered you something and you turned away and lived so many years for yourself and maybe in the last years of your life you turned. He'd say, boy, I wish I could live my life again.

I wish I could make those decisions again, that foolish man that I was at that time, to listen to what the devil told me, that I turned away from a wonderful opportunity to live my life in a worthwhile way for Christ. You know, we all come to a place, particularly in our younger days, where we choose a certain course. I'm glad the decision I made when I was 20 years old.

I decided that Christ would be everything for me. It doesn't mean I don't have a bank account. It doesn't mean I don't have a family.

I have a house, a family, a bank account, but Christ is first. So it doesn't mean you don't have a job. I have a job.

I support myself. I run a business to support myself. I've done it for 30 years.

You can have a job, you can have a family, you can have a bank account, but if God is first in your life, that's the thing which the Lord sees. Jesus made the same call to Peter. Young man, Peter, John, leave that and follow me.

They left. This man didn't. Think that he could have been an apostle like Peter? We know the names Peter, James, John.

You would have known this fellow's name. But he's a nameless person. One rich young ruler.

We don't even know his name. And in eternity, we won't know his name. He's not going to be great in heaven.

You can be known in heaven for eternity, if you make a choice now. You may be unknown on earth, despised on earth. Usually you will be despised, ridiculed, laughed at.

But what is your desire? To be great in the sight of the Lord? Or great in the sight of your friends? You want to please yourself? Or you want to please the Lord? See, when we are young people, we have certain struggles. And I've often spoken to young people that one of the first things you need to do, all of you, is to learn to accept yourself the way God made you. I believe that's one of the first things, because some people have a difficulty with that when they are young.

They have a wish, I wish God had made me a little different. Maybe a little taller, or a little shorter, or a little fairer, not so dark. Or a little better features, a little more intelligent.

Or perhaps born, you know, some of you may wish, I wish I was born into a richer family than the family I was born into. And there could be all types of questions like this in your mind. Do you believe that God did not make a mistake when He made you? If He made you a boy, that was not a mistake.

If He made you a girl, that was not a mistake. God makes no mistakes. Some of you sisters may wish you were brothers.

God didn't make a mistake. He needs sisters, and that's why He made you. The Bible says He formed you in your mother's womb.

Turn to Psalm 139. Some of you may already know these things, but it's good to hear them again, and many of you are probably hearing it for the first time. Psalm 139.

Lord, verse 13. You formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother's womb, and I will give thanks to you for the way you made me.

It's what David says. God was the one who formed you in your mother's womb, gave you the color of your skin, determined your intelligence, and decided how tall you should be, how short you should be, how fat you should be, how thin you should be. It's all programmed into your genes, and like you can program a computer, God programmed your system.

So you came out of your mother's womb, and you grew up to be tall or short or fat or thin or dark or fair, according to God's programming. And I'll tell you this. You may make a mistake with your computer programming, but God does not make any mistake in the way He programmed you.

He determined everything. You formed me in my mother's womb, and my frame was not hidden from you. I was made in secret.

And not only that. It says here, verse 16. Your eyes saw my unformed substance.

You know, when you were in your mother's womb, you didn't even look like a human being. It was just an unformed substance. And God saw that, and while you were in that unformed state, God wrote a book with your name written on it, verse 16.

And in that book, He wrote that you were to be born on such and such a day, and you were born on that day. And in that book, He saw when you would hear the gospel and be born again. And that's in that book.

And from that time, He determined how long you should live on this earth. All the days that were ordained for me, while yet there was not even one of them. This is before you were born, before your first day on earth.

He wrote a book with your entire life, what He planned for you to be. Now, we may say, well, I made my choices. Yeah, you made your choices, but God's hand was over it all.

For example, I'll tell you my life. I was not really born again. I don't even know whether I was, when I joined the Navy.

And I certainly didn't join the Navy to glorify God. The Bible says, whatever you do, do for the glory of God. I didn't choose the Navy to glorify God.

I had no interest in that. I wanted to be a Christian, but I chose the Navy because in those days, in the 1950s, that's more than 50 years ago, 52 years ago, that was the military, was the profession people wanted to join. With career prospects.

And that's why I joined it. And it was a very tough selection. When I got it, I was very happy.

And I wanted to do well for my own interest. I wanted to really get on in life. But God was in it.

