

# Balance, Not Tangents

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the importance of spiritual balance in the Christian life, warning against various tangents that lead to imbalance.*

**Duration:** 1:00:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:29

**Topics:** "Balance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of balancing two principles in the Christian life: grace and truth. He also discusses the balance between organization and freedom, highlighting the need to be flexible and adaptable in a fellowship or organization. The speaker emphasizes the supernatural nature of God and the importance of relying on His power for healing and answered prayer. He also mentions a group in California that took the teachings of Watchman Knee to an extreme, cautioning against falling into legalism. The sermon concludes with a call to wake up, pray, and fast as the New Testament teaches in order to evangelize the world and uphold godly leaders.

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## Transcript

I want to speak this evening on the subject of spiritual balance. Spiritual balance. I believe this is very, very important and I want you to look with me at a number of scriptures, starting in Acts 20, verse 29.

This is our authority. One of the things I believe this church and O.M. have very much in common is our attitude and our faith in this book, God's holy, authoritative, infallible word. And we go to this book for that which we know God wants us to do and to obey.

We have the joy of distributing in many languages books that uphold the inspiration of scripture. And if any of you young people have questions and doubts about the scriptures, there are a number of books in the book room. And if necessary, I would even go there with you and point them out to you, though I'm sure the people in the book room can point out some of the great books on the inspiration of scripture.

One of the aspects of O.M. that is not well known in the United States is what is called in England, Send the Light Trust, which is the English wholesale literature distribution arm. With a staff of 70 people and now a computer, they are reaching out to over 100 nations and distributing literally millions of pieces of literature. Their warehouse in the United States, where we now also have a part-time representative, going to the book shops and taking books like Operation World, which we're just printing another edition of

50,000 copies of, the new American edition.

And I might ask you to just pray for the warehouse in Waynesboro. Harley Rollins, the leader of that team is here, because they are always in need of staff. So it isn't always necessary to go overseas to be involved with Operation Mobilization or with Send the Light Trust.

And praise God for the number of people who are being influenced by these biblical books, books that really carry forth a strong message. One such book is a book by John Stock called *Balanced Christianity*, perhaps an excellent follow-up for tonight's message. Another one, a rather poor book written by this dear brother who is speaking to you right now, is called *Revolution of Love and Balance*.

I got very depressed today, I can assure you, as I watched for a few minutes George Boer on television. I tell you, it is really sad. Those of you who live further seated, you don't live back there, but those of you who sit further back, I'm sure it's easier than those who are right up here in the front.

I'm sure I have a whole lot about that and I'll try to work on it. I don't know, I just get more excited when I think of my wife. I just was on the phone with her and I agreed to buy her a new bathrobe and I've got Karl Knirke's wife out hunting for it.

I had to phone all the way to London to find out what her size was. I don't know if husbands are supposed to know the size of their wife. My wife is just losing weight all the time and then re-captivating it, so I do have difficulty finding her size.

But she's definitely losing now, so that's very encouraging. You can imagine how horrible it is to be married to me. Anyway, that was last night's subject.

Tonight we're into spiritual balance. They are, by the way, related. Book of Acts, chapter 20, verse 29.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that for the space of three years I have ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified. And then I want you to look at Ephesians 4, verse 15. Ephesians 4, verse 15.

Let's start at verse 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sly of men and the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive us. But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part making increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love.

Speaking the truth in love. This is the essence of spiritual balance. The combination, the divine combination of love and truth.

Without this combination, spiritual balance is impossible. The more you study the word of God, the more you will see the need for spiritual balance, the more you will see that the Bible teaches spiritual balance. I saw this emphasis at Prairie Bible Institute, and I dare to say one of the truly great schools in North America, their emphasis on spiritual balance and how God has used that.

I believe, though of course I don't know so much about Ohio and about your church, but from what I've sensed in my short visit here, I see the same burden here. And maybe my message is unnecessary, or maybe it will just be in the way of remembrance. And here is a congregation of people and pastors that want spiritual balance.

They want obedience, they want the word, and yet they want the love and the passion and the spiritual balance that must come with it. We're living in a day in which people are quickly attracted into extremes. I have a message I give which is called Tangents, and I wanted to just give the outline of that before I go into my main thoughts on spiritual balance, because it's very much tied together.

I believe there are nine tangents that Christians easily get on. A tangent is a dead-end street. You're going off the path, you're leaving the narrow road.

The first one is the tangent of the ego trip of Mr. Success. We become successful, then we're no longer very teachable, and soon we're on our own little religious ego trip. Beware of success, it can be very dangerous.

