

(Youth Conference 2006) Questions and Answers

by Zac Poonen

To overcome sin and experience spiritual growth, we need to see sin as a major thing in our life, seek God's help with all our heart, and believe that God is more eager to bless us than we are to be blessed.

Duration: 1:07:14

Scripture: Psalm 103:3, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 22:36-40, John 1:4, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Victory Over Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of avoiding movies with explicit content, as even a few seconds of inappropriate scenes can stick in our minds. He highlights the need to evaluate the entertainment value of movies and the impact they have on our thoughts and desires. The speaker also encourages believers to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit as a major need in their lives, comparing it to the dedication people show when seeking important things like admission or visas. Additionally, he addresses the question of why some babies are born with physical or mental disabilities, acknowledging that there are certain things he doesn't have the full answer to, but affirming that God is good and the world is under a curse. The sermon concludes with the exhortation to never give up in seeking victory over sin, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and serving God faithfully.

Transcript

Today we're going to have a time of questions and answers. If you've read the Gospels, you know that many times the disciples asked Jesus questions. And the Pharisees also asked questions.

Sometimes some lawyers and scribes asked Jesus questions. And if you've noticed in the Gospels, sometimes Jesus would answer those questions. And sometimes he'd say, I'll ask you another question.

And they wouldn't answer that. Then he said, well, I'm not going to answer your question either. But if the disciples asked him even the most stupid question, he would always answer it.

But if the Pharisees asked a question, sometimes he would answer, sometimes he wouldn't. So I find that Jesus had a different attitude towards Pharisees and a different attitude towards disciples. The disciples were sincere.

The Pharisees were not. And in my life, I've had different people ask me questions. And in a camp like this, of course, I realize that 95-99% of people are sincere, the questions they ask.

But at other times, people ask me questions, and I say, well, I have nothing to say. You can believe what you like about me or what I believe. Because I know that they're not sincere.

I know that they're only trying to find fault. And I'm not here to justify myself before any human being. I do not want the approval of any Pharisee or anyone.

People who want to believe something false, they are welcome to believe what is false. If they are sincere, God will lead them to the truth. If they are not sincere, they'll go astray.

And I'm not going to stop them, because God doesn't stop them. But I believe that most of you, if not all of you, are sincere, so we'll try and answer the questions. The only thing we're limited by is time.

So we'll have to try and cover whatever we can in this time, because we've got other things following. Okay. One of the very common questions is, I'm sick and tired of trying forever to get victory over my bad habits.

When will I ever get victory over them? You know, our church is unique in the sense that we preach victory over sin constantly. I wonder if there is another church in India that preaches it all the time. I wonder if there are many churches that even preach it once in a while.

But we preach it all the time. We preach about being filled with the Holy Spirit, about taking up the cross, about overcoming sin, because these are some of the great themes of the New Testament. You never read about people being asked to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, because you couldn't be unless you were a prophet or a king.

And you don't read in the Old Testament about taking up the cross. There was no cross. And you don't read in the Old Testament about overcoming sin, because nobody could overcome sin.

So the reason why we talk about these things is because these are the distinctive privileges we have in the New Covenant. And just like as citizens of India, we have certain privileges, and we make use of them. And the same way as citizens of the New Covenant of Heaven, we have certain privileges.

We must know those privileges. Then we can make use of them. And that's why we speak about it.

But God has allowed, it's not only victory over sin, the fullness of the Spirit, understanding many things in the Christian life. God has allowed us to go through a struggle in order to come to it. Now I'll tell you, almost every truth I believe today, starting with being born again, I got through a struggle.

Because denominationally, I belong to a church called the Syrian Orthodox Church, which doesn't preach the new birth. I was sprinkled as a child, and they called it baptism. So I broke out of the teaching of my denominational church in order to be born again.

And I broke out of the teaching of my denominational church to be baptized. And then I was with another group of assemblies that didn't believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or speaking in tongue. So I had to break out of that to come to that experience.

And then I was with people who didn't believe in overcoming sin. So I had to break out of that and discover truths in scripture. I mean, hardly anybody in India ever taught or believed that Jesus came in the flesh, and was tempted like us, and overcame as a man.

That was another truth. I had to battle and suffer a lot of opposition. And even till today, people call me a heretic for preaching that.

It doesn't make a difference, because it changed my life. So what I'm trying to say is, many of the truths I have experienced in my life, the Christian life, have come through a battle, through long, hard struggle, through many years. And because of that, they are very precious to me.

Supposing you acquired something after struggling for ten years, that would be pretty precious to you. But if you got something in one day, it wouldn't be precious. Do you know why babies are so precious to mothers? Because they suffer such a lot for nine months to carry it.

Imagine if babies were born in six hours or one day or something. I don't think the mothers would be so attached to the babies. They treat them so casually, like these animals who treat some of their little ones casually.

But we value what we have taken a long time struggle to get. And that's one reason why God delays answers to some prayers. So that you value, like a baby, something from God.

So, if you see something in the New Testament, whatever it is, for example, a promise, like John the Baptist said, Jesus will baptize you. Baptize means immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Isn't that for you? Don't go seeking it because you heard somebody else testify or because I said it.

My word is not going to give you a promise from heaven. But if you find it in God's word, it's a promise that Jesus will save you from your sins. Do you know the first two promises in the New Testament? All of you should know it.

Matthew 1.21 is the first promise in the New Testament. He will save His people from their sins. The name Jesus means He will save His people from their sins.

When you pray in the name of Jesus, I'm saying, Father, in the name of One who came to save me from all my sins, I'm asking for this. Do you ever think of that when you pray in the name of Jesus? The second promise in the New Testament is Jesus will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Two great ministries of Jesus are the first two promises in the New Testament.

Matthew 3.11 is the second one. Matthew 1.21 is the first. What are the two great ministries of Jesus? One is to save you, not forgive you your sins.

That's good. That's just cleaning the cup. But save you.

Even after I'm forgiven, I need to be saved. Supposing I get angry with somebody and ask God to forgive me. He forgives me.

But I'm not saved from my anger. I'm forgiven of that one event where I lost my temper. But I'm not saved from my anger.

I can lust and ask God to forgive me. I'm forgiven. But I'm not saved from my lust.