He saw that. And He, you know, it could have been very easy for Him if that was not His will for me to know, well, He could have seen this young boy, five years from now, He's going to surrender His life to me. So, I don't want Him to join the military.

I'll make Him fail. Or I'll make Him not selected. He'll do something stupid in the selection board and He won't be selected.

That would have been the easiest thing for God to do. If that was not His will for me, because He knew that five, six years later, I'm going to surrender my life to Him. He could have, then I would have not been selected.

I'd have tried for something else. I'd have gone to college perhaps and done some other course. But the fact that God saw where I was going and He allowed me to get selected.

In fact, a lot of people got surprised when I got selected. I was so small and thin and people in my class said, hey, you're going to defend our country? Anyway, that was God in it. So, what I'm trying to say is, God's hand was on you even before you knew Him.

You may think that, well, I selected that course and I did that and I went that way because I felt that was good for me. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, but God could have stopped you. He could have stopped you when you were going down some path, but He didn't.

And can you think of some times in your life when you planned to do something sinful and go along that way and God arrested you and turned your life around? That was God. Some of you would have been dead today if God hadn't stopped you somewhere from some accident. I know God saved me from serious accidents.

I should have been in the grave today. I should have been dust. God saved me and I've often thought of those incidents and you need to think of those times in your life when you were almost certainly killed by some accident or something.

All of us have got occasions like that where we miss death. Sometimes by hair breath. I've seen sometimes when I used to ride the scooter.

Boy, that was scary. I remember once when I was taking Sumil on a scooter to school. He was in 9th standard or something, my youngest son.

And there was a postman riding the cycle on the wrong side of the road and I don't know what he was thinking of, whether he had some difficulties at home or what he was thinking looking down and driving. He had delivered a letter in one house looking down and driving not even seeing me coming down the scooter. And you know how I drive very slowly as you all know.

And I'm only joking. I learned to drive in the military. It's one of those unconscious sins of mine.

Anyway, I was driving down the road and I tried to avoid him because he was on the wrong side of the road and he decided to get on the right side of the road at the same time. And we collided. Of course, it's always 100% the other person's fault whenever anything like that happens.

And we both got tossed, my son and I. And fortunately, no car was coming down the other side of the road and we just got a little injury and got up and I drove the scooter back home and did up his injuries and then it was very minor, just a scratch. I thought, you know, it just needed one car coming down the road at that time and both of us would be dead. That's just one instance.

I could tell you so many instances like that. I said, Lord, you had a plan for my son and you had a plan for me. Now I'm just using that example to tell you you can think of instances like that in your life.

Why did God allow you to live? Why did God allow me to live? I know, not that I might live for myself. I, who should have been in the grave, God allowed me to live so that I can serve Him and be a blessing to other people. And I want to say to you, young people, don't ever forget that.

Don't ever take those things for granted. You'll see one day in heaven that there are angels who pushed vehicles out of the way to save your life. I believe that.

Who protected you from serious injuries. How is it that no car comes down the road when you're tossed? I remember once when my foot brake broke on the scooter. That's the most dangerous thing to happen because the front brake, the hand brakes, are not usually kept very tight.

The foot brake wire snaps means you are in danger. And guess what? No vehicle was coming down the road at that time. I don't know, somewhere down the road, some angel slowed down somebody or gave somebody a flat tire or made some traffic light stay on red for a little longer but I have got a lot of angels I'm going to shake hands with when I get up to heaven.

And you too. And I want to say to you, don't ever forget those incidents and don't think that your life belongs to yourself. It doesn't.

The days were determined for you. You say, Lord, how am I to spend those days? I want to spend it the way you wrote in your book for me. I want to accept that you made me the way I am.

You determined my life. I'm not going to complain about the house I was born in. I mean, were any of you born in a cow shed? I don't think so.

Jesus was. He was the son of God and he grew up in a very poor home. Remember he had four younger brothers, two younger sisters, seven children at least in that family and it was a very poor carpenter's family.

I have a feeling they all slept in one room. You know, next to each other. Some of you may wish you had a separate bedroom for all the boys at least.

Jesus didn't. They all slept in the sitting room, one next to the other. I've seen families in our churches like that where they have only one room in their house and they all sleep there.

