

So we are studying *Romans 15* and the first thing we looked at was consideration for one another that's *verse 1*,

### **Romans 15:1,2**

<sup>1</sup> ***We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.***

First thing is to be considerate to one another. You think about the other person first. Second thing is - what are the issues that divide us. Second thing is... If we look at the things that divide us, *verse 2*

<sup>2</sup> ***Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification.***

The second thing we need to see is that

<sup>2</sup> ***Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, and his good is important.*** Sometimes when we try to please our neighbor, it's not for their good, it's for our good. Okay? So we are busy trying to change our neighbor so that we will be okay. It's never looking to see whether that neighbor will be okay in the process. By the time we've finished with our neighbor, he's finished. The Scripture is very clear there it says,

<sup>2</sup> ***Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification.***

Edification always means building up. Okay, building up a person, you see? Like we looked on Sunday whenever we use this term edification, building up, we need to realize, even when a builder uses or a welder builds something, there is always a standard to which he builds. That's why in the Old Testament God says, "I will stand on the wall using a plumber's line." Okay, he also has a standard, so whenever we edify a neighbor the standard shouldn't be something which we picked up, the standard is always God's Word.

Okay, so if our neighbor were to ask, our friend was to ask, "Why do you want me to do this?" We should be able to give an answer. That this is the reason, this is what God seeks from us, it's not because I don't like it therefore... okay, what I like it this way. Okay, because sometimes much of the things which we hear are personal preferences, and it has got nothing to do with Scripture. But if you look at the Scripture, Scripture also teaches, Scripture is very clear, Scripture, God sets us to what He desires. I always see in that when I show people from the Word of God, "This is what actually God would like from you as His child," and when they see it... and they say, "Oh, I didn't know that. Okay, I was resenting ... I've heard this many, many times but I was resenting it thinking that this is what man demands from me. Okay, but when I saw this is what my Father in heaven would like from me," than it's very easy to fall in line. Okay, so that's what Scripture is talking about,

<sup>2</sup> ***Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification.***

It should lead to edification, it should actually build. Edification actually means, build him up spiritually, because an edifice is a building. The Scripture is talking about the real building is within, okay, a real building is within. Turn with me to *1 Peter*, we'll read from *verse 1* onwards

### **1 Peter 2:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> ***Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,*** <sup>2</sup> ***as new born babes, desire the pure milk of the word,*** (the pure milk of the Word, unadulterated Word of God, so) ***that you may grow thereby,*** <sup>3</sup> ***if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*** (If you have tasted the grace of God, the salvation of God, then now start drinking the pure, unadulterated milk, that's the Word of God. How do we come to Him?) <sup>4</sup> ***Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,*** <sup>5</sup> ***you also, (okay, you also) as (What?) living stones, are being built up a spiritual house,***

Okay, this is the edification we are talking about. God is building, we are all living stones but the corner stone is Jesus. Okay, the foundation stone is Jesus. The cap stone is the Holy Spirit, okay. The foundation stone is Jesus and the cap stone is the Holy Spirit. So this is how God is building His house. He's building His house, okay, and we are all living stones, we are not dead stones, we are living stones, okay. What does it mean that we are living stones? What is the difference between a dead stone and a living stone? A living stone means there is still work going on it. See once a stone is put and the mason has cemented over it, it's dead there's nothing. But if he hasn't cemented it, then what is he going to do? He's going to keep on chiseling it until it is the shape in he wants. We are not talking about bricks, we are talking about stones, right? Okay, because brick comes in there already with a shape. But if he hasn't cemented over, He's still working over it, chiseling it. So we are living stones on which the Spirit of God is working, bringing us to shape until we all fit in and the Spiritual house is being built. Built up as what?

***a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, (to what) to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

First and foremost once we are born again, we need to realize we are Spiritual beings. We see ourselves usually as fleshly beings because that's what we are so aware of because we are in the flesh so all the fleshly needs; the fleshly impressions are very, very powerful. But Scripture actually says, we are primarily Spiritual beings. So every sacrifice that we offer to God primarily has to have its origin in the Spirit. Then only it will have, it will be acceptable in God's sight. That's what we talk about. Now everybody does good works, in every religion there are good works. Okay, every religion. Now if we look at Islam, this is the month where they are most spiritual, they are most spiritual this month. And even so this is the month they will feed the poor, their poor of course, okay. And give alms and clothes and all these things. They will fast for a month; they will fast for 30 days. But you will also see its origin is not in the Spirit. Its origin is not in the Spirit. If its origin is not in the Spirit then it will always end in the flesh. Therefore you will fast from sunrise to sun down and when sun down reaches it is, it's an extravagance in the flesh. So it's, so interesting because I lived in an entirely Muslim dominated area, you will see that more than any time of the year, every food stuff is available during this season, the season of fasting. Most unimaginable fruits also end up during that time, okay; every nook and corner is stocked with food, okay. But why because it's origin is in the flesh, it's not in the Spirit.

On the other hand when it is originating in the Spirit, okay, you'll realize fasting is not about fasting. Fasting is about prayer and fasting is about Spiritual break-through; fasting is about the Kingdom of God. It's about what God demands of me. So what happens, it becomes a Spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God. You need to realize, we are not criticizing them because we do the same thing. Five day lent know. Lent, Friday, okay, everybody, I know lots and lots of Christians, good Christians who give up alcohol during those forty days, you know, including my father-in-law, okay, forty days. And on that fortieth day, 12 o'clock noon, he will say, noon means evening has begun. Evening has begun let me now start, okay. So what happened, its origin wasn't there in the Spirit at all, okay. So you didn't edify. Instead of edification taking place ..., that's what Scripture is talking about, that's what it's talking about.

Whatever you do unto your neighbor, okay, please remember it should spiritually build him up so that what he offers will have a Spiritual beginning, a root and it will be acceptable unto God. Okay, therefore now because so many are here from the ministry. Every time we do anything in the ministry, we need to go back and check – "Why am I doing this?" Where does it originate? Okay, where does it originate? If it originates in the flesh, the danger is, you will work in the flesh, you will struggle in the flesh and you will finally end up in the flesh. And the flesh has an end. It has a beginning and an end. And you will always struggle to finish it because you cannot do things of God in the flesh. You will struggle, that's why things of God have to be begun by God. Okay, it has to be begun by God. Otherwise we'll always struggle to finish it and God's things always have to begin in Him, okay. We cannot do God's things in the flesh, okay.

So whenever we demand or we try to help our neighbor, our friend, our colleague, who's a believer, He's talking... chapter 15, is only talking about Christians, okay. Please don't apply these principles with unbelievers. For them there's only one thing, "Lord let that person see You in me and come to love You." That's the only message we have to pass on to the unbelievers we have nothing else to say. Instead we tell God, "Lord, help me to be the standard for them, without me opening my mouth. I'm not going to open my mouth, I'm not going to tell them anything but Lord let my life be the standard." That's why Sunday pulpits we are tough as nails, okay. The reason is that when you go out of Church, Church everybody is fine, everybody is good, everybody is holy, everybody is wonderful, everybody praises. But Monday to

Saturday is your witness and if we can be as we are the three hours at Church, Monday to Saturday that becomes our real witness. Then the people around us will believe that He is God, that your God is different.

