

(A Heavenly Home) 1. a Heavenly Home on Earth

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of building a marriage on God's love and instructions to create a heavenly home on earth.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 11:18-21, Song of Solomon 8:6-7, Isaiah 49:15, Matthew 22:37-39

Topics: "Heavenly Home", "Love in Marriage"

Description

Zac Poonen shares a heartfelt message at the wedding of his eldest son Sanjay and Kathy, emphasizing the importance of building a heavenly home on earth through love and God's guidance. He highlights that a home can reflect the peace and joy of heaven when it is founded on God's unconditional love and the Maker's instructions found in the Bible. Poonen illustrates that true love involves appreciation, forgiveness, and partnership, urging the couple to prioritize their relationship with God to strengthen their marriage. He concludes by encouraging them to seek God's love as the foundation for their life together, ensuring their days can be like heaven on earth.

Transcript

(Message given at the wedding of Sanjay (my eldest son) and Kathy)

It's a great joy for me to speak at my eldest son's wedding. We have been looking forward to this day for many years.

I want to share a phrase with Sanjay and Kathy that is found in Deuteronomy 11:18 to 21 (in the King James Version). There God says, "Impress My words upon your heart so that your days may be as the days of heaven upon earth."

What an expression that is: "That your days may be as the days of heaven upon earth".

Think what the days of heaven are like. There is no strife or conflict in heaven, but only peace and joy. And above all, love - everywhere. You can have a home like that - where everyday is like a day of heaven upon earth. That is the way God intended every home to be.

The Bible begins with the marriage of Adam and Eve and ends with the marriage of Christ to His people, the Church.

When God conducted that first wedding - of Adam and Eve - He wanted their days to be like days of heaven upon earth. Their first home was a paradise - Eden. But Satan came and made their home into a hell. And now we have homes like hell all over the world, today.

But praise God that was not the end of the story. The Bible tells us, how right there in Eden, as soon as Adam sinned, God promised to send His Son to solve the problem Satan had created. That's where we see this great truth: That God is always on our side against the Devil. Before God cursed the earth for Adam's sin, He told Adam and Eve that a seed would come through the woman Who would bruise the head of the Devil. It was only after that, that God pronounced their punishment.

Even though the Devil had come and messed up things, God wanted Adam and Eve to know that He was on their side against the Devil. No matter what the Devil may ever do in any home, God is in the business of redeeming homes. He wants to bring our homes back to His original plan where our days will be as the days of heaven upon earth. And now that Christ has come and the work of redemption has been accomplished, this is a real possibility for every one of us.

The Manufacturer's Instructions

Some time ago, I bought a digital camera. Before that, I used the simple "point and click" cameras that used a roll of film. But with this expensive digital camera, I discovered that the pictures were not better but worse. They were fuzzy and out of focus. After spending all that money, I got pictures that were fit only to be thrown in the trash - just like many marriages.

And why was this so? Because I had not read the manufacturer's instructions. We know that every expensive piece of equipment always comes with an instruction-booklet that the maker supplies. Is it possible then that God Who ordained marriage could have left us without any instructions? Of course not. He has given us instructions. It is because we don't follow those instructions (as I did with my digital camera) that our marriages turn out fuzzy, out of focus and fit for the trash-can.

And so I read the manufacturer's booklet and followed his instructions exactly on how to use my digital camera. I did not dare to imagine that I knew better than the maker of that camera. It would have been foolish to have thought like that. But that is the foolishness found in many who ignore their "Maker's Instructions" when it comes to marriage - and who imagine that they can produce a better marriage by listening to psychologists and human tradition than to God Himself.

God has given us very clear instructions on marriage. When I finally followed the digital camera-maker's instructions, my pictures came out perfect. And that's exactly what will happen in a marriage, when the husband and wife follow the Makers Instructions.

There is only one book in the world that contains the Maker's Instructions on marriage - the Bible. I started studying it many years before I got married. And my wife and I studied it together after we were married. And in the 37 years of our marriage we have tasted a little bit of what it means to have "days of heaven upon earth".