So I hope you see the difference between being forgiven and being saved. They had forgiveness in the Old Testament. Psalm 103, 1000 years before Christ, David says, Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives all your sins.

All your sins? That's right. Who heals all your diseases. Even that they had in the Old Testament.

What did they not have? He couldn't say, Bless the Lord, who helps me to overcome sin. Nobody could say that in the Old Testament. Because the Holy Spirit did not dwell within.

And when the Holy Spirit doesn't dwell within, trying to live the Christian life is like pushing a car. Have you tried pushing a car? I mean, it's like, if people don't know the New Covenant, it's like giving a gift of a car to some barbarian in the jungle. And he travels pushing it from one place to the other.

And he tells the person, listen, I could travel much faster before you gave me the car. Now I'm a little slower. And he says, hey, that's not the way to do it, man.

You got to get inside and fill the tank with petrol and you can go full speed. Oh, I didn't know that. Exactly.

That is how a lot of Christians don't know about the New Covenant. They are pushing something, pushing, pushing. It's such a struggle, struggle, struggle, struggle.

There's a better way. You can go much faster than those old covenant people. If you understand what Jesus came to give, you need to have the power within, the Holy Spirit, that helps you to overcome.

They didn't have that in the Old Testament. They could not be filled with the Holy Spirit within. They could have the Holy Spirit upon them.

So, I believe this. One, you may not be wholehearted in seeking for victory over sin. It may not be the most important thing in your life.

You know, if you had cancer or AIDS, serious diseases, I think that would become the most important thing in your life to be healed from that. Even smaller sicknesses than that you seek for healing, it becomes a major thing in your life. But sin is not such a major thing in your life and then, of course, you don't get victory because God is waiting for the day in your life when you see sin as the major thing in your life.

Why? Because that's what Jesus died for. He died to save us from our sin. And you never understand what Jesus did on the cross, how much He suffered, if you don't see that that was for your sin.

It wasn't to make you rich. God could make people rich in the Old Testament without Jesus dying. He died in order to save us from our sin.

So, when sin becomes a major thing in your life, Lord, I'm desperate. More than passing my examinations, more than getting a job, more than getting married, more than anything, I want victory over this wretched sin in my life. That's number one reason why you may not be getting victory.

Second could be that you haven't come to an end of yourself. You may not have realized that you just can't make it. You say, oh, I've understood that.

No, you haven't. We think we have understood, but it takes a long time for us to understand that we just can't get victory no matter how much we determine, no matter how much we grit our teeth. We'll be like those fishermen.

The disciples went fishing. They tried all night. They caught nothing.

But finally they came to an end and said, okay, we're going to be giving up and going home. Then Jesus came. So, when you come to an end of yourself, you know, your strength decreases from 100 all the way to 5, 4, that's it, 0. Then you take off like the rockets, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. When you get to 0, that's the other thing God is waiting for.

He's waiting for you to come to an end of yourself. And when you come to that place, you really seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Holy Spirit will become a major need in your life.

You know, when I see people standing in the queue outside a school, even to get admission for their children for kindergarten, or standing in long lines to get an application to apply for the common entrance test for a college admission. Long queues outside the American Embassy to get a visa. Why do people wait such long queues at 4 o'clock in the morning? Because these are very precious things for them.

Oh, if I could get that admission, or I get that visa, that'll be great. Where do people seek God for victory over sin like that? I mean, people who get up 4 o'clock in the morning to go and get an American visa, they wouldn't get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to get victory over sin. It's not such a major thing in their life.

And God says, when I become the most important person in your life, the most important thing in your life becomes to please me, you'll find me very quickly. You shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I believe that's the number one reason.

And it's not that God is reluctant to give, it's that we are not ready. You say, what do you mean I'm not ready? For example, you pray to God, God, here I'm sowing the seed, send the rain. God says, no, you haven't even plowed the ground yet.

What's the use of sowing that seed? Supposing you go sowing your seed on hard ground like concrete, there's no use of God sending the rain on that. You've got to plow up the ground. Every farmer knows, before you sow the seed, you plow up the ground.

And I've discovered one thing, this waiting on God. You know the Bible says, those who wait on the Lord shall exchange their strength. That's one translation.

Isaiah 40, verse 31, those who wait on the Lord shall exchange their strength. Lord, I give you mine, you give me yours. Why wait on the Lord? Because this whole process of waiting digs up the ground.

That's great. It's time to dig up the ground. And that digging of the ground in our heart is very necessary for fruit to come quickly.

So we wonder why God doesn't send rain on a ground like concrete. No, he won't. He's not foolish.

He waits, you wait, and you wait, and you're not giving up, even though there are other people who give up. You don't give up. And finally your ground is dug up.

Boy, when the rain comes, what a difference. I saw a cartoon once, which I'll never forget, of a man, you know, here are the 120 people waiting in the upper room before the day of Pentecost. For 10 days they waited, we know.

But they didn't know how long they'd have to wait. Now we know from history it was 10 days. But when God, Jesus, told them to wait, he never told them.

It could have been 100 days, or one year. They were just waiting until. And this cartoon shows one man getting up and walking out and saying, boy, I waited 9 days and I've had enough.

I'm going home. And when he's at home, the next day he hears that the Holy Spirit fell on those 120. Oh boy, I wish I'd been there for the 10th day.

Why did he walk out on the 9th day? I've never forgotten that cartoon. How sometimes you could be so close to getting a blessing and then you walk away from it. And you don't press on until you get.

See, that is faith. Faith is, you know the story of the widow? I was speaking about it last week in CFC. The widow went to the judge in Luke 18 and said, give me justice, give me justice, give me justice.

And the judge said, no, I don't have time for you. She persisted, woke him up at 3 o'clock in the morning in his house and troubled him until he said, okay, what do you want? And she told the story of a man who went to his neighbor's house at midnight. Knock, knock, knock, knock.

Kept on disturbing him until he got what he wanted. And these are the two parables that Jesus spoke on prayer. Saying if you want to get something from God, that's the way you've got to pray.

It's not because God is reluctant to give. Do you know what faith means? I got a new definition of faith the other day. Faith is to believe God is more eager to bless you than you are eager to be blessed.