I've studied the lives of quite a few successful people, and I've noticed how the enemy tries to attack them in subtle ways, even bringing them into depression, as Elijah faced after his tremendous success. The Bible says, Take heed, lest you fall. The second tangent is emotionalism.

This is a very big thing today. We live in the existential age. Dr. Francis Schaeffer is desperately trying to warn us through his books, through his films, of allowing our Christian faith to be basically subjective and existential.

And so we go from experience to experience. The Word of God is laid aside. This is why I believe many, young people especially, get trapped into this tangent, this dead-end street of emotionalism.

Like the lady who got some kind of blessing when she leaped into the air in a meeting, and she called it the leap experience. That was all right, I don't like to despise anybody's spiritual experience, but then she went around ministering and teaching about the leap experience, and giving invitations for people to stand and to leap, most of whom did not get the same experience that she got. The things that people do in the name of Jesus are unbelievable.

We spoke about the invasion of impurity into the church on Monday. All those messages are available even tonight on cassette. And we touched a little bit on how the religious emotion and the sex emotion can easily cross and jump the track.

That's why most of the false cults, the leaders, are immoral. Have you followed David Moses Berg and the Children of God? The degeneration process until now, they send their women out into the streets to give their bodies in sex, to bring men into the love of God. One woman recently left the cult because she didn't mind giving her body to other men, to bring them into the kingdom.

Quote of David Moses Berg was totally immoral. But now, the girls were sent out to give themselves also to other women in lesbian relationships, to bring other women into the kingdom. If you think this is something new in the religious scene, obviously you haven't followed religion.

Religion without morality, religion without ethics, religion without the supernatural power of Christ and the discipline that the Holy Spirit can produce in a man can become the most weird and dark form of living that can go on on planet earth. When the salt has lost its savor, it is of little value. And I warn you of the various feeling trips and emotionalistic efforts that the devil may make in your life.

There's nothing wrong with emotion if it's under control, and our emotions change. But we need to get the priorities right. And then there's the dead-end street, or the tangent of what I call the signs and wonders and miracles trip.

We're not against signs, wonders and miracles. We see it in the book of Acts. God still heals, God still does great things.

He doesn't always heal, especially the way we try to bend His arm and force Him to heal. And one of the books I'd like to commend to you is Edith Schaeffer's book, Affliction. But the danger is that when we read certain passages of Scripture without allowing them to be brought into balance by other passages, we get on this little trip of the signs, wonders and miracles.

We think if only we had this in greater dimensions, that nations would fall and repent and Muslims would be converted and we'd have most of our problems solved. I have been studying this for at least two decades. I have watched people get on this tangent.

I've had even a few leave OM to get on this tangent. And in hardly a single case did I see them do what they claimed they would do. On the other hand, I have seen people destroy others and their own homes when they get on this particular trip.

It's taking a good thing too far. It's taking a good thing and not allowing it to be balanced by other basic biblical principles. And we need to be aware of that.

On the other hand, we know people go to the other extreme and they turn God into a very small person who is unable to do very much. And that's the last thing we want. Because if you take the supernatural out of the Bible, you don't have much left.

And our God is a God of the supernatural. And he heals and he hears prayer and he does great and mighty things which we have seen all over the world. The greatest miracle of all is when a sinner can be brought from darkness and death to spiritual light and life in Jesus Christ.

And then the fourth tangent is the only church tangent. There's a group in California under Witness Lee who took the teachings of Watchman Nee 16 steps further. I'm sure Watchman Nee must be rolling in his grave about it or weeping in heaven or whatever else.

I don't know really how to handle that. When these people go to heaven and they look down and see what people are doing with some of their books. Though we have a lot of Watchman Nee books on our table ordered by some dear brother who, praise the Lord, had a vision for them, I myself no longer push his books very much.

Though I love them. Because dear Witness Lee, this interesting leader of this extremist group in California, is taking people who read these books and just twisting their minds. And his little local churches are spreading all over.

They'll soon be in Akron. Their teaching is that they are the only true group and they have caught the minds of some very dedicated and clever young people. It's attractive.

It looks good. But it's off balance. It's extreme.

And I recently had another letter. Not from someone in the Witness Lee thing. And there are whole books about that extremist group, by the way, if you're interested.

But someone else going down a similar road. More or less looking down on anything that wasn't local church. And pretty soon everything evolved around the local church.

