

# True Spirituality - Doing the Will of God

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will and building with gold, silver, and precious stones, rather than building Babylon through religiosity and external correctness.*

**Duration:** 1:00:54

**Topics:** "Holy Living", "Spiritual Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of controlling our bodies and living a life of holiness. He references 1 Corinthians 9:27, where Paul states that he makes his body do what it should, not what it wants to do. The speaker highlights the temptation to indulge in sinful desires and urges listeners to resist these temptations. He warns that on the final day, believers will have to give an account for their actions and that those who prioritize worldly activities over holiness will face disappointment and regret. The sermon concludes with a reference to Romans 11:36, emphasizing that all things should be from God, through God, and to God.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to God's Word in 1 Corinthians and chapter 3. When we read the Word of God carefully, which I have discovered is not a practice followed by most believers, we will discover some amazing things. For example, here is a passage like that. In 1 Corinthians 3 it says, about that day when Jesus Christ will come back and we will all stand before him, we may be born again, our sins are forgiven, but it says here in that day, even though we have built our life on the foundation of Christ, verse 11, it says on that foundation, here it's not a question of the foundation, here it's a question of the superstructure, verse 12, if any man builds upon that foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, that's one alternative, or with wood, hay and straw, each man's work will become evident, for the day will show it, and that's referring to the day when Jesus comes again, because his work will be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

Notice the word quality. It's not the quantity. Unfortunately, we assess people in Christendom today by quantity.

Statistics of a man's work, or of the results of an evangelist's labours, or of the ministry of a church, are always in terms of numbers, quantity. But here it doesn't say anything about quantity. It says the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

And if any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. But if any man's work is burnt up by that fire, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. So here it's not a question of whether you go to heaven or hell.

It says the man himself is going to be saved. He's going to get into God's presence. And all those believers whose only ambition in life is to get a last seat in heaven need not worry about this passage at all.

They need not hear anything for the next three days. I'm speaking for those who are not satisfied with getting a last seat in heaven. I want to speak to those who don't want to do just the bare minimum for the Lord Jesus Christ.

To scrape in by the skin of their teeth into God's presence. I want to speak primarily to those who are so gripped with gratitude for what Jesus Christ did for them on Calvary's cross that they say, Lord, what's the maximum I can do for you on earth before I leave this world? Thank you. Not what is the bare minimum I need to do to somehow or the other get into your presence and live eternal ages with you having lived a selfish, self-centered life on earth.

So the people I'm speaking to, I hope, becomes clear now. And I believe it's to such people the Bible speaks. Jesus did not call people who wanted to somehow get into heaven by the skin of their teeth and get a last seat there.

He called people who were willing to forsake everything, deny themselves every day, because they were so tremendously gripped by gratitude to Jesus for what he has done. Once Jesus was in the house of a Pharisee and there a sinful woman came to wash his feet with her tears and Jesus told a parable to the Pharisee there when he was inwardly judging the Lord for allowing this woman, this sinful woman, to even touch his feet. And he said there were two people who were forgiven.

One let's say 500 pounds and the other 50 pounds and who will love more? And Simon the Pharisee said, obviously the one who is forgiven more. And Jesus said the one who is forgiven. Do you see this woman? She is forgiven much.

She loves much. How much we love the Lord depends on how much we recognize we have been forgiven. Not how much we have been actually forgiven.

Because actually nobody has been forgiven little. You may think you have committed very few sins. One day when the Lord comes you will discover nobody has been forgiven little.

Everybody has been forgiven a tremendous lot. Much. But the awareness of how much we have been forgiven varies.

There are many people who have been forgiven much who think that they were not so bad as others. And who therefore think they have been forgiven little. But there are others who have a greater understanding of purity and holiness.

And recognize that in the light of that purity and holiness they have been forgiven a tremendous lot. And the proof of that is they love much. They don't find any comfort in this verse which says even though their work is burnt up they shall still be saved.

They don't find any comfort in that and they are not basing their life on that verse either. They say Lord that's not for me. That's for all those people who haven't who feel they haven't been forgiven much and who are ungrateful.