How many of you can say you believe that? God is more eager to bless me than I am to be blessed. God is more eager to fill me with the Holy Spirit than I am to be filled. God is more eager to give me victory over sin than I am eager to get victory over sin.

God is more eager to save me from my sin than I am to be saved from my sin. God is more eager to heal me than I am to be healed. God is more eager to anoint me with gifts of the Holy Spirit than I am eager to receive those gifts.

God is more eager to use me than I am eager to be used. I tell you most Christians don't believe that. That's why I say they are unbelieving believers.

And those who don't believe don't get anything. I've come to a new level of faith myself. I believe that God is more eager to use me than I am to be used.

God is more eager to fill me with the Holy Spirit than I am to be filled. God is more eager to give me every gift of the Spirit I need to serve Him than I am eager to receive them. You start believing that from today.

And tell the devil he's a liar when he brings all those other thoughts into your mind. Why do I say that? Because God is a loving Father. You know, I know as a father, if there was only breakfast for one person in the house, I know my wife and I would share it with our children and deny ourselves.

God is a much more loving Father than that. He is more eager. I'm just using an example.

Any earthly father would be like that. Your parents would rather feed you than feed themselves. God is like that, a million times better than that.

He is more eager to bless you than you are to be blessed. And even if you find that difficult to believe, you say, Lord, it must be true because Jesus came to reveal God as a Father. So, question, does God still love me after my repeated failures? Of course He does.

And I'll tell you one encouraging thought. As long as you're fighting the battle, you're okay. It doesn't matter if you're defeated.

You see, I believe, and I think you'll discover, and I don't have a verse to prove it to you from Scripture, but I believe that if you never overcome anger or lust in your entire life till Jesus comes, let's assume, I hope you do, but if you don't, if you're battling, battling, battling, battling anger and lust till the day Jesus comes, God will count it as your having overcome it. Are you happy or not? Isn't that great? That you never got the victory, but you kept battling. You didn't give up, which showed that you were against it.

And that's what God wants to see. Are you against it? Or have you given up and say, oh well, the devil's the victor. Don't ever say that.

You know, when you give up a battle against any sin, you're saying, oh well, Satan, okay, you win. What do you mean he wins? He's already been defeated on the cross 2,000 years ago. Don't ever tell him he's won.

And when you give up the battle, you're telling the devil, okay, you won. That's a disgrace in the name of Jesus Christ. You've got to tell the devil, I don't care if you beat me black and blue, I'm going to fight and fight and fight and fight and fight and fight.

You'll never find me giving up, Satan. Because my Savior defeated you on the cross. That's what I tell him.

He used to trouble me a lot in my younger days. He sort of leaves me alone nowadays. I mean, individually, he still attacks me through other people, but personally, I hardly ever find the devil come to me nowadays like in the olden days.

Because he knows that I'm absolutely convinced he was defeated on the cross. He knows he can't try those bluffs on me like he can on some of you. You tell the devil what you think of him.

You know, I saw a little sticker once. When the devil reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future. When he tells you, hey, you lived that terrible life in the past, you say, yeah, I know, but let me tell you about your future, Satan.

You're going to end up in the lake of fire. Because the Bible says that. You know these detective stories? It's very exciting and you want to know who's the criminal, who's the criminal.

And you get impatient and still another 50 pages to the end. And you peek at the end. Ah, I found out.

Now I can relax and read it. Well, you know, I peeked at the end of the Bible and I read that the devil's going to be caught in the lake of fire. Okay, now I can relax and go through life.

I know the end of the story. If you know the end of the story, you'll be a very happy Christian. I'll tell you the end of the story.

The good man wins. The bad man is defeated. Okay, so don't think that God will stop loving you as long as you're fighting the battle.

And even if you stop fighting the battle, God won't hate you. He'll feel sad. Haven't you seen these? I've seen one or two races where somebody was a pretty useless runner.

I remember, I think it was the Melbourne Olympics or somewhere. There was, it came in the papers, there was this guy from some unknown country in Africa who, you know, Olympic. He could become very easily an Olympic swimmer because there were probably only one or two swimmers in the whole country.

And he was representing his country for the Olympic swimming. He couldn't swim for nuts. Others had finished and got up and standing.

This fellow still got two laps to go or something like that. He wouldn't give up. He just kept on swimming.

Everybody's waiting for this fellow to finish two laps. And what an ovation he got when he finished. His name came in the papers.

All those other fellows who came, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, that name never came. But this fellow's name is photographed and everything else. Because he endured till the end.

So I want to say, it will be like that in heaven. If you endure till the end. Don't give up.

I've decided on that. I say, I don't care what happens. I'm not going to give up.

There may be areas in my life where I'm battling. Maybe not the same areas you're battling, but it's still a battle for me. I battle, battle, and I say, Lord, I'll never give up.

And Satan, you know I'm never going to give up because you were defeated on the cross. And I want to encourage all of you. There's one lesson you learn from this camp.

It is never give up. Never give up seeking victory over sin. Never give up seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Never give up seeking to be a useful servant of God. Never give up seeking for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve Him. Never give up whatever you're seeking.

I don't hear the voice of God clearly. Okay, don't give up. Seek Him.

I tell you, by the next year this time, you'll find a tremendous difference. Just because you change your attitude, the ground is plowed up and you'll find the rain falling upon your life. Are you sick in some way? Never give up till God heals you.

I believe that. I believe God's a loving Father. And I don't believe that God wants me to be sick.

I personally don't believe it. If He does want me to be sick, it must be to teach me a lesson. Or to use me more mightily.

Or to humble me so that He can give me grace. That's okay. But it's got to be something better than sickness then.

Otherwise, I don't believe it's God's will for me to be sick. And I'm not going to give up just because I prayed once or twice and nothing happened. I'm not going to give up till I get it.

You remember that woman who had a demon-possessed daughter? Who came to Jesus and said, Please just give me healing for my daughter. And Jesus said, Oh, go away. I can't give that bread to the dogs.

He didn't treat her like a dog. If you read that story, He walked 50 miles. One whole day He walked just to help that woman.

And walked one day 50 miles back. He walked 50 miles, 80 kilometers up and down. 160 kilometers to help one person.

Do you think He'd call her a dog after that? No. It was just to test her. And God will test you by not answering your prayer immediately.