Okay, that's the key when we study the special people in the Bible like an Abraham, an Isaac, or a Daniel or a Joseph, why did the unbelievers around them believe that their God was God? They never spoke, they lived.

Sunday to Sunday, meaning Monday to Saturday they lived that life. When they lived that life around and in the process of living the life, they were also willing to risk their necks. Remember, it's not that when you live that life everybody will be happy with you. The truth is that, you will see a lot of people around them were unhappy with them, who were plotting their destruction. Joseph was thrown into prison. Because of his testimony. If he wouldn't have given, he wouldn't have been thrown into the prison. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den because of his testimony. There were enemies. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego were thrown into the fire because of their testimony but the good part about what we read in the Old Testament about this people is that God rescued them. The fact in the Old Testament is also that God did not rescue most of His children who had a testimony, they died. Almost all His prophets were killed. Jesus talks about them. He said, "Your fathers killed them." And if you are right down in the altar, in the Holy place, one of the prophets were killed. Zechariah was killed. But the fact is that we look at Joseph, we look at Daniel, we look at these other three friends of Daniel, we look at them and we say, "Wow! I am going to be a witness, I am going to be a testimony and this is the way you are going to exalt me and You are going to rescue me from all my troubles", let me tell you it is not the reason we are His testimony. The reason we are testimony is what Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego said, "Whether He wants to rescue us or whether He doesn't want to rescue us. Its only one thing we know. We bow only before this God."

This is the problem because if you look in the New Covenant, actually if you study the New Covenant the fact is that rescue is very less. We share in the suffering that Jesus went through. We go and share in it. And as long the fact of the matter is that as long as we are not willing to share in the sufferings of God, we will never really get to know God. He says, "I want to share in it." He says, "When I share in that suffering, I also increase in measure actually, to share in the resurrection power of Christ." That's the key: If you want to share the resurrection power, there is only one way. I want the resurrection power, I am saved, I am happy but Lord I don't want to go through all this trouble; we don't actually share in the resurrection power. We need to understand one thing about sickness. Sickness begins because of the fall. Before the fall, there was no sickness. And as we are digressing further and further, we don't progress, the world doesn't progress; further and further down, the effects of the fall is only increasing. Everything that we see around the whole of nature is breaking, so we need to understand that everything around us is breaking down. There are epidemics, there is going and God is allowing all these things to happen.

Do we have divine protection? Yes. We do have divine protection, but does that mean that God's children will be protected from everything that touches the rest of the world? No. Yet, we have divine protection. Yet, God also promises in Deuteronomy, "If you fully obey Me, all these diseases ceases." If you look and study these diseases in detail, you will see in those diseases come every other disease known to man till today. They are categorized, very clearly categorized. Every new epidemic we talk about will fit into one of those categories. He says, "This will not come." The problem is who is that we know who fully obeys? Do we know of any man, Pastor or not who fully obeys God every day of the week, every day of the month, throughout the year. It is not possible. As simple as that. So we are not fully obeyed. Therefore God protects us. But yet, when you open doors for the enemy to attack us, sickness comes in. The encouragement we have is that, because we love God and we are called according to His purpose and we are moving according to that purpose, all things will work together for our good. Its only when you have gone through your sick-bed and experienced God's powerful healing and come out, you are able to talk to somebody else that there is healing available in Jesus, otherwise it's here (in mind). And also you are able to sympathize with somebody who is in the sick-bed.

Those who walk in the pink of health don't have sympathy for those who are sick. They will keep on telling and make them feel even more condemned by making them feel - you don't have right or there is sin in your life and that is the reason, which is not true. If you check with all this healing preachers, including Benny Hinn, they all take medicines every day to keep themselves in the pink of health. Every vitamin possible, everything combination possible, they are watching their diet with a horse eye and probably most doctors don't know what combination medicine we should be taking. The fact is they do. Yet, God also tells us, when we are out of this world, He says, in the Gospel according to Mark, that when we are

fulfilling His purpose in life, even if you drink poison it will not harm you. The whole idea is that, whole question we ask yourself is: What am I doing with my life? Everything is related to that.

There was this CEO of a very big company who was interviewing people for a big post of his company. So the way he used to interview all those highly qualified people, make them relax, take the tie off, put his feet up on the table until they are fully relaxed, then he will shoot this question: "What is the purpose of your life?" And he writes that, every one of them was confused when this question was asked and he would let them go until one man called Bob came for the interview and he asked Bob also after making him relax. Suddenly he asked him, "What is the purpose in life?" Bob turned around and said, "My purpose in life is to go heaven and take as many people as possible along with me." And he said, "For the first time I saw a man who had a very clear defined purpose in life which had meaning." The whole problem is that, Christians haven't defined their purpose, God-defined purpose. What is our purpose? I want to go to heaven because my Bridegroom is there, I want to take as many people possible along with me. Once your purpose is defined, then you start understanding what this is all about. Everything written here, *Romans till Revelation*, is to believers. It is not written to non-Christians. So for non-Christians don't tell them to read Romans or Corinthians, tell them to read the four Gospels, let them come to know Jesus. Once you have come to know Jesus, then *Romans to Revelation* is preparing to go to our home. Everything is based on that. But we are struggling, we are confused, our hearts are divided, our minds are divided because purpose is isn't clear. If you know your purpose then things become very clear. This is where I am going, I want to take everybody along with me. Now keep that purpose in mind and read *Romans 15* once again. Purpose is very clear, *verse 1*

### **Romans 15:1**

**<sup>1</sup>We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

Isn't it true? It is true. I am going to heaven; I want to take as many people along with me. I don't want to please myself, I want to please others and take. If I have to take as many people along with me, what happens? I shouldn't please myself and I should have a very forgiving heart so that I accept and understand the weakness of others. I don't justify the weaknesses, but I am always there to help them to overcome their weaknesses, but I don't judge them. I am not condemning them. I tell them, "Okay, this is your problem and I am there to help you. Why? Because I know where I am going and I want to take you along with me." I want to go beyond to say that I not only know where I am going, I also know what I am going to be there. I am not going to be Rebekah's nurse, I am not going to be Rebekah's companions, I want to be Rebekah. Do you understand why those twelve people went in there? Again the number is 10+11+12. Rebekah, 10 and 12. Who is the nurse? The nurse is the one who brought Rebekah out. Yet, the nurse did not become Rebekah. There will be so many people in the ministry whom God used to prepare Rebekah but they themselves did not obey the Word.

Have you ever thought about all the people who helped Noah and the three sons in building the ark? What happened when the rain came? I'm sure there were not only four people who built the ark. They must have hired a lot of laborers and they all knew what they were doing. What are you building this ark for? Because judgment is coming. But when the rain happened, what happened to the laborers? Forget the people, what happened to the laborers who built the ark?

That's like that old *Left Behind* movie - the Pastor who is preaching is left behind all the people have disappeared. But that's true, a lot of people during the tribulation period, a lot of men and women of God will be left behind. But even they at that point will believe and prepare all those who are left behind and they will die during the tribulation period. The point is that it is not enough, Lord, I know where I am going, but I also want to take as many people along with me, but Lord. We should have this conviction, "Lord, I am going to be Rebekah, I also want all my neighbors and all my friends to be Rebekah." Because they being Rebekah doesn't cost my position as Rebekah. This is the beautiful thing about the race which we are running. Because all the other races in the world, everybody is running to be first because there is only one first.