But I am not one in that category and I hope none of us here are in that category. I hope our singing thank you to the Lord in our songs will manifest itself in seeking to do the maximum for Him before we leave this earth. I thought it would be good if in these three sessions we consider the difference between spirituality and religiosity.

A lot of people are religious but think that they are spiritual. There is a world of difference between being religious and being spiritual. You know the Bible speaks in 2 Timothy 3.5 of those who have a form of godliness without the power.

That's what I mean by religiosity. Having a form of godliness. That form can consist of going to meetings reading the Bible praying everyday giving permissions a lot of emotion in our singing but without the inner power that makes a man truly spiritual.

Here is an example of a man who is religious.

He doesn't go to hell he has got his foundation right he has trusted the Lord for his salvation but he has spent his life his time his money his energy his talents his gifts his opportunities building wood hay and straw maybe quite a lot of work statistics wise very impressive but when wood, hay and straw is put into the fire there is nothing left because the fire is not impressed by the size of the wood or the amount of the hay or the straw it tests the quality and it says this is good for nothing it's burnt up imagine the sorrow and the regret that a lot of believers for remember this is not speaking about unbelievers it's speaking about people who are saved but whose entire life's work is burnt up who are going to stand in eternity recognizing they have lived for themselves their thank

you songs in the meetings were empty because they were just plain religious but because multitudes of Christians around them did not have discernment they got along pretty well maybe they were even elders in churches I believe lots of people in spiritual leadership are not spiritual they are religious so it's good for us to focus on this what does it mean to build with gold silver and precious stones you put gold, silver and precious stones into the fire and it remains even if it's very little I'd rather have a little gold in the final day than tons of wood, hay and straw so I want to turn in that connection to a verse in Romans so that we can try and understand what is the difference between gold, silver and precious stones on one side and wood, hay and straw on the other Romans chapter

11 and verse 36 in Romans 11.36 is a little verse which says from God and through God and to God are all things now we know that all things on earth are not from God and through God and to God a lot of things on the earth in fact most things on the earth are from man through man and to man but here it's referring to things which are going to abide for eternity things that have eternal value we could read it like this all the things that are going to last forever are the things that have originated in God that have been done through God's power and that have been done unto Him for His glory and everything else which originated in man's brilliant mind and done through human power and all the abilities man has and which was done for the glory of man will not last for eternity so there we see

this is gold, silver and precious stones what was done in the will of God by the power of God for the glory of God that's gold, silver and precious stones that will remain for eternal ages and all the rest for example

even Christian work which was done without seeking the will of God which was done through the power of money or emotions or hypnosis or anything like that and which was done for the honor of the preacher or the honor of the organization or for the promotion of a particular church or denomination will all be burnt up in the final day it's good for us to know it now so that we don't waste our time building with wood, hay and straw there is an example of this in the Old Testament in the book of Genesis chapter 11 in Genesis chapter 11 we read about the building of the tower of

Babel the tower of Babel is the origin is the beginning of what finally ends up in the book of Revelation as religious Babylon which is called in Revelation 17 the mother of harlots spiritual harlotry what is spiritual harlotry?

James says, know ye not brethren he who loves the world is an enemy of God he who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God and he says you can be an adulteress in fact he calls them adulteresses in James 4.4 know ye not that friendship with the world is to be the enemy of God that's how a person becomes a spiritual harlot when he claims to be the bride of Christ and during her engagement period fools around with another man called the world while waiting for her bridegroom to come but the origin of that whole religious system of spiritual harlotry begins here in Genesis chapter 11 with Babylon and how does it begin? how did Babylon begin? it's a whole lot of people who were united let's remember one thing here all unity is not necessarily from God these people were united but they were

united against God and they thought up an idea this did not originate from God it originated in man's brilliant brain they said come let us Genesis 11.4 build a city they had a plan they didn't need to see God it was from man and it was through man with their energy and their strength they did not need God's power for any of these things and it was to man it says here in verse 4 let us make for ourselves a name brothers and sisters that is the fundamental principle of Babylon of religiosity it is Christian work Christian service which originates in man's fertile mind without studying the scriptures without seeking to understand God's way without seeking the will of God which does not need to wait before God in prayer in fact the cleverer we are the less we pray the less we need to pray