By humbling you. It looks as if He's treating you like a dog. He's not.

He's just testing you to see whether... And that woman said, Okay, Lord. I'm nobody. I'm just a dog.

But even the dogs get the crumbs that fall from the table. And Jesus said, He wanted His disciples to hear that. But that saying, Go your way.

Your daughter, who's 10 miles away, is healed already. The demon is gone. It's one of those cases where Jesus casts out a demon long distance.

10 miles away. Because she took that humble position. I don't deserve anything, Lord.

But because you died for me, I can have it. And what was it that cast out the demon? A crumb. That's all that healing is.

What is the bread? If healing is a crumb, casting out a demon is a crumb, what do you think is the bread on the table? Overcoming sin. Living a life of usefulness to God. And if you have that, can't you have the crumbs? Sure.

God is a good God. Don't ever doubt that. You say, I'm going to die believing that God is a good God.

I die, I die trusting Him. Okay, question. Will I ever live as a victorious Christian someday? What's the answer? The rest of you? Okay, good.

Great. See, something has happened. I remember hearing, there was an incident where one brother, this actually happened in a church, you know, where everybody was testifying and this brother got up and said, it was another country.

I, every day, in my office I determined, today when I go home, I'm not going to get angry with my children. But every day I come back from work, I lose my temper at my children. He was testifying in the meeting and today I was driving home and I said, I'm not going to get angry with my children today.

And he started weeping. And he said, I got angry today also. And he's going to sit down and the other brother said, no, no, no, no, no, don't sit down yet.

You've got to say one more sentence before you sit down. But it will not be like this forever. I will overcome one day.

Say that. So he said that. Now you can sit down.

See, that's it. That is confessing our hope. Do you know the difference between hope and faith? Faith is what I have now.

Hope is what I'm going to get, maybe tomorrow, maybe next week, I don't know. But I have hope. I confess my hope, the Bible says.

It's not yet faith. One day hope will become faith. And I got it.

Just like that with me. I believed in Romans 6, 14, sin shall not have dominion over you. But I was defeated, defeated, defeated, defeated in my home.

Defeated in my thoughts, anger, everything. Dirty thoughts, anger. And then, one day it came.

It will come for you, don't give up. Abraham, I don't know whether you know that story where one day God told him, your name is Abram, which means exalted father. Change your name to Abraham, means father of a multitude.

How many children did he have? Zero. Okay, next morning he calls all his 318 servants and says, fellas, my name is father of a multitude. What happened? Did Sarah have a son last night? Hey Abraham, sir, did your wife have a son last night? No, no, no, she's just the same.

She's not even conceived yet. And you changed your name already? That's right. Father of a multitude.

He goes around telling everybody, I'm father of a multitude. How many children do you have? Zero right now, but I'm father of a multitude. And he goes on like that for year, year, year, year, year, year after.

Today, everybody knows, Abraham is the father of a multitude. Didn't God honor him for saying that? The Bible says in Romans 4, he honored God, gave glory to him by believing that was able to do what he had promised. Not what I am able to make a multitude out of my body.

No, that God was able to do what he promised. He has promised to save me from my sin. He'll do it.

He has promised to write his laws in my heart and my mind. Hebrews 8. He'll do it. That's faith.

Not believing what you're capable of. Believing that God is able to do what he's promised. The prayer of faith will heal the sick.

God is able to do what he's promised. I believe it. Go to scripture like that and you'll see amazing things that happen in your life.

You don't have to go boasting about it. Just confess it to God. Lord, I believe and confess it to the devil.

Okay, that answers many, many questions because a lot of people are seeking about this. Okay, let me go to some other questions. What is the definition of humility? Humility is what you see in the life of Jesus.

Jesus said, learn from me for I am humble. Matthew 11.29 If you want to learn humility, just look at the life of Jesus. See the things in his life.

How he was willing to be born in a stable. How people called him an illegitimate child of Mary. And he just kept quiet.

He said, let people call me what they like. You know what's the English name for an illegitimate child? Bastard. That's what they called Jesus and he accepted it.

And they called him prince of devils, demon, all kinds of things. And he humbled himself. He humbled himself to take a lowly job as a carpenter when other people were big shots around him.

He was ill-treated, beaten. He just accepted everything. And he watched the disciples beat.

He never desired any position. He didn't even want a title. He always called himself the son of man.

And I love that title because my translation of that word is, I'm an ordinary man. Once they called him prince of devils. And he said, well, I'm an ordinary man.

If you've spoken against me, you're forgiven. I love that. He challenged me so much that Jesus, who was God Almighty, came to earth and always called himself an ordinary man.

And that challenged my heart and said, Lord, till the end of my life, help me. I want to be an ordinary man. Even if I become the greatest servant of God on earth, I want to be an ordinary man.

I want to be an ordinary man. I don't want a title. I don't want a position.

I don't want any honor. I don't want anything. I just want to be a brother among brothers and sisters, an ordinary man.

We learn humility from Jesus. Forgive people who call you the devil, etc., etc. Why should we take water baptism? Jesus commanded it.

And even if there's no other reason for it, we take it. We testify that our old man was dead, buried. I've turned over a new leaf.

I've been dead with Christ. I've risen. And we must take it as soon as we are born again.

As soon as you're sure you're born again. There's no rule in the Bible, somebody's asked a question, do you have to wait till you're 18 years old? No. We don't baptize.

You know, I believe a person can be born again when they're 3, 4 years old, 5 years old. They can really accept Christ. But for that child's own sake, I say wait till you're a little more mature, and you really are convinced.

You know, sometimes children can take baptism, because, oh, all those people getting baptized. I'd like to get baptized too. It's like a mosque thing.

No, it must be an individual thing, where you yourself are convinced. There's no rule. You can be baptized at any age, but generally speaking, in your own interest, I'd say wait till you're mature enough, and I won't give an age limit there, when you know you're convinced yourself, and you're not taking it because your friends are taking it.

You're convinced that you belong to Jesus Christ, you never want to live for the world. Not you will never, but you never want to live for the world. I ask people who come for baptism, I don't ask them, will you sin again? Even I can't answer that question properly.