That's why Paul talks about it in Corinthians: *Run the race marked for you*. Okay, he says very clearly: "Run the race that is marked for you." Because we are all running our own individual races and everyone will get a crown if we finish. She can't steal my crown and I can't steal her crown. Everyone will get their crown, everyone who finishes. That's why we need to define this purpose. The whole problem is that we look into the world, there's so much dissatisfaction. I mean, some calls, let's say, when they are talking about their problem, it is connected with dissatisfaction. Okay, IT coming in has done a good thing for India. But you know what IT coming in to India has brought so much dissatisfaction to all the people in the other sectors. There are people, who used to get 20,000, 25,000, 30,000 salary, are not happy anymore. They are no longer

happy. Why? Because in the IT sector people get paid more, nobody is happy. You know why? And we bring the same thing into the Church. Okay, because we look at all the other churches – “I wish I had his ministry, I wish I was used by God like her.” And you don't realize that you are trying to run somebody else's race. You cannot run somebody else's race and try to win a crown. You have to run your race. “Lord, what is that You want *me* to do.” And it's not only that, it may be in the fleshly eyes, in the Church, in the world, a very insignificant job. Okay, not God's sight, please, not in God's sight. But because it is insignificant in the eyes of the Church or the world, people get dissatisfied and they do run a very sloppy race, a very, very sloppy race.

That's what the book of Corinthians says: Many parts, one body. And some of the parts we do not see at all, have very important functions to do. The thing is that we look at those functions even within the body which has got, let say, glamour. But the glamour itself is brought from the world. In the Kingdom of God there is no glamour, there is only service. There is no glamour, everyone is a servant. But we have brought all those things from outside and have brought glamour in over there and brought in the spot lights and TV cameras and black cars and the smoke. You know everything, I'm not joking I am telling you I have seen in Christian dominated states in India, north India especially, where Bishops in their car have put a red sticker saying *Bishop of the North East Diocese*. Okay, why because the state is 90 percent Christian and now you want to go like the MLA or the MP or a Minister goes, you have sticker on your car. And it looks so ridiculous, when you look at them it's so ridiculous, because the first thing which comes to your mind is what Jesus said, “The Son of Man did come to be served, He came to serve.” He is a Servant King and let this mind be in you. And if you don't have this mind in you, you are always going to be dissatisfied and unhappy. Even in our secular jobs we need to realize we are a servant appointed by Christ Jesus. Our salary doesn't come from our company, our government, our resources, our provision, our salary comes from God. Okay, it comes from God. Let anybody get whatever increment, promotion, and all of that because if we believe the Word of God, Scripture says that our promotion comes from God.

Did Daniel's promotion come from God? Yes, I mean the king was an instrument God used. But did the promotion come from God? Yes, but did Daniel serve the king there? No, he served God there. Whenever there was a choice to be made between serving God and king, he served God. Was he in a ministry? No, he was in a secular job. Joseph was in a secular job, Daniel was in a secular job, all his friends were in secular jobs. This is the thing we need to realize, whether we are in a secular setting or in the Church setting we are all servants and we only serve God. It may cost us, promotion may come, promotion may not come. But we always need to realize that our provision comes only from God. Otherwise I am telling you, you will be absolutely dissatisfied, doesn't matter how well you are doing. Your testimonies will be only when you are doing well. Now you are not able to rejoice when you are not doing well.

Okay, in the home, on Sunday we didn't look at it in detail but I know most of the complaints I get from couples is because there are no servants in the home, all are rulers. The husband is trying to rule there, the wife is trying to rule the husband. And because of that there is so much unhappiness, but on the other hand if both were servants and the children also were servants, there is so much joy.

Parents, please teach children right as they are growing up that they are to take care of the house. Everybody has got responsibilities, they will do a sloppy job okay, don't worry about it. The whole idea is getting the idea in. Richie maybe only in class 4, that means he is eight years old. At eight years you ask him to sweep he will do a sloppy job, or make his bed he will do a sloppy job. Don't worry, fix it after he leaves but let him do that. Okay, the reason is he has to do that. And Andrew has to do that, Noella has to do that. They do it, they have to sweep and swab their own rooms and keep their rooms neat. The reason is that the fact is that in a home we are all servants. Okay, and even if there are servants. I have never allowed them to speak back to the maid. They have never and once she did when she was small and I think she got a spanking of your life. Yes, you got. Okay, she got, only once, poor thing because she was the first one she got all the spanking and the younger one learned from her, never got spanked. Okay, but only once she talked back very rudely to Purnima. I made it very clear that Purnima is a member of the family and not the servant in the way you see in the world. She is not a servant in that way. All are servants, she is a part of the family, you are not allowed to talk back. And when I and mamma go out of the house, she is in charge, you are not. She is in charge and you listen to what she says. Because I will ask her, “How were they?” I won't ask you, I will ask her, so she is in charge. The ground rules are very clearly set. Okay, the thing is that they grow up and they understand this is how the system works, there is authority, there are rules, we are all servants and then when they go up to school. I like their school, all said and done. Okay, no uniform, I don't like that but other than that the school is very good. You ask her, her principal is 80 years plus, she was there in the Hindu last week. If a boy wears a T-shirt

with a slogan unacceptable, he has to go to the room there inside, get a new T-shirt and the bill will be sent home. It goes for both boys and girls, if you dress immodestly and come over there, there are spare dresses kept over there. You will be asked to wear that, very simple, don't wear all fancy stuff, simple sandals and all, small earrings, very clear about that but don't need uniform.

Learn to live life wearing simple, when you go out you will be wearing all kinds of things, you won't be wearing uniform. but learn. It's a very old system, very good because the best thing about the system in this school is that these children are from extremely rich homes. That system is very good. Children learn to like each other, they don't fight, they don't use words which are rude, it's not allowed and there is no corporal punishment either. Okay, that's what God is also basically telling us. Okay, learn, right, from the beginning that we are servants called to serve.

Then what happens, when we are servants what happens is that we are bearing each other's weaknesses. The one who is strong will bear the weakness. It is one thing to say, "You are wrong," it's another thing to say, "I know you are wrong and I will help you to the best of my effort and ability to see that you can become right." The problem is that with Christians we will only say, "Hey you are wrong," and leave it at that. Then it becomes judgmental. God is not saying that we shouldn't judge. God says, actually, that if you see a brother sinning, go to him and help him out of it.

But I will tell you Church, whenever you hear correction, either from the pulpit or otherwise, never be offended. Did you hear that? What's the verse? Scripture talks about offense, Jesus talks about it, He says, "Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." It is because the greatest danger is of us getting offended. Because the minute offense gets in, we close our ears to correction anymore. Okay, we get offended; remember Cain was offended because Abel's sacrifice was received. But God said, "Why are you offended? You sacrifice also." But he got offended. And he refused to listen to God anymore and from that he goes to murder, he refuses to accept murder that he says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" So then when he is judged then he says, "My punishment is too much for me to bear." And Scripture says that he went away from God and became a wanderer. That's the danger okay, because I know people sit in churches but they are wandering. They are wanderers simply because inside they are carrying offense. Because when we do counseling, even between couples, we know the one who is offended. And it is very difficult to minister to the one who is offended, because offense closes your ears. So never be offended.