because we are capable ourselves if we are wanting to build Babylon that which originates in man's mind and is done through man's power we can look at it another way when God sent Adam into the garden of Eden there were many trees there but the two trees particularly mentioned you know them one is the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the other is the tree of life have you ever wondered why God said to Adam that if you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you will die why is the knowledge of good and evil bad isn't it a good thing to know good from evil to do evil I mean if God had said if you do evil you will die that we can understand but to know good and evil what's wrong in that and yet the Lord said if you go and eat from that tree you will die why was the knowledge of

good and evil something that led to spiritual death you see these two trees symbolize two principles of living one is a way of life where I have the knowledge of good and evil resident within myself I have eaten of the tree of that fruit it has come inside me I don't need God now if I hadn't eaten of that and I go to the tree of life instead that speaks of another way of life where every time I want to know good and evil I go to God that knowledge is not resident within me I have to go to God and say but once I eat of this tree I don't need to go to God anymore it speaks of two ways of life one is a way a life independent of God not doing evil necessarily but not referring to God in wanting to know his will do you know that there are a lot of things which look good to the eyes of man but

which are not the will of God twice in the book of Proverbs once in chapter 14 and in second time in chapter 16 it says there is a way that seems right unto man but the end thereof is death and it's interesting that the Holy Spirit has recorded it a second time in chapter 16 just in case you missed it in chapter 14 that is there is a way that seems right to a man there are a lot of things that seem right to us but the end thereof is death you see just because a man is religious doesn't mean he is hungering after God man is basically religious we see that in all the religions in the world they are not seeking after God but man is basically religious just like he feels hungry and wants food just like he feels sleepy and wants to sleep he also is religious and when a person in a false

religion is religious we identify that as that's not spirituality but when a person is religious in the name of Jesus Christ we automatically think he is spiritual not necessarily it may be the same motivating power and force that motivates that person in the false religion that motivates this man to do things in the name of Jesus Christ it may have nothing to do with spirituality and yet he may be very upright in many ways haven't we heard many people say boy that man may be a Hindu but he is such a good man he is such an upright man and there are people who are upright they have the knowledge of good and evil resident within them their forefather and our forefather Adam has eaten of that tree and we've got that knowledge resident within us whatever religion we may be we know good from

evil and we can be upright but we are not necessarily spiritual so there again we see those who live by the tree of knowledge of good and evil can be extremely religious it's a life under the law of rules and regulations let me use another illustration the Bible says in John 1 17 that the law came with Moses but grace came through Jesus Christ the law is pictured in that tree of knowledge of good and evil what could the law give people it couldn't give life to anyone it couldn't give eternal life it was never meant to give eternal life but it did teach people what was good and what was evil but the Bible says in the book of Hebrews chapter 7 and chapter 8 that the old covenant has been abolished God has brought in a new covenant through Jesus Christ because the old covenant could not lead

a man to become spiritual the law could never make a man spiritual it could only make a man religious and that's why the apostle Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 I don't want the righteousness of the law he says I want the righteousness of God or if I were to paraphrase his words using the words I'm using right now what Paul is saying there in Philippians 3 verse 9 and 10 is I don't want to be religious I want to be spiritual I don't want a religion of external correctness you see the righteousness of the law is an external correctness which gives me a good testimony before men but the righteousness of God is love deep within the heart a fervent love for God whether I read the Bible or not a fervent love for God remember people couldn't read the Bible for 13, 14 centuries when the Bible

was not printed today we have the printed Bible for 14 centuries there was no printed Bible I'm not despising Bible reading but I'm saying it must be based on a love for God a fervent love for God and a love for others whether they agree with me or not that's true spirituality I have often wondered why God did not make certain doctrines more clear in the New Testament I find believers for example who are baptized as children and others who are baptized as adults both born again I find some believers who don't speak in tongues and who think it's of the devil and other believers who do speak in tongues and know it's from God and I thought you know they both use the same Bible and they come to two different conclusions on baptism on speaking in tongues and many other things on the