And I thought, that must be the type of home Jesus lived in. He didn't have a separate bedroom to retire to when temperature got too hot in the house with people yelling at him and he could go inside and lock the door. There was no door to lock.

No. There wasn't. There wasn't even a toilet in those houses.

You just went into the bushes. You couldn't lock anything anywhere. That's the type of life Jesus grew up in.

The son of God. Look at the things we complain about. My parents don't give me this and don't give me that and don't give me the other thing.

Think how Jesus lived. He lived on earth without ever complaining. He who had lived in heaven for millions of years came down and never complained.

What an example. I want to say to you, that's what it means to be a Christian. To accept our circumstances.

We complain because we are so used to luxuries. You say, I don't have any luxuries. You've got a hundred luxuries that Jesus never had.

I'll tell you. You can travel by train. Do you know how Jesus went from Galilee to Judea? He didn't have a chariot.

He didn't have a bicycle. He walked. It had taken many days to walk those 50, 60 miles, 100 kilometers.

Then he'd come back. We have a hundred luxuries at least that Jesus never had. We have gas stoves.

Jesus never had a gas stove. They had to gather wood and light a fire and burn and cook food. In the winter, they didn't have any heater.

Just a fire perhaps with a smoke in the house. In the summer, they didn't even have a fan. There was no electricity in the house.

They'd light a lamp and live by that lamp. What a lot of things we have. We are used to so many comforts that we haven't learned to be grateful.

I want to encourage all of you young people. Learn to be thankful to God. It's a very big lesson to learn.

Learn to be thankful the way he has made you. Don't complain. Say, oh, I wish I had this type of hair.

See, most of us are tempted by what we see in those models on television and newspapers. People standing in different poses and wearing different dresses and with different hairstyles and you want to be like that. I'll tell you something.

Let all the worldly brothers and sisters in your church be like that and let them go that way. Don't imitate them. Don't imitate them.

There are worldly people in every church. We don't have to imitate them. Let's not imitate them.

Let's follow Jesus. If you want to imitate somebody, imitate Jesus. Think of the passions he had.

before you ask your dad to get you this type of shoes, think of the type of shoes Jesus wore. The type of clothes he would wear. Just the simple clothes which anybody else this level wore.

You know, we destroy ourselves by asking for this. Maybe your father is rich and I'll tell you something I have seen through many years and I'm 67 years old now. It's usually the rich people's children who are the most spoiled because they get everything they want.

Their dad and mom never say no to them for anything. That's the way to ruin and destroy a child. Just give him everything he wants.

Give her everything she wants from childhood. You're raising a child for hell. If you've got good parents, they'll say no to you for some things.

And don't always wish that you could wear the clothes that others in your school or college wear. And don't say, oh my father is so poor he can't get me that. Thank God.

You know, Jesus grew up with self-denial. A lot of things he didn't have. His parents just couldn't afford it.

And he never asked them for it. Do you want to be a man of God or woman of God? You've got to learn self-denial. Be thankful for the little things you have.

And say, Lord, I'll not complain. A wonderful lesson to learn when you're young, to be thankful. Like they say, count your blessings, name them one by one.

And it'll surprise you what the Lord has done for you. So thankfulness for the way God has made me, for my parents. How many of you have thanked God for your parents? How many of you have written a birthday card to your dad and mom on their birthday with one little line saying, Dad, I thank God that I'm

your son, I'm your daughter, that God brought me into your home.

If you have never done that, find out your dad's birthday, your mom's birthday, and give them a surprise. I mean, they'll be so surprised. What happened to my son, my daughter? They went for a camp in Bangalore.

Learn to thank your parents. They've suffered so much for you. You'll never know till you become parents yourself, how much a father and mother have to go through to bring up one child.

To the place where they get educated and stand on their own feet, it's not easy. Don't wait. By the time your father and mother may be dead, they may not even be converted.

Fine. They may get converted when you start appreciating them for what they did. You don't appreciate them for their godless life.

Maybe they are non-Christians. Maybe they worship idols. Fine.

But they still took care of you when you were a little child. So you're not saying, Oh, I thank God you're a great example for my Christian life. No, they're not.

They're not even Christians perhaps. But you're saying, I thank God for that you took care of me when I was young and helpless. I want to say thank you.

I really want to say I appreciate you for that. Thankfulness. Learn to thank the elders in your church who serve you.