God couldn't correct those people He brought out from Egypt, because they were offended. They thought when we come out of Egypt, immediately we'll move into the Promised Land and everything is going to be ok, wonderful. They thought one day journey, three days journey, there we are going to have our own plot, my house, ok three bedroom apartments I'm going to get. And I'm going to have my cows and donkeys and camels. They did not realize that there was a process before they could reach there. And they did not like the process. Because they did not like the process, they were all offended. And every time, whom were they offended with? They were offended with Moses. Every time when they were offended with Moses, God took it personally. God said, "You are not offended with Moses, you are offended with Me. Because Moses is only telling what I told him to tell. You can't be offended with Moses, you are offended with Me." And finally they broke out into rebellion and God said; "Ok, they are not going to enter into the promise land." So Scripture talks about this, because sometimes bearing the weakness of a weak brother would also mean correction. And when correction is being brought, don't get offended. Always be willing to listen and see what it is.

Even when somebody is angry with you, if you are a mature believer, first try to read through that anger. Why is that person angry? What is in me that is offending that person? If it is flesh, then I have to correct my flesh. If it is Spirit, praise God. If it is something that is spiritually good in me that is offending a person, then his flesh is offended. But if it is my flesh which is offending somebody, they I need to correct myself. So don't even brush away anger. Now people have become so Scripture smart, that when somebody is angry, immediately we will say, "You are being angry and Scripture says, do not be angry." That's not the issue. Leave that, let aside, but why is he or she angry with me? What is the reason that is offending somebody? Why, because we are all moving towards that. Then third thing we looked at is that: **Whatever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.** What does that mean? That means please don't even leave Leviticus out. Most people don't read or study Leviticus. But what is written over there? Whatever things were written before was written for our learning.

**Romans 15:4**

**<sup>4</sup> For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**

Which is this letter we are studying? This is the first epistle. So what is it talking about before? It is not talking about the Gospel; it's talking about the Old Testament. **Everything which were written before were written for our learning.** Meaning: study the Word of God, Old and New Testament. Study both because it was written for our learning. So what happens? What is Scripture actually telling? It says, when we gather around the Word, the weak will become strong. Ok, because the Word of God is both milk and meat, and dessert. That's why he says that it tastes as good as honey. So its milk, talks about the Word being meat, talks about the Word being honey -dessert. What happens, the weak will become strong. And also the strong will be able to accept the weak. Both happen when we gather around the Word.

Please remember, even if we stand on truth, we operate only by grace. I get upset when after Church when the sermon is a little tough and people come and ask me, "Pastor are you angry with me?" No, I am not angry with you, why should I be angry with you? I preached whatever the Lord put in my heart, but I am not angry with you at all. Ok? So many times I've realized, "Are you angry with me?" It's probably because the Word convicted somebody and I have no idea what the person has done or been doing. But the person thinks that I am angry with him or her and I said, "I am not angry with you at all. Why should I be angry with you?" But if the Word has convicted you, go ahead and correct yourself. Praise God! I am not angry with you. God says that when we gather around the Word, God will make the weak strong and the strong accept those weak ones that God brings into our midst.

**Romans 15:5**

**<sup>5</sup> Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:**

Ok, suddenly he changes the terminology of God. Who has God become? The God of Comfort and patience. When you have tough people in your life, you need comfort and you need patience. Are you getting it?

You look how the Spirit of God changes terminology. The God of patience, Why? You need a lot of patience with some people because they are just babies in the Lord. They may be forty years, fifty years, sixty years, but in the Spiritual realm they are still babies. And babies need a lot of patience. How many of you have wacked babies? How many of you have taken babies and shaken them, "Why don't you change?" No, we don't do that with babies. Right? The whole problem is that sometimes when we are dealing with grown-up people, you don't realize that spiritually inside they are babies. And we are frustrated because we don't see spiritual change in them. All we want is to take them and shake them. But God says, "Hang on, it's a baby inside." So you need a lot of patience. So suddenly God becomes the God of patience. But also because you go through your tough time because they don't look like babies, they literally send you up the wall, He also becomes the God of comfort. You need a lot of comfort. I'm telling you, I go through this every week and I say, "Oh Lord, when is this person going to change?" They don't change, you know.

God, we need comfort, because sometimes you are at the receiving end. You hold the receiver or the mobile a little far off because fire and brimstone is now coming to you after Sunday morning. You don't understand. Oh, I do understand. You need patience and you need God's comfort. So He's called the God of patience and comfort, grant you to be like minded towards one another according to Christ Jesus. Be very careful, every word in this Scripture is very carefully put over there. He says, "Be like minded with one another." What is this like mindedness? Love your neighbor as yourself. I have already lost count how many times I have forgiven myself today. Ok. One person we readily forgive every day is ourselves. Oh, I can do nothing wrong. I forgive myself immediately. Be like minded, but be careful that it is according to Christ Jesus. Yes, I am not the standard. Like we saw on Sunday morning, I am not the standard. Meaning, because I see something that is sin in me, I accept that sin in me; I would be wronging my brother if I say that sin in you is ok. You need to realize sometimes compromise is happening from pulpits all over, it's because the people who preach from those pulpits have compromised in those areas of their lives. But God says, "It's still not acceptable."

David might have taken Beersheba, but when Nathan came and said, "A rich man had this and a poor man had this. But he took the poor man's," immediately his judgment was still right. He might have looked at his self-righteousness, but that's not the point. The point is that he judges the issue, he did not judge that issue according to the sin within him. He judged

that issue according to God's Word. Meaning I shouldn't justify my failing from my pulpit. We all have failings. But when we set the standard, the standard is never me, the standard is the Word of God. Ok, the standard is the Word of God. Because so-many times when we counsel one another, when we say God understands, we are actually excusing our sin. So we need to be very careful this is white, this is black. And also let me tell you something, because this is an issue which we will come over, wherever the Word of God is not very clear, be silent. You can put it across and be very clear that you are only suggesting this could be. See there are areas, you know there are areas where the Bible is not very clear about. It doesn't talk about at all, it's very silent about. If you realize that if you turn to *1 Corinthians 7:12*

**1 Corinthians 7:12**

**<sup>12</sup> But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.**

It's a place where Paul says, "This is not what the Lord says, this is what I am saying." Ok, remember why is he saying that? Because it is not very clear. But he's saying, "As a man of God, as a servant of God who's been walking with God for long if you want to take my advice, this is my advice to you." He is not putting it across as Scripture, because Scripture cannot be broken. Now that is his advice because it is not very clear.

***But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.***

Now why is he saying that? This is my personal advice as a servant of God. Now why is he saying that? Because if you make it into Scripture, let's say a situation: Pastor John ok, or let's say Sister Alisa. She's a believer, husband is an unbeliever. But Scripture says that if the unbeliever doesn't want to leave, then the believer has to stay. But he is saying, "This is what I am saying as an advice, not the Lord." Why? Because in certain conditions it is not possible to stay with the unbeliever. If you have to stay with the unbeliever, you will have to give up on your faith. He will say, "I don't want to leave" so there he is saying, "I am telling you, wherever circumstances are possible and the unbeliever wants to stay with you, and he is not abusing you, he is not beating you up, he is taking care of you, in those situations where he is not an abuser and he is not stopping you from living your faith." I won't give anybody ground for separation by divorce, unless it is absolutely scriptural. What is he talking about? Here what he is saying is that in certain areas we are not very clear, but go by godly counsel. Because God is also very clear there. What if God had said? He says, "This is what the Lord says, if an unbelieving spouse wants to stay with you then you have to stay with him or her under any circumstances." You are trapped. That's why he is saying, "Look, hang on, you have to look at these situation by situation. Each marriage is different, each home is different, each situation is different so I will leave it to godly counsel. So I am telling you, if this is a situation when the unbelieving spouse wants to stay, meeting all the other requirements, then stay. Then don't make an excuse saying, "No, he is an unbeliever and because of that alone I want to leave."