Doesn't this poor brother realize that some of the greatest church planting movements in the world have been some of the interdenominational faith missions, which are now accused of being para-church? They were planting churches. African Indian mission. Other great missions.

That was their work. Planting churches. And I hate to see this breach that is coming between the local church and groups that are called para-church.

I don't like the word para-church. It's too close to paralyzed. And I look into the book of Acts often and I see that God was using evangelistic teams, just like these OM teams that are going to Turkey and India on the one and two year programs, not for the summer.

God used teams like that in the book of Acts to start the churches. And so we shouldn't argue which is more important, the team or the local church. We are one.

These teams and the members of such teams are sent out by their local churches and their job ultimately is to see other living churches born around the world. Beware of people who especially come along putting down everybody else. You can judge a man more by his attitude than you can by his words.

His words about other Christians may be nice, but his basic insinuations and his attitude toward other Christians will reveal really where his heart is and whether or not he's moving into neo-exclusivism on one side or some kind of other extremism on the other side. The fourth tangent or the fifth tangent is legalism. A spiritual movement is born in the power and the energy of the Holy Spirit.

It's not a matter of rules and regulations, though there may be some basic policies, but the Holy Spirit is doing the real work. People are being changed. The danger is that several generations later, when the people have run out of their spiritual steam, they try to enforce that which was originally a work of the Holy Spirit and produce a facsimile or some kind of carbon copy.

It doesn't work. And legalism is basically an enemy to true spirituality. That's why young people, most of the things we have said to you, even in the discipleship manual, I don't want you to see them as legalistic little boxes that you have to live in, but I want you to see them as goals that you can aim at and as principles that will have to be worked out in your own life in the unique way that God is working in you.

One of the books I love is Lane Adams' book. It's in the book room called Why Is It Taking So Long? That has so helped such a wretch as I. Some areas of my Christian life I seem to be going incredibly slow, and

it's such an encouragement to understand that other people, even pastors, have some of the same struggles. Isn't it great when you meet someone that has your same wretched struggles? Isn't that somehow warm your spiritual battery and give your carburetor a clean out? Praise God! I've always had difficulty relating to these people who seem to have it all together.

When I first met David Vernon, he seemed to just be the all-American pastor, had it all together, and look at this beautiful church, and I came in here feeling like a worm that had just crawled out of the back end if I won't tell you what. And I just got such a linking with David as we prayed together and fellowshiped together to discover he's real and he's human, and I'm sure you know that as well. Praise the living God for the fellowship we have as we share some of our struggles, some of our doubts, some of our fears.

Great faith is not made in the absence of fear and doubt and struggle. Great faith is made as we battle through, some of us daily, to the position of trust and faith and rest in the Lord. Are you doing that? Are you allowing some of those fears and struggles and doubts to push you into some little corner and isolate you from God's people and therefore eventually paralyze your spiritual life? And then the sixth tangent is the liberty cult.

This is a big thing in England now. People go around always quoting, we're called unto liberty, we're called unto liberty. They forget the rest of the verse.

But not to use it as an occasion for the flesh, but to serve one another. You get people saying, we're free. If we want to play golf at 11 o'clock Sunday morning, we play golf.

If we want to go to church, we go to church. We're free. And you get people, even now evangelicals in northern Europe, who say, we're free.

If we want to have sex before marriage, we're free. Christ has set us free. And now we have a so-called evangelical freedom movement in this area, and even a Christian book came out recently saying there's nothing wrong with premarital sex.

It's really all part of the freedom that we have in Jesus. I want to tell you, my dear friend, your freedom finishes where my nose begins. So please be careful.

In other words, we cannot use our freedom to hurt other people. It has to be kept in balance. And for every verse on freedom, there's a verse on obedience, on discipline, on dying to self.

And there are basic commandments, both positive and negative, in the word of God. Beware of that ugly tangent and extremism. And then the seventh tangent is what I call extreme Calvinism.

On the increase in Great Britain, on the increase in some places in the United States, these people become the ultra critics. Everybody and everything is ultimately criticized. And though I'm sure many of you are moderate Calvinists, I pray that you will not get into extremes and become more Calvinistic than Calvin, because it has been one of the arch enemies of world evangelism, without any doubt.

And it's an area where we need to find balance. And then the eighth tangent is perfectionism. This often comes out of a form of extreme Arminianism.

And it's also on the increase in some countries. And it's heartbreaking to find people who actually feel that they are now perfect. They no longer sin.

I heard of someone years ago who felt he was in this position, and a great pastor walked up to him and poured a bucket of cold water on his head, and the guy really flipped out in anger. And suddenly his doctrinal position was broken for a long time. We say that we have no sin.