It's not easy. It's not at all easy. To serve you, to look after you, to build a church is one of the most difficult.

It's more difficult to build a family. Imagine building a church. Learn to appreciate them.

Don't take anything for granted in life. Learn to be thankful to your teachers. Learn to be thankful for the people around you.

Anyone who does any good to you. Be thankful. Be thankful.

I'll tell you this. I have eliminated complaining from my life one hundred percent. It's made my life so happy.

Because I say God's mercy is new every morning. He's been so good to me. Way beyond what I deserve.

I'm thankful. I want to encourage you to be thankful for the way God made you. Thankful for your parents.

Thankful for the house you live in. Even if it's in a one room house. Say thank you Lord.

Thank you. Thank you for everything. Thank you for health.

You know a lot of people never thank God. Think of health till they get sick. It's like that statement I read somewhere.

I complained because I didn't have a new pair of shoes until I saw a boy who didn't have any feet. He learned to thank God for his old pair of shoes when he saw another boy whose feet were amputated

through some accident. Then he stopped complaining that he didn't have a new pair of shoes.

You know we have many many many things we never thank God for. We take so much for granted and I believe that's the way to remain in a stagnant Christian life. When God sees that you're thankful for the little things he's done for you, he'll give you more.

You remember that story of the man who got one talent and he just buried it. Didn't do anything with it. And the master came back and said, what did you do with that? He didn't do anything.

Give it to the fellow who has got ten. No, he's already got ten Lord. No, give it to him.

Because he was faithful. Apply that to the simple matter of thanksgiving. Here is a brother or a sister, young boy or girl, who just thanks God, Lord I thank you for this and I thank you for this and I thank you for that.

Good thing before you go to bed tonight to think of some of the things you can thank God for. It won't take you more than five minutes as you lie in bed and the lights are out quietly Lord I can thank you for this, this, this, this, this, this. The number of times you were saved from death, your parents education, the fact that you can understand English.

I really thank God that I could understand English because it's opened up a whole world of Christian literature to me. Many things like this. And as you do that you'll find God says, give him some more.

The person who got something never thanked God for it. He's going to lose even what he has. So that's one of the first things that we need to learn.

Another thing I want to say is we need to learn to respect older people. When you are young we are living in a day when respect is disappearing. We still see traces of it in the villages.

I've seen, I'll give you my example, we have about 40 churches in India and among the young people I'll tell you my own testimony that the young people who have shown me the maximum respect are the ones who are not so educated in the villages. Some of the more educated ones in Bangalore, especially once they get jobs and all, it's sort of high. It's almost as though I'm their equal.

I never see that in the villages. I've asked my wife, how do the sisters treat you? They don't even say hi. That's in Bangalore, never in the villages.

It's because of the pathetic state of some of our young people in CFC Bangalore. I'm just telling you the truth. I don't do anything about it.

I say if they want to destroy themselves, they can destroy themselves. But I have seen respect has disappeared because the devil has got more and more control over the earth. And it's disappearing.

You go to western countries, it's even worse. They don't respect older people. They don't even respect the servant of God.

The Bible says, God says, I honor those who honor me. And God honors a lot of his servants. But here are young people who don't know how to do that.

That's pathetic. Who's the loser? I'm never a loser. I don't want anybody in the world to respect me.

Not at all. But I feel sorry for those young people because they are the losers. And I can see that.

I can see that they don't progress spiritually. They were good people 10 years ago, they are good people today. That's like saying they got 100% 10 years ago and they got 100% today, but they are still in the first standard.

That's the sad part of it. They were good 10 years ago, they are good today, but they are still in the first standard. You may not realize that you are not progressing, but it's obvious to somebody like me.

You haven't become evil. You didn't get 90%, you are still getting 100%, but you are in first standard still. Learn to respect people.

I'll give you that advice. God is my witness that from my younger days, I have always respected my parents, I have respected every genuine servant of God I have met in my life till today. Really honored them, respected them very highly.

And what's the result? It's gone well with me. I know my wife has done the same. It's gone well with her.

It's gone well with our family. But I feel sorry for some of you young people. I don't know how it will be when you get married and set up homes.

Because I see that sense of respect is not there. The Bible says we must respect honor father and mother. It means respect someone who is older than you.