Because sometimes unbelieving spouses are much better than believing ones. Extremely. Sister Joba's husband is an extremely nice man. I really like him. Very polite, he takes care of the family more than most believing fathers, he spends time with Richie. He sets a day apart. These are things which I teach in the Church and people don't do. He doesn't come to Church and listen but he is such a good father, a good husband and he spends time with his wife, spends time with his son. Okay? Now isn't he a good husband? Now just because he doesn't come to Church, using this verse, can Joba leave him? No, she can't leave him, because he a very good husband and he doesn't stop her from coming to Church, he doesn't stop her from having a meeting in her house. He doesn't stop her from anything. What does God say? Your husband is now sanctified because of your faith. That is also in the same chapter.

The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the faith of the believing wife. What does that mean? He has been separated unto God, one day God will touch him or her, like in this case. Sometimes they are much godlier than people who know God. So we have to be very careful about it. Okay, I have told Ailsa, but ultimately you have to go by God's Word. You have to leave room. What I tell to people who are separated, not to people who are divorced, but people who are separated. What I tell them is, always leave a door open, don't shut the door. Unless God says, "Shut it." Don't shut the door. Allow a little air to get in okay, because you never know. Though I tell them don't build hopes. Our hope should always be built on God, not in that my husband will come back or my wife will come back, because then what happens is that spiritually you'll get worn down, because you are always hoping, hoping and sometimes hope, when it is a hope in a human being, it never

materializes. The reason why I say is that, I also know it but when I give them this advice I will tell them this is my experience from deliverance ministry. When I look into the Word of God I am not sure, because it is silent. Okay. (There are children here, children close your ears, this is for adults.) A whole lot of things that is not mentioned about sexuality between a husband and a wife in the Bible. It is not mentioned at all. Okay? Some people come and ask me whether this is right or this is wrong. What I am telling them is that the Bible is silent, but the only thing I can tell you is by experience from deliverance ministry, that is counsel, it is not Scripture. Whatever the Bible is very strong and says emphatically, this is wrong even in sexuality. I tell them that's wrong, but where the Bible is silent, you remain silent. But if they ask, you can only tell them I have an experience again in the spiritual realm that during a deliverance session, this spirit came out and this spirit's name was this, and that is connected with sexuality. Therefore I think it is wrong. Use your discernment; use your wisdom when it comes to that. So in that way there are lots of things.

Now if a young girl comes and asks me, "Pastor what is modest dressing?" I would be in a fix. Which age do I go back to? Yet, the only counsel that I can give them is, there is modestly in dressing. When you pick your dress, go on your knees and ask the Spirit of God, "Will You guide me?" He is the best guide, not your Pastor. Yet, if you want a thumb rule, when you are walking on the streets, if a boy turns around and looks at you and he is not looking at your face, change your dress. You need to change your dress. It's a good thumb rule, as simple as that. Meaning, you are dressed in a way that is drawing unwanted attention and nobody should draw unwanted attention to your body. That goes for boys also. That's why I tell young boys, put on your buttons. Because in Kerala what used to happen is, all the young men will unbutton their first two shirt buttons. Because you see, chest hair is a big thing back in Kerala. So all the boys, they will roll up. Look at all the Muslim boys over there, they have short sleeves, because they are always pumping iron and they will always be standing showing their biceps. Don't draw attention. We are not talking about girls alone; we are also talking about the boys. Now you are drawing unwanted attention. Now the whole thing is that a girl should never marry a boy because he has got muscles. If you marry a boy because he has got muscles, he will use those same muscles one day to beat you up. These aren't the reasons. That's what Peter and Timothy, God is writing through them that, whenever somebody is attracted to somebody's beauty, it should be the beauty that is within. It is not saying that you should be sloppily dressed; you should be very decently dressed because that is what God expects of us. Decently dressed, clean, hygienic all that should be there, but be very careful of drawing unwanted attention. So how do you know? Does Scripture say? Scripture does have to say a lot on eating, on clothing, on behavior, on conversation.

It has a lot to say about conversation. Be careful, do not crack obscene jokes. Do not use obscenity. Do not. I like their grandmother, that's their mom's mother. Anyone of the children spoke a word out of context in the family she saw to it that they washed their tongue with soap. She did it. Not mom but her grandmother. Her mom did it, her mom had to wash, brother also. It's not acceptable, that's not allowed. It's a one-time experience. Rin or Vim or something. If you wash once with it, you are very careful about it. You don't have to beat your children, there are many beautiful ways of disciplining children without having to use the stick or hand, but what I am saying is that Scripture is also very clear about it. God says very clearly about, be very careful about your humor, the words that you use, all profanity, all that needs to get out. Because you need to realize that we were all those at one time. The first time when I actually realize that I was saved was a few weeks after I got saved, when one of my friends, with whom I used to walk, suddenly turned to me and said, "James do you know what? You have stopped using obscene words." My every second word that came out of my mouth used to be obscene in Malayalam. It can sound really terrible in Malayalam and I also didn't realize it. He said, "You know what, your language has changed." And this was a day scholar, I was in the hostel but he was a day scholar and he asked, "What happened, how come your language has changed? Because earlier when I used to walk with you, I liked you so much, but I had to close my ears." And I realized that something had happened, my words have changed. You are suddenly not comfortable with these words. Now that is what God is talking about, not that everybody is perfect the day you get saved but we are moving towards that. So God says, change that, change.

The world has its own language, change your language. The world has its own way of dressing, change your dressing. The world has its way of eating, change your eating. In everything the world has its own pattern, you are different and when you have become different what does God say? You are the light of the world. That doesn't necessarily mean everybody likes light. In the same chapter, *John 3* God says, *those who love darkness will hate light*. Therefore there are people who love darkness. Darkness is within them, they will hate you when we set this standard unconsciously before them. They will hate you, and that also you have to receive with thanks giving. Why? Because that is your testimony or proof that the life of Christ within you is authentic. How do you know that the life of Jesus within you is real? What does *John 1:4* say?

**John 1:4**

***<sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.***

That is the thing. Meaning, when the life of Jesus increases in me, it becomes the light of men. I don't have to say anything. His life in me becomes the light of men. Earlier in Scripture was- *Psalm 119:105*.