Do you want to sin again? Oh, my answer is a resounding no. Do you want to sin again? That's the question. Okay, is it unchristian to watch movies which have some violence in them? A lot of movies today have sex and violence.

In western countries they have a rating called R-rated, and X-rated is much worse, but even R-rated, R-rated for sex and R-rated for violence, I always encourage people to avoid watching them. You know, movies are a form of entertainment, but I've found that even some movies which are good, they put in five seconds of sex just to pollute your mind. It's very sad.

It's very difficult to find nowadays a movie which is clean all the way through. And I'll tell you something, if you watch one of those movies, you may forget everything, at least for men it's like that, you'll remember that five seconds you saw are filth. That's what sticks in your mind, because that's something that your flesh responds to.

The rest of the story you forget. That teaches us that there's something in our flesh which responds to these type of temptations. So then we have to ask ourselves, evaluate.

Okay, I get some entertainment value from that movie, but then I have to evaluate it, I put in a balance and say, is it worth it if I'm going to pollute my mind for the next 25 years with that thought? It's not worth it. I'd avoid it. Because, I'll tell you, I'm not saying you'll go to hell because of that, but I want my sword to be sharp for the Lord, and some of these things blunt the edge of my sword, and I can't speak God's word sharp enough, because the devil has blunted it.

And I'll tell you, the devil's trying to blunt your testimony and your sharpness for the Lord, and your devotion to Christ in some way, and he uses these things to do that. So I would say be very, very careful. Violence is another thing you've got to be careful about.

You know, it's very common now in schools, for even kindergarten children who have watched the World Wrestling Federation. Remember that WWW is not World Wide Web for many children, it is the World Wrestling, what's the next word? WWF. Okay.

They learn to tackle people in tough, and they try it on each other in school. Where did they learn all that? They're watching some type of violence on television and all that. You've got to be very careful.

Very, very careful. Even television, I'd say be very careful, because I find a lot of students nowadays don't... I remember once when somebody was buying television in our church, I said, just watch your children's grades in school, now that you've got TV. You may be very careful that you don't watch filthy programs, but think of what their grades are going to be, because they spend so much time watching television, even good things, that time gets wasted.

You've got to be very careful with all these things nowadays. I don't say you should never watch TV, and I don't say you should never watch a movie, but you've got to be extremely careful with programs to see what... Am I going to get some good out of it? And if you've had one or two bad experiences, then be extremely careful with the type of movies you watch. How do you go about practically meditating on scripture and listening to God the whole day through? Well, it's a habit that has to be developed.

You know, try and absorb scripture. It's better to read a small passage of scripture and let that sink in, rather than read large sections and not sink in. Let it meditate, meditate on God's Word.

And supposing one day you went to work or school without reading the Bible, that's fine. When you have a spare moment during the day, try to think of some scripture that you have read off or meditated on in the past and say, Lord, I didn't read the Bible this morning and I've come off to work now. I want to try and think of some scripture I want to think of right now, while you're doing some work during the day.

And say, Lord, please give me something from that. See, the important thing is not reading the Bible. The important thing is meditating on scripture.

And we read the Bible in order to meditate on scripture, not to ease our conscience and say, oh, I read the Bible 15 minutes. Another person who meditated on scripture for 5 minutes may get more than you read the Bible for 15 minutes. It's meditations, thinking about what is God trying to say to me through that.

Okay, what does it mean to humble myself under the mighty hand of God? That means to accept the circumstances and situations God has planned for your life. I mean, arranged for your life. That means if your particular circumstances are a bit difficult right now, you didn't get that admission, you couldn't marry that girl or that boy you wanted to marry, that's fine.

Humble yourself under God. Oh God, well that's fine. That's your mighty hand that's allowed that circumstance.

I didn't get that admission, I didn't get that job. It's disappointing, but I believe it's your mighty hand. I'm not going to grumble, I'm not going to complain.

If you can remember, I've tried to teach people two circles. One is a very small circle. If I wish I had a blackboard here, I'd draw a very small circle.

Then a huge circle next to it. These are two circles in your life. This very small circle is all the things you can do something about.

There are very, very few things you can do something about. Because there are so many other people and circumstances that try to trouble you in so many ways. There could be germs in the air bringing the flu.

What can you do about that? That's not in your circle. Those are things you don't have any control over. There are people probably planning to do some evil to you right now.

You don't even know about it. You don't have any control over that. And there are so many events.

There could be terrorists. There could be people with bombs. You can't do anything about all those things.

In fact, all of that is in this big circle that God takes care of. And my circle is very small. I meditate on scripture.

Those are the few things I can do. I pray when I have a need. And I cry out to God.

I try my best to love people. There are certain very few things I can do. I say, I'm going to do that.

I'm only going to concentrate on that. And if I see some situation over which I can do nothing about that, I say, well, that's in God's circle. The Bible says, don't be a busybody in other people's matters.

So that's God's matter and I'm not going to worry about that. I say, Lord, that's your problem, it's not mine. I know it's coming into my life, but that's for you to handle.

It's not for me. What I can do, I do. You see, that's brought such rest into my life.

If you can recognize there are two circles in your life, one very, very small circle over which you have control, you can do something about it. You know, so often we worry about things over which we can do nothing. We have no control over them.

So I want to encourage you to be at rest. That's how I've come to rest myself. I believe my life is a life of deep rest in God.

I have no problem sleeping at night, I have no problem sleeping anywhere. Because, I say, my circle is so small. There's very little that I can do in my life.

All the rest is God's circle. I'll tell you, you'll overcome anger and many other things when you recognize your circle is so small. And you'll be merciful to other people because you say, that's something that guy doesn't have any control over either.

He's also got a small circle. Why am I blaming him? For things which God is in. God's in all that.

So often we blame other people. Hey, why did you do this? Why did you do that? We're so hard on people and it's because as if we do everything perfectly ourselves. I'll tell you the only person who can afford to be hard on others is the man who never makes a mistake himself.

And that's Almighty God. And He's not hard on people. Isn't it interesting? There's one person in the universe who never made a mistake.

He's very merciful to people. To everybody. And we who made thousands of mistakes, we're so hard on others when they make a mistake.

That's because we're so evil. One mark of an evil man is a lack of mercy. You know one place in the universe where there's no mercy? Where? Hell.