We deceive ourselves, says the Word of God. Though I want to be the first one to say that by God's grace, I want to aim as high as I can. And I hope you do as well.

And then ninthly, the tangent of liberalism. Do you think this died 20 years ago? Because we're now riding on an evangelical crest here in the United States. Liberalism is going to make a new counterattack.

It is making a new counterattack right now in the United States through playing down the true position of the inspiration of Scriptures. One of the leading publishers in England just wrote a book by a so-called evangelical, belittling the basic view that I believe you and I would have concerning the Word of God. Liberalism has many tentacles.

It's so pleasant. It's so pleasing. We don't have to any longer be so bigoted to believe that people are lost without Christ in India or in Africa.

That's the most soothing pill that modernistic and liberal theology can attempt to give us. But I feel in my soul more than ever it's a dead end street. And then the tenth tangent is the prosperity cult.

Somebody just gave me a leaflet today attacking the prosperity cult. And if you write to me, I've always got pockets full of papers and leaflets, and this is the one I got today. Rich religion, the hundredfold heresy.

This is not saying that God does not prosper some people. Of course God prospers some people. That's no problem.

But this doctrine, this heresy, teaches that God prospers financially all who are spiritual. And that is the thermometer of your spirituality. And this is being propagated on television, and I believe it is one of the ugliest heresies in the present-day American scene.

And if you want this leaflet on the hundredfold heresy, I'd be happy to share the address with you. Yes, God does prosper some. May they be careful.

May they be faithful stewards. May they study the New Testament well, and may they take books like the Golden Cow. But God does not prosper all.

And around the world, the majority of Christians that I have met, even very spiritual people, are often very, very, very poor. And how we must beware of allowing our mentality to become sort of totally confined to thinking within the terms of American culture. Well, I share those thoughts with you, and trust they will be of some help as you move forward in your Christian experience.

A. W. Tozer said, The more keen Christian is more easily led astray. That's why I give you those warnings. Also because I have read many times the epistles of Paul, where he says, I come to you in much exhortation.

If the Apostle Paul came around to visit our churches, he would come with much exhortation. And also Paul said, I bring these things to your remembrance. Though many of you already know some of those principles, we need to be reminded again and again.

But what are some of the other basic areas of spiritual life that we, where we need to face the need for spiritual balance? First of all, there's the balance between the crisis and the process, or spiritual growth. Both are in the Word of God. I've had a number of crisis experiences in my life.

I remember being in Moody Church where Dr. Oswald J. Smith was speaking that night. I thought I was already committed to Christ. I had been to Mexico.

I was winning people to the Lord almost every week. And when Oswald J. Smith gave the invitation, God just snouted me. And I had to go forward, and I was weeping my way back to Calvary.

I remember a similar experience when another evangelist was preaching in New Jersey. I remember a similar experience as a young Christian at a Youth for Christ meeting in Tennessee when God just broke me. And I had to repent, and I had to renounce sin and lukewarmness and recommit my life to Jesus Christ.

But it's not those experiences that have brought me where I am today. I have a long way to go, I can assure you. But it's those experiences combined with the Word, the spiritual growth, God's process, these great Christian books, exhortation from others, hundreds of tape-recorded messages and radio messages that I've fed out over the years, and even those two years of that process at Moody Bible Institute.

Within three weeks, I thought I would go crazy in the institution. It wasn't my thing. They told me I could only have two practical Christian work assignments.

I already had seven and was spending a large amount of my time in outreach. They said, look, you're here to study. I said, what do you mean? I came to Chicago to evangelize.

And I was a rebel. God had to break me. I was in the dean's office.

What are you doing? Oh, it's just a night of prayer. It's too noisy. I'm sorry.

And I praised God for those two years at Moody because God taught me to submit. And I remember once breaking some rule, and God convicted me I ought to go to the dean, and I did, and I confessed that I had broken this rule and that my heart attitude wasn't always right. And you know, that dean and I became the closest of friends.

I remember one time when I put a missionary on the spot. I was a bit of a cynic. I didn't feel the missionaries were emphasizing prayer enough.

So a mean missionary was giving a speech. He opened up for questions. I said, excuse me, sir, is there any place for prayer any longer in the missionary strategy of the church? Two days later, the professor and the head of the missions department gave a lecture to the students about embarrassing the missionaries.