The message of the gospel is this, that we can have two heavens - one right now, as our days on earth become like the days of heaven. And finally a physical heaven, when Christ returns.

The other alternative is to have two hells - one right now, and the other in eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us from that.

The Foundation

Sanjay and Kathy are going to be living in a two-storey-house. And we can look at that as a picture of marriage. That house has a foundation first of all, on which the first and second storeys are built.

The most important part of any house is its foundation. What every marriage needs first of all, is also a good foundation. And the foundation for a good marriage is God's perfect and unconditional love for us. The truth of God's unconditional love is the greatest truth found in the whole Bible. Even when we falter and blunder and fail and make a mess of our lives, God's love for us never changes.

When God wanted to illustrate His love for us, He used the example of a mother's love for her newborn child. We know that a mother expects nothing in return from her baby.

On the other hand, the love that is portrayed over television and in the movies is a selfish love. A young man may say that he "loves" a girl. But he wants something from her for his own pleasure. And she wants something from him for herself too.

God's love however is different. It is like a mother's love for a newborn baby. The mother does not want a single thing from her child. In fact, her little baby can't give her anything at all. A mother's love is the most unselfish love on the face of the earth. That is the example God uses in Isaiah 49:15, when He explains His love for us - it is a love that is totally unselfish and expects nothing in return. Like a mother, God serves and suffers for the sake of His children. Have you seen how a mother looks after a sick child? That is how God loves us too.

Being aware of this perfect love of God for you both is what you need as the foundation for your new home. On that foundation you can build the two floors. If each of you is not individually secure in God's love, then you will have many problems between yourselves.

I am convinced that many of our problems are caused by our insecurity. We have not found security in the unconditional love of a heavenly Father. And when we are not secure in the love of our heavenly Father, we will not be able to love others as we should. We will have jealousy, a competitive spirit and many other problems in our relationships. But once we are secure in God's love, we become free - and then we can start building.

The First Floor

When someone asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was, He replied that there were two commandments that were the greatest - not just one. The first was to love God with all one's heart, soul and strength; and the second was to love others, as He loved us.

And those are the two floors of the house. You can't build the second floor before you build the first. A lot of people make that mistake - they try to love others without first loving God with all their hearts. They haven't read the Maker's instructions - and so their love for others withers away after a while. We've got to love God first, before we can love others the way we should love.

When God made Adam and Eve, He didn't make them together - at the same time. He could have done that easily if He wanted to. He could have taken two lumps of clay instead of one, and made both man and woman at the same time, and breathed into both of them. But why did He make Adam alone? So that when Adam opened his eyes, the first person he would see would be God - and not Eve! Then God put

Adam to sleep. Why? Not just to take a rib out of his side. But so that when God made Eve separately in some other corner of the garden, and she opened her eyes, the first person she would see would also be God and not Adam. She didn't even know of the existence of Adam. She only saw God at first.

That was the first lesson God wanted to teach Adam and Eve: "I, your God, must be first in your lives always." That is the lesson that all of us must learn too.

You have heard of the well-known industrial glue, Fevicol, which is used to stick wood together. I saw an advertisement for that once, that showed two pieces of wood stuck together with Fevicol, and two elephants trying to pull them apart. And those elephants are unable to separate those two pieces of wood. That is how a truly Christian marriage becomes too, when Christ is in the centre, between husband and wife, holding them together. No force on earth or in heaven will then be able to separate such a husband and wife from each other. If however Christ is not first and the binding factor between husband and wife, then such a marriage will be like two pieces of wood just put together without any glue. They will fall apart, even without anyone pulling them apart. No wonder, we see so much of divorce in the world today. Those couples truly imagined that they loved each other deeply, on the day they were married. But what they did not realize was that theirs was a selfish love, because Christ was not Lord of their lives. Thus, a few months later, they found themselves snapping at each other.