Did you say hell? Yes? Right. So, when you don't have mercy in your heart towards somebody, what do you have in your heart? A little bit of? Got it? Have you got a little bit of hell right now in your heart towards someone? Get rid of it. When you don't have mercy towards someone who made a mistake, you got a little bit of hell in your heart.

And I'll tell you, I decided long ago in my life, I am not going to have a little bit of hell in my heart. No. That guy may have done the worst possible thing, that's fine.

He wants to have hell in his heart, he's welcome. But I'm not going to have it in mine. Yup.

So, how to be sure that you're filled with the Holy Spirit? It's not accompanied with speaking in tongues. I'll tell you that. Even if you speak in tongues, you can't be sure you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's no verse in the Bible which says, if you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you're certainly spoken in tongues. That's a Pentecostal teaching. It's not in the Bible.

Jesus said, Acts 1.8. That's the verse I always go by. Jesus' words are always the final word for me. When the Holy Spirit's come upon you, you shall receive power.

Why didn't people speak about that? I find in India, I'm almost one of the only ones who speak about that. Power. I speak in tongues, but I don't believe that's the evidence.

Because I've met thousands of people who speak in tongues, I don't believe they're filled with the Spirit at all. And I know a lot of people like Moody and Finney and all who are filled with the Spirit, who never spoke in tongues, and their lives are mightily used by God. John Wesley.

You can't say they were not filled with the Holy Spirit. They never spoke in tongues. Seek for power.

I never tell people to seek for tongues. I say, seek for power in your life. Power to overcome sin.

Power to be a bold witness for Jesus in your place of work, in your college. Power to serve the Lord. Whatever your calling is, power to share the word with others.

That's what you need. Power. So that's... And if God gives you tongues, take it.

It's like the extra at the end, you know. The main meal is power. Okay.

Do we need to have a kind of feeling when we're saved? No. Salvation is by faith. Feeling follows.

Don't put the cart in front of the horse. I'm sure all of you have seen bullock carts, right? Yes or no? See, what a wonderful country. You know, I've been in many countries.

They've never seen a bullock cart in their life. We've all seen bullock carts. Have you ever seen a bullock pushing a cart in the front? I haven't.

The bullock is always in front and the cart is behind. Faith must come first and feeling must come. So next time you're looking for feeling first, think of the story of the bullock pushing the cart.

See, you got it all wrong. Okay. Right.

Why are some babies born retarded physically and mentally when many times they go through hard times? Well, I'll tell you. There are many things for which I don't have the full answer. But there are certain things which I know absolutely.

God is a good God. The devil is a bad devil. I know this world is under a curse.

That's why there are thorns. That's why thorns can poke the feet of believers. One of the results of the curse is that we perspire.

Do believers perspire? Yes? Okay. That's part of the curse. You know we won't perspire in heaven.

It's one of the curses that God put on this earth. Can snakes come into the compounds of believers? Sure. We had one in our compound once.

So these are results of the curse. There could be a flu going around town. We could get it.

It's not because we're evil. No! It's because we are living in a sin-cursed earth. Our feet can be poked by thorns.

We can be tossed off the scooter. There can be accidents, little, little things. God cares for us.

But as long as we are under a world under the curse, certain things we cannot avoid. But we thank God for His mercies. He's provided medicines.

He's provided hospitals. He's provided good doctors. Etc, etc.

So we're thankful for all these mercies. But one day in heaven we will discover why God has allowed so many problems, so many poor people. I live in this country and I say Oh Lord, so many beggars, so many poor lepers.

If there were only a few, I would have helped all of them. But the problem is in millions. I don't even know where to start.

I can't even scratch the surface. It's so big that I almost feel like giving up. I don't know the answer.

But I know one thing, and I've seen this through 30 years in all of our churches. People who live in slums, they accept Christ and immediately their standard of living comes up. It's not because we give them money.

The blessing of God comes upon their life. I've seen, you haven't seen it, I've seen it in 30 years in all of our churches. Extremely poor people.

And it's gone well with them financially when they sought God's kingdom first. That's true. It's gone well with me.

My wife and I started very poor when we were married. It's gone well with me financially. I'll tell you that.

But I never sought it. I was never interested in money. I was interested in living for God.

And I'll tell you many people in our church who can testify to that. Not only our church, down in the poor villages in Tamil Nadu they can testify to that. Because it's true.

We teach them to seek God's kingdom first. That's the answer to everything. When the spirit is right, other things take care of itself.

It doesn't mean we won't have thorns. It doesn't mean we won't perspire. And what is the greatest mark of the curse? Death.

Do believers die? Sure. It's because of the curse. There won't be any death in heaven.

So because of that curse there are retarded babies. There are so many things like that. I don't know the full answer.

Sickness. So many things. But one thing.

A believer knows how to overcome this and give thanks to God in everything. Okay. We won't have time to cover all these questions.

I'll try and... Why don't we allow sisters to be priests and pastors? All believers? We don't allow brothers to be priests and pastors. Every believer is a king and a priest to God. Isn't that great? Sisters also, you're a king and a priest to God.

Or a queen and a priest to God. Pastors. Pastor is a gift.

It's not a title. I personally don't believe in the title of pastor. I believe it's a gift.

A person who's got a shepherding heart towards the lambs. And we want many pastors in our churches. A person may be a leader.

He's called an elder in the New Testament. That's the title we prefer because that's the title the New Testament uses. Why do we have to follow rules such as don't drink, don't smoke? What does the Bible say about it? The Bible says whatever you do, do for the glory of God.

If you can smoke and drink for the glory of God, go right ahead. 1 Corinthians 10.31 1 Corinthians 10.31 is a great... Whereas the other thing it says is do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. It says in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5. That means I say whatever you do, do it in fellowship with Jesus.

I was actually in a place in one of the states in India way up in the north where I discovered there were very good believers and they all used to smoke cigarettes. I don't blame them because the teachers didn't teach them. So I said how can I tell these good believers to stop smoking? So one day I got up in the meeting.

I was having a series of meetings and I said I'll tell all of you how you can smoke a cigarette as Christians. Christian way of smoking a cigarette. So I said, you know, have you seen this how people who smoke cigarettes will always offer a cigarette to the person standing there.