tribulation whether the church will go through it or not go through it and we could name so many other doctrines like that and I thought in a Bible which contains more than a thousand pages God could have

added one more page just clarifying these controversial doctrines which he knew would arise in the future God knew the future and he could have said this is the correct form of baptism and this is the right doctrine about speaking in tongues and this is the right doctrine about the tribulation just three verses I mean there are already thirty one thousand verses in the Bible three more verses wouldn't have made much of a difference why didn't God put it in is it because he didn't know I hope you don't think so he knew everything he knew he knows everything from the beginning to the end

why did he not put it in now I understood when I was a younger Christian I did and the Lord showed me my own life the Lord said if all of you my children agreed and saw I in every doctrine you would never know whether your love for one another was human or divine human love can easily love people who see eye to eye with them whether they are communists or naxalites or Christians or anything provided you see eye to eye with me rather I lay down my life for you but the moment you disagree with me on something boy then you will see my true colors that's human love but when it is divine love it has got nothing to do with whether you see eye to eye with me or not it has got to do with the fact that I have partaken of God's nature and I believe that is the reason why anyway one reason why God

has allowed some of these doctrines to be a little vague and you find a whole lot of people who are so dogmatic that they are absolutely right and everybody else is wrong Paul himself the great apostle who wrote scripture said in 1 Corinthians 13 we see through a glass darkly but some believers say we see clearly Paul may have seen darkly but we see clearly that's the problem and the other group in the other denomination says we also see clearly and you are 100% wrong it's good to be a little humble and say we don't see so clearly concerning so many things if we love we have got the most important doctrine right if we know how to humble ourselves like Jesus Christ and become a servant of one another then we have understood the main thing in the Christian life you see how easy it is for us

to be religious to be fervent in our religiosity and not be spiritual at all and our labors will build Babylon from man through man to man with all our doctrines and all our bible knowledge so let's look at one of these things today from God are all things of eternal value that means God wants us to live in His will the important thing is not what I do for Him I can do a whole lot of things for Him which God may not want me to do do you remember that prayer which Jesus taught us to pray our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done that's not all the latter part of it is the most important part thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven now when you read a verse like that and it's the Lord's prayer which many people repeat I want to ask you my

dear brothers and sisters how many of you have spent even two minutes thinking about how is God's will done in heaven I must confess I prayed that prayer for many many years before I even sat down and thought what does that mean as it is done in heaven let me think how is God's will done in heaven then I got some light on that verse which I never got before I thought well how do the angels do God's will in heaven do you find the angels always thinking of bright ideas to do something for God and running around here and there doing something for God like people say I want to do something for God well the angels are not doing something for God they are waiting in God's presence Gabriel for example he doesn't suddenly think of a bright idea to go down to earth and do something for God no he

waits in God's presence and God says Gabriel I want you to go down and do this he goes and does it it's not his own will it did not originate in his brain it originated in God and he just did what God told him to do you know the story of Mary and Martha another clear picture of spirituality and religiosity what was Martha doing unselfishly working in the kitchen facing all the heat of the whatever type of fire they had those days

to cook a meal not for herself for the Lord and his disciples can you think of a more unselfish act than that to slog away in the kitchen cooking a meal for 14-15 people and what was Mary doing just apparently lazily sitting at the Lord's feet listening now I think if you and I were there we would have thought Martha is the one who is really spiritual because