**Psalm 119:105**

***<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.***

The Word is still external. Now God says, "It never worked in the Old Testament." So we look back in the Old Testament and say, "Yeah David. Thank God, David fell, so I can also fall. It is alright." "Oh, Abraham- you know what he told about his wife? He said that his wife was his sister, so that is ok with me also. Moses after eighty years also lost his temper." We start excusing. Why, because the Word was external to them. God says, "Not for you. For you, the light is not the Word, the light is His life." That is why we are called, the *born again people*. Nobody in the Old Testament was born again. Not even Moses was born again. That is why Jesus said, "Of all those who are born of woman, in the Old Testament, the greatest is standing before you- John the Baptist." It is because he is the precursor to the Messiah, the herald of the Messiah. Of all the line of prophets, who is the greatest? John the Baptist. Yet He says, "The least in the Kingdom of God, (He is putting basically hypothetically), is greater than even John." Why? Because you are born again. You are living by the Word. You are living by the life of Jesus within you and when that life increases, that life becomes the light of men. So, we are not trying to testify, we are only trying to surrender and allow Jesus to increase in us. "Lord, I need to go and witness." Lord says, "No, allow Me. Allow Me into your life." "How Lord?" "Every area of your life." "No Lord, you know what, I like dressing this way." He says, "Ok, when it comes to dressing there will be always a conflict."

When you try to witness to somebody about God that our God is holy, they will always say, "Ok, I like this concept about this holy God," but, they will be thinking in their mind, "If you think your God is holy, then why are you dressed like this? If you think your God is holy, then why do you use this language? Why do you talk like this? Why do you do these things?" Why? Because there is a disconnection. God says, "That is the whole problem. The whole problem is that there shouldn't be a disconnection. Allow Me. You decrease and let Me increase each day. The more I increase; suddenly people will start noticing," because He will be noticed. People will notice Jesus. It is not possible not to notice Jesus. They will notice. But how will Jesus be noticed? Jesus will be noticed only when the outer vessel is broken. That is why remember, we looked at it many times. We are treasure in earthen vessels. What is that earthen vessel? Flesh. Flesh likes a lot of things. That is why Jesus said, "You want to really witness Me, you need to take one thing the flesh hates. What is that? The Cross. Take up your cross daily." He didn't tell me, "James; you take Pastor John's cross." Each one's Cross is different. Each one has got a cross specially manufactured for you. Why, because I know what I need to crucify. He knows what he needs to crucify. Ailsa knows what she needs to crucify. It is not that we do not know. We all know - in my life I know what I need to crucify. That cross was made for me. If I tried to carry his cross, I will realize, I don't fit in because his cross doesn't fit me because some of the things which I want to crucify is already dead.

So, God says, "Take up *your* cross- (how often?) daily and follow Me." Why cross daily? Because it is on the cross that the flesh was crucified. Jesus' Spirit was never crucified. His soul was not crucified, only His flesh was crucified. He said, "Take up your cross daily and follow Me," because when I have to take up the cross, the cross brings death to the self. "Lord, I look in the mirror and say I like this." God says, "I don't like that." God says, "I don't like that." "Ok Lord." "Surrender." "Ok, You show me what You like. Ok that? You should be kidding me Lord. I will look like I have come from the 16<sup>th</sup> century if I wear that." He says, "But I like that." "Ok Lord. Are You sure God?" God says, "I am very sure." Ok. The whole day you are miserable. You are miserable that means your flesh is miserable. Remember how miserable Eric was before he cut his hair? His hair- remember? He will not tell you. If you insist he will tell you how much money he has spent on maintaining that hair. Right? Quite a small fortune? Five thousand a month. The house rent of a normal family in India. He spent on that long hair of his. But, one day God spoke to him and said, he was looking probably at marrying his hair, but God said, "I don't want to get married at all." You could be kidding Lord, this one? Yes, that one. That was a tough thing to do. Once it was done, you are free. I am telling there are so many examples.

This is one slight little example. I know I have taught in some of those groups over and over and over, you need to cut of this, you need to cut of this. "Yes brother, I know I need to cut of this," but next five minutes when the meeting is over the

conversation goes back to food. "Brother, have you tried this haleem?" "Brother, have you tried that haleem?" "I am telling you, the best haleem in the city is that haleem." Or, "brother when you get snacks, you need to have khatta and meetha." You should be actually fasting. Get rid of weight. Your weight is creating all kinds of medical problems. Ok, but the whole thing is that, you are stuck to this. So, what is the only thing that is going on - you are believing in divine healing. God says, "Divine healing is not needed. Just cut down on your food. Change your food habits. Just cut down all the things that your tongue likes." But, what happens, if you need to do that, you need take up your cross. That is what I am saying - the cross defers from person to person. If I have to preach that to somebody like her who doesn't like eating, she will say, "Thank you papa, I don't want to eat." That is not her cross. That is not her cross at all. For each one it will be different. We can only give the general rule. Individually each one of us knows what is my flesh, what am I feeding. The problem with us is that where the flesh is very strong we feed it. When we feed it, it becomes stronger and stronger.

Lot of young boys come for ages to me, saying that they are struggling with one area, basically, pornography. They struggle. Young boys struggle in that area. So, what is the way? The way is first to cut it off. You have to stop feeding it. If don't stop feeding it, you will go through the same cycle. "Lord help me," fall. "Lord help me," fall. First you stop feeding it, suddenly one day, two days.....where do I start. I start with the TV. Not those sites. Stop watching TV. Because it is all with images. Stop watching TV. Stop reading magazines. Film magazines even in a barber shop. Stop reading that. Do not read any newspaper other than The Hindu. I told the agent who came yesterday saying, "Sir, we are offering Time of India." I said, "Times of India?" I said, "No." "Why sir, six months only Rs. 30." I said, "I don't want Times of India; I don't want DC, because I have children growing in my house. You print pictures of half-naked women in your newspaper, I will not buy it." I said, "Go back and tell your agency. There are houses who will not subscribe to Times of India, DC or anything other than The Hindu because it is very conservative. That is the only newspaper I will allow into my house." We have to cut that also because all these will add to that. Even a little picture you will think will be harmless. It is not harmless because if you are struggling with an area, you need to tackle it at the root. Cut it all out until you have full deliverance. Then don't go back to it at all. But, you need to realize this was the weakness in my life once, I need to be very, very careful about it. That is why Scripture says, those who are...*who feel they are strong, beware, lest they fall*. Because I might have been struggling for ten years over a problem and finally I got my deliverance, now I am thinking I am ok, I am fine. I am not going to fall in that area again. You are mistaken. Guard that area with your life. Don't go back to that area again.

That is why we see after Bathsheba, David never married again. God allowed David to fall to that level, because he was simply picking up wives and concubines. "You know you are a man after My own heart, why are you picking all these women? Ok, you need to fall to these depths." He fell to the depths, public apology, public humiliation, whole world knows about it. After that in his old age, they put a young girl next to him, he doesn't even touch her. "I learned my lesson the hard way Lord." Years later, we are still talking about it. He must be sitting there and thinking, "Ok, can you leave me alone today at least." God allowed him to become an example to whole of humanity. Why, because you need to realize we are never too strong to fall. Areas where we know we are weak guard that with awe. Meaning if you are addicted to nicotine-smoking, and you were smoking for twenty five years, now you have given it all up. God has given you the grace and you have broken it all. When you travel, travel in a non-smoker...thank God rules are coming where we can't smoke. Get away. Get away from even passive smoking. Move away from those because those are temptations. Only those who are addicted to smoking tell me, "Pastor you have no idea. I passed that way, a whiff; all that old feelings came back." Avoid. That happens. I am not saying you are doing it...There has to be co-operation. It is all by the grace of God. We depend and lean on God's grace but we have to co-operate. That is where the will comes.