I've seen that even happen in a bus stand where somebody doesn't know me. He's smoking. He said, would you like a cigarette? I said, no thank you.

So I say, don't you want Jesus to be with you all the time? Next time you pull out a pack of cigarettes, offer one to Jesus and say this is great Lord. Just try this. And you think he'll smoke? He won't.

But if he doesn't smoke, you don't smoke. I said this is the way to do it. Whatever you do, do it in fellowship with Jesus.

If Jesus won't do it, don't do it. If you think Jesus won't watch that television program, you better turn it off yourself. So we don't have rules in the Bible because in the Old Testament they had the Bible as the light.

Today Jesus is the light. Did you know that big difference between Old Testament and New Testament? The Old Testament is thy word is the lamb to my feet, Psalm 119, 105. Today it says Jesus is the light.

His light, in him was light, John 1, 4. The great difference between Old Testament and New Testament is Old Testament was rules. Thou shalt not this, this, this, this, this. How to remember all these rules? That's

why God made a tribe called Levites to study these rules and teach people.

Today it's much simpler. No rules. Just Jesus.

Would Jesus do it? Can I do that in fellowship with Jesus? You get the answer straight away. You don't need a Levite, you don't need a pastor, you don't need a priest. Isn't that great? Yep.

Okay. When does appreciating beauty in the opposite sex become lust? I think every man knows when it becomes lust. He crosses a red line and he realizes.

It's difficult to define but you know when you stare too long. Somebody once said like this, the first look is temptation, the second look is sin. Okay.

Learning music, is it right to learn instruments if the teachers teach you secular rock music songs to practice technique? Well, I personally believe secular music is okay, but rock music is not. I've always associated rock music with demons and drugs. I mean, these fellows who sing rock music, you see them outside of their CDs and all.

And the way they look at them, the way they dress themselves, they make it obvious, hey, I belong to the devil. See, here I am. No, I don't understand.

Anybody can't see through that. I would avoid it. I would avoid secular music which keeps on.

You know, I remember hearing secular music when I was young. I don't listen to it so much nowadays. But I remember when I was 15, 16 years old, almost all the songs was, oh honey, why did you leave me? When will you come back? I can't live without you.

It's all these disappointed lover type of songs. Almost every one of them. And you keep on singing that.

You feel sorry for yourself. You're thinking of this girl and that boy and you're always thinking, why did you leave me? It affects your mind after some time. So that's what I have against these songs.

And it's not good to keep on singing something which makes me depressed. And it's all imagination. No such thing is happening.

So, that's the reason I say, the music is okay if you don't know the words. Some of these things, the words keep ringing in our mind. We've got to be careful.

Okay, some of these I've answered. How can I have a great love for the Lord in my life? Two things. One, 1 John 4, it says, we love Him because He first loved us.

That's the first thing you must bear in mind. It's towards the end of 1 John 4. I don't remember the verse. We love Him because He first loved us.

Meditate on how much Jesus loved you. Meditate on the cross. That's the first thing, to increase your love for Jesus.

Second, in the end of Luke chapter 7, it says, He who is forgiven much, loves much. So that's the second way to increase our love for the Lord. By meditating on how much I have been forgiven in my life.

So there are only two things you need to meditate on. One, how much Jesus loved you. Second, how much He has forgiven you.

You must remember, don't get depressed by your past sins. They've all been cleansed in the blood of Jesus. You must believe that.

But you must remember them to be grateful. Not remember them to feel condemned. Now, you confess your sin, they're all forgiven.

But I've been forgiven many sins in my life. But I'll tell you till today, I remember my past life, and I'll never want to forget them. Because 2nd Peter 1 says, if you forget your past life, you'll become spiritually blind.

I don't have time to show you exactly the reference. 2nd Peter 1. So I don't want to be spiritually blind, so I remember my past sins, and how much I've been forgiven increases my love for the Lord. Okay.

What if someone keeps on making fun of you? Well, I remember someone told me this, Brother Zach, they're treating me like this, they're doing this, they're doing this to me. I said, have they spat on your face yet? Have they whipped your back yet? Have they nailed you to a cross yet? He said, no, no, no, none of those things. Ah, I said, then you've just had a few mosquito bites.

Don't make a big fuss over that. Jesus went through much more than all that, and what did he say at the end of it all? Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

So, don't weep such crocodile tears over, oh, my mosquito bit me. I tell you, some women, some men act like women. Somebody's making fun of me, somebody's Is it wrong? Very important question.

All alert. Is it wrong to fall in love with someone from the church? And that's the only person you have in your heart. The expressions are mine, it's written in ordinary.

And you want to marry that person. What do I do in that situation when even that person has an affection for me? And we are unsure what to do. I suppose second chapter is that parents don't agree or something like that.

Anyway. I don't believe it's wrong to I really don't like the word fall in love. He keeps us from falling.

So I prefer the word rise up in love. Why not? Why not rise up in love? Instead of fall in love. He is able to keep you from falling.

A thousand shall fall on your left side and ten thousand on your right. But Psalm 91, but it will not come near you. I shall rise up in love.

I rose up in love about 39 years ago and I got married to the one I rose up in love with. Yeah, I believe it's right. God gives us an affection, but your affection must not be based on somebody's pretty face or somebody's wealth or somebody's got a good job, but must be based on that person is a spiritually minded person.

I'm not saying you should ignore whether he is a jobless man walking around the streets. I'm not saying that's unimportant. A person, a man who gets married should be able to support a family.

But my point is that's not the primary reason. If your attraction is based on spiritual values, then it's right to love a person. But, I would say to boys, hang on at least till you're 25 years old.

Don't be in a rush. I mean some 16 year old listening to me and says, ah, that's it. No, it's not for you.

Wait till you're 25. And your sisters, wait till you're at least 20 before you begin to think about all those things. Because marriage must be there within the reasonable future.

You don't want a prolonged you know, to love somebody and you know you can't marry that person for 6 years is like driving for 100 miles with your foot on the brakes. You know what will happen to your scooter or brake mechanism or car brake mechanism? The linings will get worn out. And your emotional linings will get worn out if you keep on having to hold on to a love for 6-7 years.

So, I'd say, hang on. If there's a reasonable prospect of marriage within the near future, by all means is perfectly right. And you say, what if the elders object? Well, pray.