I was so strict on this in my home. Some of you know we had a young girl working for us as a helper in our home. I would never allow any of my children to speak to her disrespectfully.

No. Even if they were older than her. We must speak respectfully even to those who are lower than us in society.

And I think that girl, you know she's married now in Tamil Nadu. She can testify today that not one of my children ever spoke disrespectfully to her even once. In all the 10 or 12 years she was with us.

See that's something, if your parents haven't taught you that, you must learn yourself. It will go well with you. Always speak respectfully to people.

And if you don't know how to speak respectfully to older people, how in the world are you going to speak respectfully to those of your own age? It's part of that spirit of rebellion which the devil has. You know how the devil became the devil? He turned around to God and said, who do you think you are? I'm equal to you. I'm going to be like you.

And that's the attitude that he puts in a lot of young people. Hi. I'm equal to you.

Are you really? Has God honoured you as he's honoured that other man? Has God honoured you as he's honoured that other sister? These are some things which we must learn. And I know this doesn't apply to most of you because many of you from the villages, you already know our village culture has taught us to respect older people and I pray we'll never lose it. It's the educated people in the cities who have this problem.

Because there's an arrogance and I've seen particularly those who come from very poor homes. I've seen in CFC, those who come from poor homes, I've seen through many years, some of them have left the church. They came to the church as very poor homes but then they got blessed in the church and God blessed them and they got good jobs.

These young people were little children, they got good jobs and they got good salaries and then it went to their head and they lose the sense of respect and the devil's destroyed them. They become useless to God. People who should have been fantastically useful.

I think of case after case after case of young people who've grown up in CFC who have lost. What are they doing? Maybe they're just earning a lot of money somewhere, that's all. Useless to God, just like this rich young ruler.

He had a lot of money but he was useless to God. Don't be like that. One of the ways in which you prove that you respect God is that you respect anyone who's older than you.

You know there's a good habit that they have in the villages. We don't practice it so much in the cities. In our Indian languages, even someone who's 2-3 years older than you, you don't call him by his first name.

You call him Anna, Achayan. In different languages that means a sign of respect. Now we've dispensed with that in the cities.

That's fine. I'm not saying that you should call people with those names but you shouldn't dispense with the respect you have for somebody whom God allowed to be born onto this earth 2-3 years before you were born. If you are interested in becoming a Christian yourself, learn to respect someone whom God brought onto the earth a few years before you.

It's good for you not to treat everybody like you're equal. They are not your equals. They've lived on earth a little longer than you.

And even if you don't call them Anna or Achayan, learn to show them a little respect. Learn to show a little respect to people who probably have double your age and who walked with God for longer than you have existed on this earth. Respect.

So important. The other thing I want to say concerning young people is, you know, just before I go on, when you disagree with your parents, speak to them respectfully. And if you find it difficult, ask God for the power of his Holy Spirit.

Supposing your dad asked you to bow down to an idol. And you say, well, Dad, don't turn around and say, well, you don't know anything. Don't talk to him like that.

Say, Dad, I respect you for being my father, but God is greater than you, and I have to, I cannot bow down to that idol. I cannot go through that ritual of a heathen religion you're asking me to do. I'm a Christian.

Speak respectfully. When they ask you to marry an unbeliever, say, Mom, I respect you. I'm sorry you're crying so much, but I can't marry an unbeliever.

I've got to marry someone who loves Jesus, just like I do. Otherwise, do you want me to have a miserable, unhappy married life? Please give me freedom that I will not marry an unbeliever. I'd rather be single than marry an unbeliever, one who doesn't love Jesus.

So, the other thing that I wanted to say to you was concerning our friends in school and college and workplace. See, we show a lot of respect to them, which is the wrong thing. We should be showing respect to our parents and elders and godly people.

And these others who are godless, today's young people in the world are absolutely godless. They don't have any, look at the language they use. Look at the filthy language they use in every few sentences in their conversation.

These are 100% influenced by the devil. You want to be popular with them? You want to show respect to them? Are you a child of the devil yourself? That you don't respect a godly man or woman, but you want to respect these servants of the devil? Something's wrong with you. I wonder whether you're born again.