Please don't think God will do everything. God will do only what we allow Him to do that's where the will and surrender comes. If I don't surrender He's not going to do anything. If you don't surrender He stops at that. That's why Spiritual growth is entirely dependent upon us. Jesus says, "Lift Me up and I will draw all men towards Me." The first calling is by God but once I and you have come to God, afterwards God says, "Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you." I take one step, He takes one step; I take two steps, He takes two steps. I don't take any step, He stays standing. Why? Because He gave us the free will. In that free will I have to use. The beauty of the New Covenant is we use free will to surrender. That's what the whole New Covenant is about. Because He used the free will He had as God to surrender to the will of the Father and die on the Cross. He says, "Now I'm looking for a bride who will use that free will to love Me and surrender on your cross." Okay. And that's what servant hood basically is. The difference between- when I talk about servant hood in the Church please don't get the concept about the servants who work in our house. They don't have a choice. That's not what God is talking

## Romans Chapter 15 Verse 1-5

about servant hood in His body. The servant hood in His body is out of absolute free will. Okay, free will. First letter *Romans 1:1*. Did you get it?

### **Romans 1:1**

<sup>1</sup> ***Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated to the Gospel of God.***

Now we will leave all the other letter because they are all Paul's okay come to James, after Hebrews. James the brother of Jesus Christ. What's the first verse? James a bondservant of God

### **James1:1**

<sup>1</sup> ***James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:***

Come to *2 Peter 1:1*. Simon Peter? What does it say?

### **2 Peter1:1**

<sup>1</sup> ***Simon Peter, a bondservant and Apostle of Jesus Christ,***

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Come to John, because John suddenly takes off you know. Yes Jude is there, all of them; almost every one of them will make it very clear.

### **Jude1:1**

<sup>1</sup> ***A bond servant of Jesus Christ.***

Okay, every one of them you see. And *Revelation 1* will begin with John.

### **Revelation 1:1**

<sup>1</sup> ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,***

You see every Apostle how they look at themselves? They are all servants and KJV will use the term bondservant. Bondservant means who has willingly given away okay. That's the servant hood which Scripture is talking about. And if they were servants, what are we? If they were servants and carried their cross and surrendered on a day to day basis constantly, what are we? And that's what God is asking from us. He is asking -What are you? You know. Please don't get carried away by all the messages that we hear, which talk about reigning and leadership and all that, okay. Which is true to one level but if you want to rule anything- please rule yourself. Scripture tells, actually asks us to rule ourselves. Tells us to rule ourselves so that we are in control, God's Spirit is in control of us. The only person I'm asked to rule is myself. Ruling over sin, ruling over the world, ruling over the self in my life, okay, I'm not asked to rule anybody else not even my wife. But people use *Ephesians 5*, which says, 'Husbands love your wives, Wives submit to your Husbands'. But did you see always we have these fuse put over there to any very expensive gadget, there is a small little thing with a tiny little wire so that anything happens that should burst off first. Turn to *Ephesians 5* and you will God's fuse put over there. *Verse 22 and 23 Ephesians 5:22-23*. Let the ladies read 22 and let the men read 25.

### **Ephesians 5:22, 25**

<sup>22</sup> ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*** <sup>25</sup> ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her,***

You know what the fuse is? The fuse is *verse 21*. Did you get it?

### **Ephesians 5:21**

<sup>21</sup> ***submitting to one another in the fear of God***

Husbands submit to your godly wives, godly wives submit to your godly husbands. Submit to one another - that's the fuse. Please don't demand submission as a right, as a rule. Submit to one another. What did God tell Adam, "because you listened to your wife this is the curse that is coming." And what did He tell Abraham? "Listen to your wife and throw Ishmael out." He's not contradicting. And what did Sarah probably say when Abraham said, "God asked to take our only son." She said, "Yes, my lord." Submitting to one another, okay To Adam He said, "You listened to your wife, that was a very godly advise, you shouldn't have listened, therefore the curse is coming." To Abraham He said, "Your wife is speaking the truth." Hagar ran away from Sarah. We look at Sarah, she ill-treated Hagar and threw Ishmael and Ishmael is crying and so we have this beautiful song in Malayalam which says that, "The God of Hagar who cries even Hagar's cry." And Hagar cries she gets water and all and then the next thing God's Spirit tells Hagar. He said, "Go back and submit to your mistress, you know why you were thrown out of that house? Because you did not submit. Go back and submit to mistress, she was right in throwing you out because you were called to submit. You did not submit so she threw you out, now you go back and submit she'll be okay with you."

There's this submission to one another. That's the safety valve God is putting over there okay. It's not about ruling. The only person I'm called to rule is- me. I'm only called to rule myself. But we submit to one another. To husbands, He says, "Love your wives as Christ Jesus loved His wife." What did Christ Jesus do? It's a tough thing to do. He went straight up to the Cross and died for His wife. Okay, you know what God is actually telling the husband over there, but what He is telling the husband is that out the interests of your wives first and wife put the interests of your husband first. So what happens suddenly, you have two servants in the house.

Imagine a house where you have two servants living and the children growing up seeing two servants, what happens? You have little servants in the house. Because they realize a house is all about serving one another. And God says, "You get ten houses like that, you got a serving Church, you got ten churches like that in the city, it's a testimony to the unbelieving world." This is a testimony. Jesus said. But what does the world talk about? The world talks about name, reputation, power, ruling and keeping people down. He says, "That's not Me. That's not My Church." That's the problem when we hear even today, Myles Munroe was talking about kingdom power, kingdom authority. But why are you not talking about Kingdom service? I'm not saying what they say is not right. But you don't magnify it because sometimes the flesh likes all that. Who doesn't like about reigning? Everything under your control and then this starts, because this *Ephesians 5* has been misinterpreted down the centuries where men have become tyrants and women have become slaves. It's because it was misinterpreted. That's not the way to interpret it. Husbands were supposed to love, to rule, yes you take the decision. It's like the speakers vote finally you can't take a decision, who's decision stands? The husband's decision stands, but wherever it is possible you take a decision together. You always take a decision together. But when it is not possible ultimately in every organization there has to be one final say and that has to be the say of the head. So in the Church the final say is always Jesus and in the house it has to be the husbands okay and God says, because he is the head of the house.

Otherwise how would have Abraham left his father's house? God said, "Abraham leave." And if Sarah said, "I'm not going." He said, "Okay." Sarah- "Where are you going?" Abraham- "I don't know." Sarah- "When are we going?" Abraham- "Tomorrow." Sarah- "How are we going?" Abraham- "We'll walk." Sarah- "But where are we going?" Abraham- "I don't know." "Meaning?" "My God told me to go. He said, as we go I will show you where you are going."

But she left, she left. We have to be very careful about it. Sisters be very careful about it. First marry a godly man okay. Even if he is not so strong as you, always allow him to make the decision. Some of these men are very laidback, very lazy, very laidback, they like not to take any decisions. So, don't immediately take that position because that position that office belongs to him it doesn't belong to you. So you have to start pushing. And sometimes, the thing is that most of the times the women have the good ideas. So you put across the idea and say, "What do you think about this?" And he says, "Yes that sounds very good." Then he puts it across and you say, "Your idea was very good. Let's do that," make it sound like it is his idea and he is taking the decision. So that he is responsible for the decision. Don't take responsibility away from him. He has to lead. Most houses I see mother's teaching the children the Word of God. Yet God says, "Fathers instruct." The minute they see their mother's doing it. They quietly get out of the house and go away somewhere else. They don't take that responsibility. Yet that responsibility is given to the father. So if the father is laidback and lazy, sit there and get the family together and take the Bible and put it on his lap and say, "Daddy, you do it today" and tomorrow, "Daddy you do it today." Let him get used to it. And if he says, "No, you do it." You say, "No, it's written that you should do it." Okay, start letting him. Because men have disappeared from the homes and the tragedy of it are the children millions of them.