Mary just sitting here doing nothing because we think activity and a lot of sacrifice is spirituality not necessarily Martha also thought that and she came to the Lord and said Lord please tell this lazy sister of mine to get up and help me and she thought the Lord would rebuke Mary and on the contrary the Lord rebuked Martha can you understand that what did Mary choose just to wait at the Lord's feet like the angels in heaven to do God's will as it is done in heaven waiting for the Lord to say Mary I want you to do this then she would get up and do it and Jesus said that is the one thing needful he is not looking for people who will be restlessly active like Martha you may find in the final day with all your restless activity when you stand before the Lord the Lord may have to say to you

my brother, sister you are careful and troubled about many things the one thing I wanted you to do you never did because some of these bright ideas we have actually hinder God's work consider the example of Jesus himself he came to earth to do the Father's will now he knew the entire scriptures better than anybody in Palestine at the age of 12 and if knowledge of the scripture and in addition he had a totally pure life he had never sinned once in thought, word, deed attitude, motive for 12 years if knowledge of the scriptures and a pure life is enough for a man to serve the Lord Jesus was ready at 12 why didn't he go out? there was a world around him dying in sin if he waited till the age of 30 there would be some people who would die in the next 18 years who wouldn't hear the gospel

there are a lot of logical reasons why Jesus should have left at the age of 12 and like these boy preachers have been one of those boy preachers who have gone around preaching why didn't he do it? when he had the qualifications the ability and there was a needy world around him from every logical he should have gone and he didn't go not just for 1 or 2 years he didn't go for the next 18 years and amazing thing he spends his time making stools and benches and tables while the world is dying in sin he doesn't seem to have much missionary zeal when the world is dying in sin to be making stools and tables and benches yeah when we look at Jesus we understand what spirituality is he said in John chapter 6 John's gospel chapter 6 he said in verse 38 I have come down from heaven not to do my own

will but the will of him who sent me I believe that is one of the most important verses in all the gospels that describe what Jesus came on earth to do many of us think of Jesus having come to earth to die for our sins that doesn't say at all that's part of the truth if you want in one sentence the entire truth why Jesus came from heaven to earth here it is in this verse he came from heaven to earth not to do his own will but the will of his father part of which was dying for the sins of the world but there were lot of other things also in the will of the father which he did and so we see here he came from heaven not to do his own will but the will of his father and he calls us to follow him in the same way why has God placed us here on earth Jesus said to his disciples as the father sent

me John chapter 20 so send I you we can apply those words to ourselves in our day as the father sent Jesus to this earth he sends us into the world to do what we don't have to think of bright ideas to do something for God we need to wait on the Lord a little more that which 20th century Christians find so difficult to do it tests our patience when we have to wait on the Lord we say why do we need to wait on the Lord there is a world in need and I got so many bright ideas and I got the money or if I don't have the money I can get people to give the money and I can do it will end up like Martha it will end up like the

tower of Babel it will end up as wood hay and straw Jesus would not serve like that he waited on the father and the father said go and work in the carpentry shop till I tell

you to leave and he worked in the carpentry shop what was he doing in the carpentry shop the will of his father we think it is more spiritual to preach the gospel than to work in a secular job lots of Christians have that idea in other words if that were true then we have to say for 30 years Jesus sort of did some unspiritual work and then only for 10% of his life he did anything spiritual is that true can we accuse Jesus of that everything he did was spiritual when he helped his mother at home as a little boy he was spiritual that was the most spiritual thing to do when he earned his living with his own hands it was spiritual he didn't do it for himself he did it because he had to be an example for us not only our saviour but our forerunner our example he knew that we would have to earn

our living by the sweat of our brow and working with our hands as our forerunner he went that way himself and when the father called him to leave he left I meet lots of young people who say the lord I want to serve the lord and I have seen a lot of people who go out like that and make a mess of their lives so I spend most of my time restraining them I say hang on I say I am not against the lord calling the lord called me and I have been serving him 30 years since he called me and I know very clearly that the lord calls but I said if you go on the basis of your seeing a need and you are wanting to do something for god I can give it to you in writing today you are going to end up frustrated accomplishing nothing maybe accomplishing something that impresses men but nothing of eternal value