I wonder whether you ever want to be a disciple of Jesus. Take a hold of yourself this weekend and say, Lord, I want to honor those whom you honor. See this verse in 1 Samuel chapter 2. 1 Samuel chapter 2 and verse 30 it says 1 Samuel chapter 2 verse 30 last part of that verse it says those who honor me I will honor.

I'll tell you why I have honored many servants of God in my younger days in my life. It's because I've seen that God has honored them. And if God has honored them I certainly will honor them.

And those who despise me will be lightly esteemed. Those who despise the Lord, and I tell you in your school, in your college, in your place of work there are multitudes of people who despise the Lord. The Lord says, I don't, I esteem them very lightly.

I demean them. God doesn't care for them. Well, I'm friendly with them, but I don't care for their opinion.

You want to be like God? Honor those whom God honors. And don't care for the opinion of those who treat God lightly. Otherwise you're not serious about being a disciple.

I'll tell you that. You can come to CFC or you come to one of our churches and sing and praise and come to youth camp and act very spiritual and all that, but God sees this person doesn't know how to honor those whom I honor. This person doesn't know how to lightly esteem those whom despise me.

They've got it all upside down. They want to honor those people who despise me and they don't learn to value those whom I honor. So it's all upside down.

And that's what hinders our spiritual growth. So we should never allow pressure from those who are in our school, college or friends at work to make us do something which we know deep down in our heart we're not supposed to do. And I'll tell you this, in the beginning it's difficult.

It's like learning swimming. If you don't know swimming and somebody pushed you into a river, you'd really be scared. You'd jump out of the fright.

It's difficult, but after some time you enjoy it. It's like that. The first step into something is always difficult.

You know, I remember my early days when I had to take a stand for the Lord, it was so difficult. But after some time it didn't bother me anymore. It was like, if somebody despised me or made fun of me, it's like water off a duck's back just rolled off.

So I want to say to you, stick it out in the beginning. If you always stand by the edge of the swimming pool, never jump in, you'll never learn how to swim. Always scared to take that first step.

You know how Peter, when the Lord told him to step out of the boat and walk on the water, if he's always scared to take that first step, he'd never have walked on the water. Think what a testimony he could have had later, I walked on the water. And you know the first step is very difficult.

Sometime when you decide, Lord I'm going to take a stand now. I'm not going to laugh at those dirty jokes anymore. Ah, they'll make fun of me.

What happened man? You don't laugh at that? That's right, I don't laugh at it anymore. What happened? You asked for it. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ who saved my soul.

Ah, holy joke. Call me what you like. My soul is saved.

I'm on my way to heaven. I'm a child of God. I'm not despising you folks, but I don't believe in, just like I don't believe in polluting my body, I don't believe in polluting my mind.

My mind is more important to me than my body. I want to keep my mind clean. If you want to make your mind dirty, that's fine.

I want to keep my mind clean just like I take a shower to keep my body clean. I don't want to talk rubbish and rot and I don't want to make fun of women as though they are some lower level of creation. No, I respect men and women equally.

I tell you, they may ostracize you, they may cut you off, but you'll get closer to Jesus. You know where I learned to get close to the Lord? When I was cut off by my friends in the Navy, they wouldn't have time to talk to me. They'd make fun of me and all that.

I don't know what all stories they said about me behind my back, but I'll tell you this, they respected me. One of my senior captains, when he got on his deathbed, he thought of me. He didn't think of all those fellows who laughed at his dirty jokes.

He thought of me. Because I was the only one who reminded him of eternity. Yeah, they'll keep all those friends for many years.

When they get to their deathbed, they'll think of you, if you were a faithful Christian. I remember the other day I met someone in a bank, in Canara Bank, close to our house. And he was a senior to me, a naval officer, retired, I don't know, admiral or something.

And he met me and I mentioned my name. Oh, you're the one who had those verses written on the scooter, right? Imagine, the guy remembered what happened 40 years ago. He didn't forget it.

And I don't believe he'd forget it till the day he dies. He may have made fun of me, but they won't remember. And one day in eternity, they will know that they came across someone who reminded them of eternity.

You be that person. Be that young man. And I'll tell you, I took a stand for these things when I was 21 years old.

And I just tell senior officers, I'm sorry sir, I can't do that, because I'm a Christian. Do that when you're young and you don't know, I believe, if I hadn't done that in those years, when I was 23, 24, when I was 24 years old, God said, I want you to leave the Navy and be my servant. Imagine, I was 24 years old, 24 and a half.