If your parents object. But you got to be you know, sometimes what we call love is you just think that that's God's will. I've heard people come to me and say, Brother Zak, I'm absolutely God showed me very clearly that that's the goal for me.

But I asked her, she said, nothing doing. So, I said, that proves it's not God's will for you. You heard wrong.

You heard it wrong. That wasn't God. That was your own self.

You loved a pretty face and you thought it was God. You can't make a mistake like that. That's why we have older brothers to advise us.

Seek the advice of a godly older brother. And if your elder brother doesn't believe in falling in love, then don't ask him. Go and ask somebody else who thinks it's okay.

I sometimes have a judgmental attitude in my mind and I quickly pass an opinion. I think all of us do, but we got to stop it. You know, that can be like a temptation.

When a thought comes into your mind, that's not sin. It's what you do with that thought that's sin. The devil put a thought into Jesus' mind.

Turn the stones into bread. That's temptation. You can be sitting here and have a dirty thought.

That's a temptation. You reject it. It's not sin.

So you say, Lord, I don't want that. What do you do about temptations? Like what? Iso. Fail.

I mean, I have to have this. I'm going to die if I don't. Well, I think you've got to see, like I said earlier, if you learn how much Jesus suffered to die for you, I think you'll learn to hate sin more.

Okay? I think most of these we've answered. What is the clearest proof that when one considers a marriage to the right one, should we wait for a sign from God? I think the clearest proof is that you have a peace in your heart. First of all, ask yourself, are you going by spiritual factors primarily? I'm not saying physical beauty is unimportant.

I don't say that. We're not angels. We are human beings, so we've got spirit, soul, and body.

So I believe God made us spirit, soul, and body. So I believe body is also important, but number three, mind is important, because that's number two. And spirit is number one.

That's all I say. I'm not super spiritual saying, oh, physical attraction is unimportant. I don't say that.

I just say keep it number three. Intellectual compatibility, that's important, but that's number two. Spiritual compatibility, that's number one.

If you keep it in that order, everything is okay. What are the dangers a young person faces when he's popular in his youth group? There's nothing wrong in being popular if you say, well, Lord, I'm not going to pursue after popularity. I'm going to seek to please You.

Do you think if we keep on allowing people to take advantage of us and we don't say anything back, they'll keep on taking more and more advantage of us? You must believe that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. He'll control how much other people trouble you, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. I want to give you all a great verse as I close, and that is 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13.

He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. That's a great verse. It's helped me tremendously whenever I face a massive temptation or somebody is harassing me a lot.

I say, well, I'm just going to forgive him, forgive him, and is he going to take advantage of me? I come back to this verse. God will not allow me to be tempted beyond my ability. You know, sometimes I advise a wife who is being harassed by an unconverted husband, and he says, Brother Zach, what will I do? If I just keep quiet, he just keeps on taking advantage.

You must believe, sister, that God will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. If you don't have faith in that, I'd have given up long ago. How do I know that the devil won't put a massive temptation on me tomorrow that'll knock me out completely? Do you think there are temptations in the world that could knock me out completely? Sure, but they won't come to me until I'm ready for them.

You know, about 8 years ago, some folks, some religious folks filed a court case against me for something I wrote about them, some tract exposing their own doctrines, etc. I can imagine that 10, 12 years ago or 15 years ago, the devil came to God and said, can I get people to have a court case against Zach? God said, no, nothing doing. Next year, can I do it now? No, can't do it.

He's not ready for it. He's not strong enough. Next year, next year.

It's like Job, you know. Next year. One year, 1998, God says to Satan, okay, now you can go ahead.

I get a surprise when I get this court notice. But it wasn't a surprise for God. He'd already given permission to the devil and he had prepared me for it.

Now, I'm just using that as an example. You may not be ready for it, so it won't come to you. When you're on the first standard, you don't get a 10th standard question paper.

No. You'll get a question paper according to the class you're in. So, nobody can tempt me beyond my ability.

Why? Because God filters it out. There's a filter there. 1 Corinthians 10, 13 is like a filter.

It comes, God says, is he ready for that yet? He's not strong enough. Sorry, devil. You can't touch him now.

After 10 years, that temptation may come, because now you're strong enough. And that's a compliment to you. Ah, you moved up from first standard to 10th standard now.

You can get a 10th standard question paper. Isn't that an honor? You want to live with the first standard question paper all your life? Yes or no? No, I don't want to live with the first standard question paper all my life. I want to go on to a PhD and post-doctoral studies in the Christian life.

The Christian life is wonderful, I want to tell you. I didn't answer every question. There are some questions about what to do when people of the opposite sex try to be friendly and send SMS messages to you when you're working on the phone, working in the office, and they try to be friendly.

I think you've got to be very wise. And if you make it known that you're a wholehearted Christian and Jesus Christ is the person in your life and those girls will think you're a funny type of creature and leave you alone in any case. It's because you don't reveal that you're an out-and-out disciple of Christ that they try to be friendly with you.

And if you're an out-and-out disciple of Christ and you don't laugh at their dirty jokes and don't play the fool and you're helpful and kind and compassionate but not playing the fool type, they'll say you're a serious person. They want to fool around, they'll find other people to fool around with. And if you get SMS messages, you know there's a delete function on this cell phone? Reply.

Erase. Delete. Finished.

And they don't get a reply, they get a message in a little while. So that's great. Yeah.

Somebody's asked a question about praising. What's the difference between praise and worship? You know there's a message of mine on the internet between the difference between thanksgiving, praise and worship. Thanksgiving is thanking God for what he's done for us.

Praise is praising him for who he is even if he did nothing for us. And worship is bowing down our life and submitting our life completely to him. Yep.

Can we pray when we don't have a separate room by ourselves? Sure. We can walk in the fields, walk on the road, sit in the toilet. There's so many places where we can be alone and pray to God.

There's an answer to everything if you're seeking God with all your heart. I'll tell you that. I found that in 47 years of being a Christian.

May God help you all to be overcomers. Amen? Thank you Father for helping us today with these questions and help us to honor you and please you in everything. Especially these young people.

I pray that they will be overcomers and pray that you will guide them in every step of their future path. Marriage, job, education, everything. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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