if you wait and let god call you and tell you what to do in a short time you will do much more than with all your restless activity but it is very difficult to get 20th century believers to understand that very very difficult we live in such a fast paced world that we feel that if I am waiting on the lord that is waste of time we haven't understood how god's will is done in heaven we repeat it thy will be done on earth as is done in heaven but it doesn't mean anything to us that is gold silver and precious stones from him are all things I thought of moses building the tabernacle the bible says moses was educated in all the wisdom of the egyptians and remember the egyptians built pyramids in those days which even today's engineers marvel at the way that those were built amazing the

construction of those pyramids and moses lived at that time he studied the building of pyramids these fantastic structures and then he went out into the wilderness and god told him to build a tabernacle and if you were to look at that pattern of that tabernacle this is the most unimpressive structure that you can think of just a little white sheet around a compound and some animal skins put over some poles you know if moses were the old moses at the age of 40 he would have told god leave it to me lord I've been trained in the academies of egypt I'll make a structure which all the philistines and the canaanites will stand back and wonder but he wasn't the same old moses when he was 80 years old god had thrashed out all the chaff of egypt's wisdom out of his brain and he humbled himself and

said oh lord I'll do it exactly as you say he did the lord's will and the glory of the lord came upon that tabernacle that is the secret old testament or new testament when we do things according to god's will the glory of the lord comes upon us and upon our labors jesus came to deny himself to do the will of his father we read in luke's gospel chapter 9 luke 9 verse 23 jesus said if anyone wants to come after me let him deny himself take up his cross daily and follow me I believe that it is central to spirituality to understand this verse it is impossible to follow jesus if we don't deny our self every day self has got its ideas we got to deny that self has got its power we got to deny that self seeks its own honor we got to deny that every day this is not once for all I can't finish

with it once for all every day and take up my cross means I have to die to what? to my own will to my own choices if I want to follow him now it is possible for us to read the bible every day to be very fervent in religious activity to go to 5-6 meetings a week to support missionary work very sacrificially and yet not deny self a single day that's what makes people religious and that's what made the pharisees religious in that time when you contrast Jesus with the pharisees you see the clear contrast between spirituality and religiosity the clearest example of religiosity is the pharisees they didn't have any of their doctrines wrong their doctrines were all right they were evangelical fundamental in their doctrine people think if a person is all right in his doctrine everything is ok

well then Jesus said very clearly to his disciples in Matthew 23 verse 2 the pharisees are sitting on Moses seat all that they say to you do have you read that verse Jesus told his disciples to do everything that the pharisees taught why? because their doctrines were correct he wouldn't say the same about the sadducees the sadducees were another group they did not have their doctrines right they did not believe in the resurrection they did not believe there were angels they did not believe there were spirits Jesus would never have told the disciples all that the sadducees say unto you do no the sadducees were the liberals of that day the pharisees were the evangelicals of that day but it was to the evangelicals of that day that Jesus turned around and said you generation of vipers how

will you escape the damnation of hell why? because their life did not match up to their doctrine their active religious activity had no cross in it it had no self-denial it had no sacrifice it had no death to sell it was activity perhaps a lot of sacrifice you know one of the things that the pharisees did Jesus said in Matthew 23 you cross land and sea to make a proselyte how did they cross land and sea? they must have given up their jobs they must have become full time workers they must have become missionaries supported by some missionary organization back home they crossed land and sea to make converts and Jesus said what type of convert do you make at the end of it someone who is two fold a child of hell like yourself Jesus had pretty strong language yeah he loved people so much

that's why he spoke with such strong language we don't love so much that's why we don't speak with strong language I've been challenged I try to use strong language but I don't love enough Jesus loved people far more than me and he used strong language today we live in the midst of multitudes of Christians who use such mild language and will send people to hell they don't love them enough will allow people to build with wood, hay and straw all their life and destroy their life they don't love them enough to tell them the truth Jesus was not like that he loved people so much that he would use language like that he would say if you lust after a woman with your eyes cut off your hand pull out your eyes it's better to go to heaven with one eye and with one hand than to go to hell with two