On the 6th of May, 1964, God said, I want you to leave your job and servant. Is there a greater honor than that on the face of the earth? I tell you, that's greater than the Bharat Ratna or anything. But if I had failed in those previous years and not taken a stand and compromised and I want to be friends with all my colleagues, I don't think God would have called me for his service till today.

I'd have just wasted my life being an admiral or making a lot of money. Do you want to make good use of your life? I don't know what plan God has for your life, what's written in the book with your name, but it must be something wonderful. Don't miss it.

Don't get to heaven and God shows you the book and say, what I missed like that, Rich Young Ruler. Don't miss it. Don't miss it.

Don't turn away. Say, Lord, I want to fulfill that plan. You have to take a stand with the people who work with you.

School and college, you may be unpopular. Maybe your teachers will harass you. I know some teachers used to harass my children because they were my children because they wanted to get at me.

They may harass you. They may trouble you. It's okay.

What's that compared to eternity? Are you going to compromise your witness for Christ just because somebody cuts your marks? I know people who lost a whole year because the teacher was rude on them even though they were good in their studies. You think that's such a big suffering? I lost one year. What's that? Jesus died on a cross for you.

I used to often think of that. There was a song. I don't know whether we sing it so much in CFC, but we used to sing it in my younger days.

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord. And I used to sing that often. Or to uphold His cause.

The glory of His cross. And I used to sing that and I used to think, Lord, you were not ashamed to hang on a cross with just an underwear, hanging there for my sins. You are not ashamed for my sins.

I will not be ashamed of you in the presence of my colleagues. I'll be a witness for you. I will stand there and drink orange juice while they are drinking whiskey to show that I'm a Christian.

I will not go with them to the movies they're watching because I'm a Christian. Okay? There are some people who say, we've got to be friends. Go ahead, go be friends.

I know where that finally leads. I was friendly. If there was somebody in need, I always was there to help them.

You know, very often, people in the Navy would ask me to do their duty on the ship when they had to go somewhere. I'd always do it. I'd say, sure, I'd be glad to do your duty.

You've got something urgent to do? I'll take care of those four-hour duty for you or the eight-hour duty, and you go and do your work. And they knew that I was helpful. They knew I was compassionate.

If some sailor who worked under me needed to go on leave, I'd arrange for that so that he could go on vacation, somebody sick at home or something like that. So, there are many ways in which we can show our Christianity. It's not just negative, I don't do this, I don't do this, I don't do this.

But also, I do this. I'm considerate and compassionate and helpful in any way if I can help them. That's the witness you must leave behind you.

Some of those people you see in college, you may never see again. What will their memory of you be? Some of those people you work with in your office, you may never see again. You may be transferred, they may be transferred.

I hope they'll remember that in their office there was a saint. They may argue with you, but they'll never forget it. They came across a saint, they'll never forget him or her all their life.

That's the way God seeks to make an impression on people around you. So, don't yield to the pressure of your peers. The other thing I want to say is with the young people, one of the greatest temptations, areas of temptation is the area of sex.

And I've often wondered why God allowed, you know, little three, four year old children have no problem with sex. Isn't that right? I don't know what the world will be like fifty years from now, but right now they don't have a problem with sex at the age of four. I mean, the age is going down and down and down.

I cannot predict what will be happening fifty years from now. But right now, three, four year old children don't have a problem with sex. Because those desires are not aroused.

They get aroused when you're twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old and you suddenly begin to see the opposite sex as attractive. There's nothing wrong in that. It's a question of what do you do with that sense of attraction.

And I used to ask myself, Lord, why is it that you allow these desires to come up when they're thirteen, fourteen, when they've got to wait another ten, fifteen years to get married? Wouldn't it have been wonderful if these sexual desires began to arise in us only when we were twenty-six or something? And till that time we were just like these two year old innocent boys and, you know, boys and girls mixing together so innocently, just like little boys and girls playing till the age of twenty-six and then those desires arise and then we can get married within six months. Why has God allowed these desires to come up when we're twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old and for ten, twelve years we've got to struggle with this and battle with this, with our eyes and our passions and all that? I think I got an answer from the Lord. That is, that's the way God makes us strong.