Some of the wonderful days in my fourteen years of ministry are been now, from America, the children are writing. I am telling you more than any joy, it is when I get a fourteen year child or a thirteen year child or a sixteen year child writing from America saying, "We listen to your CD and we are saved and this is what happened in our lives." My heart really jumps up, okay? You look at all the children, no father. All abused, they've gone through all terrible traumas; they're grown up in foster homes, why? Because the father disappeared and mother finally couldn't handle the pressure, let go. But, why is it happening in the first place? We are breaking, if your husband is a weaker brother in the Lord then, encourage him to take his position, don't take his position, encourage him to take his position. Don't tell him, "You're good for nothing; you are not like that man." Don't compare your husband with any other man. He is unique and he is your husband. Okay? Please don't. Do this and build around that. I hope you got the picture? That's what God is saying. He says that those of us who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak and not to please ourselves because within us is always this desire to rule. Remember in the flesh, why does God say this flesh will never go to Heaven?

The problem is with this flesh because the flesh swallowed the lie in the garden. If you eat of this, you will become like God. God doesn't have to listen to anybody. He is God meaning, He is King. The flesh took that lie, "If I eat of it, I don't have to listen to anybody anymore." So, there is this desire in the flesh always to rule and to be in control of my situations, my circumstances. That's what God was telling the children of Israel, "You will get manna only for that day. Why? You will not be in control of your tomorrow. I am in control. I want you to learn to depend upon Me." Jesus said, "When you pray, pray Father give us (this year's supply. No!) Give us our daily bread." The minute I get my year's supply, I am king of that year. I am no longer dependent upon God anymore because this thing is there deep within this old nature is there which wants to be king, wants to be god. Fight that because that's there when God takes us through our problems, why do we go through problems which we can't handle? Then only they are problems right? If we can handle it, doesn't become a problem, everybody's got a problem which they can't handle.

A husband who doesn't love you or a wife who doesn't listen or children who don't obey, or in a job where the manager is terrible, some or other we all have a problem. You know why? So that we won't be god and we will need God and we will think we will have a trouble free life, God says no. Paul says, "Here I am going for my defense," and he looks around, "Twenty-five, thirty-five years of ministry, nobody to stand with me, where have they all gone." He didn't even have a ministry to fall back on. Can you imagine a man like Paul after setting up the entire Church in Europe and Asia-minor on the day of his defense there was not a single person to stand by him. God says, "Paul, even at this end, I am the only One you can depend on. I am your shield and your protection, your Rock on which you stand." So, he says, "I don't hold it against them. I am not offended." O' I can imagine how many pastors would be offended if the congregation wouldn't turn up and Pastor Paul is not offended. He says, "I don't hold it against them," because the Lord Himself stood by him. What is God teaching Paul? "Paul, till your last breath depend upon Me. Don't be dependent upon flesh." That's what God is trying to tell us. He is teaching us, we have come to fifteen chapters of Romans. He is teaching us; please depend upon God, even when you run a ministry, sometimes it is very good to run a ministry on a month to month basis. It is very tough, I am telling you, Ailsa will know, it is very tough to run a ministry on a month to month basis depending upon God, it is very, very tough. But, it is very, very good spiritually. It is very, very bad for an unspiritual, carnal Christian to get a central government job in India.

Get the picture, get a central government job, you get security, every six months your salary goes up, you get pension, you don't need much of God. Recession doesn't touch you; inflation doesn't affect you because as the inflation goes up, your DA also keeps growing. You don't have to work also, in most cases. It's a terrible thing for a believer to be caught in but it's a very powerful thing if you know how to react to that. In the midst of plenty, to trust God is a very powerful testimony. That's why when very powerful Christians come out of US and Europe, you look at them and you know these people are really powerful because they held a testimony in the midst of plenty and in the midst of obscurity. The kind of obscurity we cannot even dream about is available there and they held a testimony there. They maintained their simple lifestyle, haven't been hooked by money or by women, or by wine or anything that is possible there and they held their testimony. That's also a testimony. If you keep the testimony of God in the midst of trials and tribulations and poverty and challenges and sicknesses is another testimony.

That's what *Hebrews 12* will talk about two characters, those who got their dead back, those who did not get their dead back, two kinds of testimonies and God is building us through these two kinds of testimonies. There's a testimony in the

midst of prosperity, there's a testimony in the midst of trials and tribulations. Both, we need to hold there and say, "God, You are God." Amen! That's what God is telling us today. Let's pray.

**Closing Prayer:**

*Father we thank You, we praise You God, we worship You God. Thank You Father, thank You Lord, thank You Father for being with us through this day from the beginning till now, You were there O' God. That's the reason we are all sitting here healthy and alive O' Master, not because we are strong, not because we ate breakfast, not because of anything else but because of Your grace O' God. Every second we receive this gift from You O' God. Help us to realize it, know it and walk enjoying that gift O' God. Thank You for touching our children, healing them O' God. Father if there's anybody else left in Your Body that is not well, Father I pray in the name of Jesus You will touch them and heal them. Touch and heal, strengthen them O' God. Strengthen all those who are not well O' God. Father there are some families going through tough times, and I pray Father that You will be with them, You will help them O' God You will strengthen them O' God that they will submit to one another, they will love one another O' God, hold on to truth yet packed in grace and in love and in mercy and in kindness, bearing the weaknesses of the weaker one in the relationship, help us O' God as a Church, as families, as individuals, to live in the light of what Your Word says O' God, to be servants first O' God because You are a Servant King. One day You will come as a Lion of Judah. Yet, You came to us as the Lamb of God. Help us to be meek like You O' God. We can't on our own, flesh is strong. But, help us O' Spirit of God to allow that flesh to die, each day a fresh anointing each day, a fresh calling each day to the cross, a fresh carrying of the cross, a fresh dying on the cross so that O' Lord as we walk through life people don't see us, they will only see You O' God. For we are Your testimony in this world O' God. Thank You Father. I speak Your blessings over this home. Thank You for brother Manoj and sister Joba and Richie. We bless them in Your name. We thank You Lord for them and we believe O' God as Your Word says that Manoj is sanctified by the faith of Joba O' God and Richie is holy because of Joba's faith O' God and one day Lord, even as Manoj in the spiritual realm, in Your sight has been separated, one day Lord You will touch him, and he will know You Lord. Together Lord, as a family, they will rejoice and praise and worship You O' God. Thank You for each one present here and I pray Lord the same joy will be everybody's portion here O' God, the joy of knowing our household is saved, everyone in our household. We believe the promise which You gave through Your servant in the Book of Acts and when we believe our household will be saved because our household will be separated and sanctified. Thank You Father, thank You. We praise You, we worship You O' God, the rest of the day we commit into Your hands. Help us to walk in that remembrance, in that knowledge that You can come in anytime and that we should be prepared as Rebecca was prepared Lord. Thank You Father. For in Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen!*