eyes and with two hands who would preach like that today? we'd think such a man is crazy we'd say to such a person brother you don't believe salvation is by faith whether you lust with one eye or two eyes makes no difference so long as you believe you're okay perhaps the Pharisees said that to Jesus in his time too Jesus said if you call a man a fool an empty head you're in danger of hell if you're angry with your brother who preaches like that today we don't love people enough we think that people are spiritual just because they're religious the Pharisees are the clearest example of religious people turn to that parable in Luke chapter 15 Luke chapter 15 this is well known in Christian circles as the story of the prodigal son but it's not actually the story of the prodigal son it's the

story of two sons and I believe we have a lot more to learn from the elder son than from the younger one the younger one was really worldly he lived in sin the elder son was not worldly he lived in the father's

house he's a picture of a Pharisee religious doing all the right things externally but inwardly having a grouse in his heart against his father which comes out in a moment of provocation he says to his father in Luke 15 I have served you all these years verse 29 and you've never given me anything do you see what's in his heart what was he serving the father for all these years was it out of love no sir he was serving to get something for himself you never gave me anything and he remembers that you never gave me a kid to celebrate with my friends that's religious service it's got a

complaint against God for not having done something for them which they felt they deserved have you ever felt like that brother sister sometimes maybe you have a sickness or a sickness in your family or some financial need or some problem in your business or your job something like that and you pray and pray and pray and pray and pray and you don't get an answer and even though you don't say it you feel in your heart boy after all that I sacrificed for the Lord and all that I did for him he doesn't even do a small thing like this for me that's the spirit of the elder son you feel God owes you something you feel you deserve something that's the mark of a religious man tell me my brothers and sisters if God gave us all what we deserved what would we get hell absolutely no doubt about that

God says you want what you deserve ok I'll give it to you don't ask for it brother it's dangerous I say Lord don't give me what I deserve give me what I don't deserve that's religiosity where I think I deserve something from God Jesus exposed that constantly in the story of the Pharisee and the publicans the same old thing the spiritual the man who thinks he is spiritual because he fasts he prays he gives his tithe he reads the Bible he does this he does that no Jesus is all nonsense that's not spirituality spirituality is to say no to my own will to deny myself when somebody provokes me to anger to say Lord let me do your will as it is done in heaven that's the time when I discover whether I am spiritual or not in James 1.26 it says if a man cannot control his tongue his Christianity is

worth zero how many people believe that is my Christianity really worth zero just because I cannot control my tongue when I have gone to so many thousand meetings given so many thousands of rupees for the Lord's work sacrificed in so many ways been so zealous to organize this that and the other for the Lord read my Bible every day and the only thing I don't do is I don't control my tongue well it's your word against God's word God's word says your entire Christianity your Christian religion is worth zero that's exactly what it says in that verse it is worthless zero because you can do all that Christian activity without denying yourself but when you have to control your tongue you have to deny yourself true spirituality comes through taking up the cross saying no to my own will and saying

father I want your will I want you to turn to Psalm 12 you know just like James chapter 3 is the great chapter on the tongue in the New Testament Psalm 12 is the great chapter on the tongue in the Old Testament and it's very good for us to read it Psalm 12 it's speaking about the tongue right from beginning till end speaking about it begins with this Lord help for there are hardly any godly men around remember the chapter on the tongue begins with this sentence Lord have mercy on us there are hardly any godly people around there are hardly any faithful people among the sons of men and when David wrote this psalm who was he thinking of he wasn't thinking of the Philistines and the Canaanites and the Amorites he was thinking of the so called religious Jews around him he says boy hardly any

godly people here they tell lies they flatter they speak with a double heart mean one thing and say something else they speak great things boast they say verse 4 with our tongue we will prevail our lips are our own who is lord over us well I may give my money to you lord but not my tongue it's significant that when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost it was a tongue of fire on top of their heads

signifying that this thing this part of the human body is going to come under the control of the Holy Spirit and when that part of our human body comes under the control of the Holy Spirit like James says he who can control his tongue is a perfect man if you cannot control your tongue your Christianity is worth zero people who say who is lord over my tongue in contrast he says verse