"Love one another" is a nice, over-used expression. But you can't really do it, if you don't love God first. You won't be able to endure to the end in love for your spouse, if Christ is not Lord of your personal life.

But once you have built the first floor - loving God - then you can build the second - loving one another.

The Second Floor

I want to say three things about loving one another.

First of all love expresses appreciation. There is a whole book on married love that God has included in the Bible - the Song of Solomon. All married couples should read that book - to each other! It's amazing to see there how Almighty God expects a husband and wife to talk to each other! And that book is inspired Scripture just as much as the other books in the Bible!

Let me read you a few extracts from this book, so that we can all learn to appreciate each other as husbands and wives. We are all misers when it comes to expressing appreciation. We are quick to criticize, but very slow to appreciate. We look at people and find so many faults in them. That is human nature. And that is how the Accuser, the Devil gets a foothold within us. On the other hand, God gets a foothold within us, when we look at others and find something to appreciate in them. Each of us can examine our own conduct here.

See what the husband says to his wife here in Song of Solomon (from the Message Bible):

"You're beautiful, my dear love, from head to toe - beautiful beyond compare and absolutely flawless. You're as lovely as the ravishing visions of my ecstasy. Your voice is soothing and your face is ravishing. Your beauty, within and without, is absolute, my dear friend. You're a paradise."

(I am not inventing all this. It is all there in Scripture.)

"You've captured my heart. You looked at me, and I fell in love. One look my way - and I was hopelessly in love! My heart is raptured. Oh the feelings I get when I see you and the stirrings of desire I have. I'm spoiled for anyone else!"

(How I wish that were true of every husband.)

"There is no one like you on earth, there never has been, and there will never be. You are a woman beyond compare."

(God permits a little poetic license there. It is not a question of scientific accuracy here, but of how the husband feels.)

And now listen to what the wife says. This is her response:

"And you, my dear lover are so handsome! You are one in a million. There's no one like you! You're golden - you're a rugged mountain of a man. Your words are warm and re-assuring. Your words are like kisses and your kisses are all words. Everything about you delights me. You thrill me through and through! I long for you and I want you desperately. Your absence is painful for me. When I see you, I will throw my arms around you and hold you tight. And I won't let you go. I am yours alone and you're my only lover and you're my only man."

How did God put something like that in Scripture? Because God Himself is a Lover.

Sanjay and Kathy, be lovers like that. God wants you to love one another like that. Your days can be as the days of heaven on earth if you learn to appreciate one another like that.

Jesus is the Great Example for us all in this area. How lavishly He expressed His appreciation for people.

The second thing about true love is: Love is quick to forgive. Love is slow to blame but quick to forgive. There will be problems between husband and wife in every marriage. But if you put those problems on the back-burner, they are sure to boil over. So be quick to forgive and be quick to ask for forgiveness. Don't wait until the evening to do that. If you get a thorn in your foot in the morning, you will take it out immediately. You won't wait until the evening. If you hurt your spouse, you poked him/her with a thorn. Take it out immediately. Ask for forgiveness immediately and be quick to forgive.

And finally, love is eager to do things together with one's partner - and not alone. How different the history of man would have been, if when the Devil came to tempt Eve in the garden, she had just said "Let me consult my husband first before I take a decision". Oh what a different story it would have been then.

Remember that all the problems in the world arose because one woman took a decision on her own, when God had given her a companion whom she could have consulted, before taking that decision.

True love does things together. Two are always better than one.

In conclusion, let me read again from God's word in Song of Solomon - Chapter 8, verses 6 and 7 (from the Message Bible): "The fire of love sweeps everything before it. Flood waters cannot drown it. True love cannot be bought. It cannot be found in the marketplace."

Only God's love is like this. That's why this love is called "the flame of the Lord" in verse 6.

Only God can give us such love.

Sanjay and Kathy, ask God to give you such a love for each other.

May God bless you both. Amen.

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