You know, if you didn't have to battle something, you'd never become strong spiritually. And also, that's the way God tests us to see whether we fear Him. Do we fear Him? Lord, that means when a thought comes into my mind, nobody knew about it.

But it was a dirty thought. I go before God and say, God, I'm sorry. Forgive me.

Immediately. God sees you're serious. And if you have a dirty thought ten times a day, go before God ten times a day.

Don't just total it all up and pay your bill at the end of the day. Cash. Always pay cash.

No credit. When it comes to sin. Always.

Lord, I did it. Here's the blood of Jesus. I want to repent.

And I tell you, if you take sin seriously like that, you'll overcome it pretty quickly. Every time you get angry, repent. Go and apologize to the person you got angry with.

You'll get victory over anger. But if you don't, you don't take it seriously and maybe confess your sins at the end of the day. No, you're not taking it seriously.

Each time you fall in thoughts or anything, you must go to God and say, Lord, I'm sorry. Help me in this area. I believe God can help you mightily.

You know, if you can conquer in this sexual area, you'll be mighty strong. So don't give up the battle. Will you go to God and say, Lord, if it takes me ten years to overcome this wrong sexual desires, you're going to give me.

I'm not saying you shouldn't be attracted to the opposite sex. That's unnatural. It's natural to be attracted to the opposite sex.

That's what leads you to marriage one day. But until the time comes for marriage, you got to keep that under control. That's what I'm saying.

And that keeping that thing under control is what will make you strong. And He allows you to have that when you're 12, 13, 14 years old, so that for 12, 13 years, you can keep it under control. So that one day, you become a strong person when you get married.

And if you have slipped up, it doesn't matter. Jesus chose prostitutes to be His disciples. In fact, Mary Magdalene was a demon-possessed woman, was the first person to see Jesus after the resurrection.

God cares for those who have fallen. In fact, some of His greatest saints have been murderers and adulterers and thieves, have become apostles because He came to save sinners. He did not come to save the righteous.

He came to save sinners. So don't get discouraged if you had tremendous failure in your past life. All of it can be cleansed in the blood of Jesus.

He can make you as pure. Do you know that Mary Magdalene was as pure as Mary, the mother of Jesus in God's eyes? I believe that because that's what the blood of Jesus does. It makes a totally sinful woman as pure as the person who never sinned.

It's great. The power of the blood of Christ. You must believe in that.

So you should never get discouraged over your past. But you say, Lord, I want to remember the past because I'm so thankful to You for having cleansed me from all that, made me a new person. And wonderful thing, He doesn't reveal all your sins to other people.

Isn't that good of God? And you also don't reveal the sins of others that you know to others. As God has hidden your sin, hide the sins of others. Yeah.

You know, I know the sins of many people because they tell me things about it. But nobody ever hears it from me. Not even my fellow elders in CFC.

Not even my wife. Nobody knows it but me. God's been merciful to me and I want to be merciful to others.

So these are little bits of advice, if you take seriously, I believe it can go very well in your life. Battle these things and determine that you're going to be an overcomer. I believe God will help you.

Mightily. Take these little things to heart. Let's pray.

And while our heads are bowed in prayer, will you pray that God will help you to believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses your past completely and that He can fill you with His Holy Spirit and make you a new person. Completely new. Filled with power to be an overcomer.

Determine that this weekend is going to be a turning point in your life. Determine it. Even if you're one of the black sheep in your home.

Your parents think you're one of the black sheep. Never mind. Don't worry about your parents' opinion.

You see that God, you're serious with God today and you say, Lord, this weekend is going to be a turning point in my life. I am going to be different from now on. I believe God will help you.

He's there to help you. The Holy Spirit is called a helper. Jesus said, I'll send you a helper.

Say, Lord, I need that helper. Or if there's anybody in this room who needs a helper, it's me. Give me the helper.

Give me the Holy Spirit's power in my life. Will you pray tonight as you go to bed, Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want you to meet with me this weekend in a fresh way.

Fill me with the Holy Spirit before you send me home. Don't send me home in the same way I came here, Lord. Will you pray that prayer? I believe God will do miracles for you.

Yes, Lord, I believe that. You said, according to your faith be it unto you. I want to trust you that you'll do something in my life.

And you'll do something in the lives of these young people. Every one of them. Do it, Lord.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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