6 the words of the lord are pure words as silver tried in a furnace on the earth refined seven times I meditated on that and this is the way I have considered it there is a verse in Proverbs which says the foolish man blurts out everything that comes into his mind if you are one of those people who says I am frank brother I just tell people whatever comes into the mind it's not me don't get angry with me it's the book of Proverbs the Holy Spirit says he who blurts out everything that comes into his mind is a fool but in the same book of Proverbs says the wise man thinks before he speaks he doesn't blurt out everything that comes into his mind he thinks he says is this going to hurt somebody is this the best way to put it is this the wisest way to put it now I am not throwing stones at

anyone the Bible says he who is without sin let him cast the first stone and I have said a lot of foolish things in my life but we are pressing on to perfection and I say as we grow in maturity one of the things that should take place in our life is we become more careful with our words if you are not becoming more and more gracious and more and more careful with your words you are not growing spiritually if you are just as rude to your wife today as you were 5 years ago you are not growing spiritually at all brother if in your ministry of the word your words are not more gracious than they were some years ago something is wrong there must be a greater graciousness because our words are becoming purer more Christ like the words of the Lord are pure words purified 7 times it means I look

at it like this I want to say something maybe to somebody or express something in a certain way and I hang on I don't want to be a fool and straight away say it I put it back into the furnace and say Lord is that the best way to say it?

No I take it out again and I say shall I say it like this?

No put it back into the furnace again and over a period of time the words become right for example you write a letter I have often had this experience when I have had to write a difficult letter to somebody I write it and then say no it's not good enough tear it up say write it a little better back into the furnace and keep it for a day or two not happy about it yet and then finally comes out a letter which is more Christ like it's a matter of denying my will Lord I can't do it right I want to wait on you is this the best way to do it? just think what how many quarrels in our homes would not have taken place if he had just denied ourselves and said Lord I don't know it all help me to humble myself and not blurt out the first thing that comes into my mind and be a fool the Bible says in

Proverbs 29 Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 20 do you see a man who is hasty in his words there is more hope for a fool than for him now the book of Proverbs is full of fools it's right from chapter 10 it says this person is a fool this person chapter 29 is the last chapter that Solomon wrote after that someone else wrote chapter 30, 31 and before he ends chapter 29 Solomon says now I'll tell you the greatest fool of the lot ok that's the man who is hasty with his words he takes the cake he wins first prize the greatest fool of the lot this is spirituality it's not activity primarily when my when I've got a control over myself when I can control my tongue then my activity my service becomes gold silver and precious stones otherwise I destroy everything with this lack of self-denial Jesus

taught us on the cross that in this fallen sin-cursed earth there is only one way to be spiritual and that is by self-denial and by dying to ourself there is absolutely no other way I have to say no to my will and say father I choose your will if you say forgive that person whom I don't think deserves forgiveness father your will be done I'll forgive him I'll let him go that's how I must read the scriptures I will find something in scripture which doesn't sort of fit in with my idea I say lord I give up my idea I want it your way well I hope we made a beginning today brothers and sisters it's serious the fire will test every man's work the bible says when we stand before him everything we did in our body we'll have to give an account for and if I have not controlled my body let me read

this verse in closing 1 corinthians chapter 9 Paul says 1 corinthians chapter 9 verse 27 he says I control my body the living bible puts it like this I make my body do what it should do not what it wants to do my body wants to do a lot of things my eyes want to look at in a lot of directions which it should not look at my eyes want to read a lot of things which it should not read but I make my eyes read what it should read not what it wants to I make my eyes look where it should look not where it wants to I make my tongue say what it should say not what it wants to that's 1 corinthians 9 verse 27 I make my body do what it should not what it wants to lest after having preached to others I be disqualified he's not talking about going to hell he's talking about ending up with wood hay and

straw lest I be disqualified after having run this tremendous marathon race and thinking that I have come first resting the tail the referee says disqualified can you imagine the disappointment it will be nothing compared to the disappointment and the regret that many believers will face in the final day who substituted activity for holiness bible reading for self-denial may God open our eyes let's bow our heads before God out of God always demands a response from God

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