For the first time I had brought my fiance to the class so she could just see how intensively I studied. And God just broke me as he stood and gave that announcement because he didn't know who it was. And I had to stand up before that class and confess that I had been in the flesh, that I hadn't even read my Bible that morning, and that I had a wrong attitude, and I repented.

And in God's grace, that missionary, the head of the whole department, became one of my intimate friends and prayer partners. Yes, that process, which I didn't particularly like of submitting, of learning, of doing

things I didn't want to do, was one of the greatest blessings in my spiritual life, even though I kicked against it almost all the way. Yes, God's process is not the little process that you are going to order.

You will take what he brings. And God has his wonderful way of breaking us on our strong points. Watch what he says.

God arranges our circumstances to break us on our strong points. So get ready. And believe me, this summer you are going to be in a training program that supplies unlimited opportunities to learn.

Unlimited. Some of you have already seen that. You haven't even got out of the United States yet.

The second area where we've got to work for discipline or for balance is between discipline and liberty. Both are in the Bible. Both are necessary.

At times, O.M. swung a little too far this way, and God had to bring us back. We have so many verses in the Word of God that emphasize both of these principles, and it's beautiful when you can allow both of them to develop in your life. And then thirdly, we've got to find the balance between organization versus freedom.

Some of you are going to find O.M. hard because, in fact, it is a family. It is a fellowship. When you're living in a family, in a fellowship, you can call it an organization if that's your favorite word.

You will have to learn to bend. If four of you are living in one little cabin on the MV Duluth, you will have to learn to bend. Back home on the farm at ten o'clock at night, every night for seven years, you've practiced your trumpet.

You've practiced it so much, your lips look like a squirrel. But anyway, there you are practicing your trumpet. But now that you're living in a little tiny cabin on the MV Duluth at ten o'clock at night, you are not going to practice your trumpet.

There is no possibility. It's not even open for discussion. Maybe down in the lower hold, underneath one hundred tons of books, they will allow you to blow your trumpet at ten o'clock at night.

You'd have to take it up with the captain. Flexibility and adaptability is absolutely basic for survival in the present-day spiritual climate in which you and I live. The rules are being thrown in the sky, and you and I need more wisdom than ever before.

Tozer said the greatest gift needed in the church today was discernment, the gift of discernment. Through study, through prayer, through the Word, through being a good listener, through patience, and through learning basically to think God's thoughts after Him, you can have that discernment. And then, fourthly, we need to find the balance between zeal and wisdom.

We're told in Romans 12, 1, to be zealous, to be fervent in spirit. We're told in James 3, 17 that we need wisdom and that we need the wisdom that comes from above. I love that passage.

It's the text that I use in my little book, Revolution of Love, which is part of the book Revolution of Love and Balance, zeal and wisdom. O-M, in its early days and perhaps to this day, has made some of its greatest mistakes because we were heavy on zeal and a little weak on wisdom. But woe be to Operation Mobilization if someday we become so heavy on wisdom and we lose our zeal.

Jesus said, Be hot or cold, for if you are lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth. And beloved, remember this, spiritual balance is not lukewarmness. Speaking recently in the Philippines to some new people and some older ones connected with the ship Lagos, one of them in the question and answer time, which are always the most interesting sessions, said, Well, don't you think that this balance is really lukewarmness and compromise and we're supposed to be totally committed and all out for the Lord? I said, No, nothing could be further from the truth.

It's spiritual balance that brings our commitment into line and enables it to increase its velocity. It's like the Concorde that sweeps from London to Singapore at supersonic speed only by perfect balance. Is that possible? And if you don't know balance, your commitment will eventually go off the rails.

How many pastors we've seen, Christian leaders we've seen in America who started with a burst of zeal and a great flow of commitment, but because of lack of balance and wisdom, their zeal and their commitment led them into extremism or into a form of which is extremely sad in the present day religious scene. One man who I believe was caught up into this, one of the largest Bible schools in our country, eventually committed adultery with a girl he met on a tennis court, sent a cassette tape to the school of a thousand students and told him he was leaving his wife and going his own way with his newfound little girlfriend. I will tell you, we need to be crying out to God and praying for the men in leadership position across our nation.

And when we see some of them fall, it is only a further word concerning the weakness of the prayer life of the church, the lack of the reality and prayer in the church. Some of you have read the article I wrote for Moody Monthly, What Happened to the Prayer Meeting? And I would beg of each one of you here tonight that you would be active in the prayer life of your church, seeking every opportunity to pray together in the power and the unction of the Holy Spirit. Some author recently wrote a silly book telling pastors that any meeting in your church you have to push, forget it.

And with a stroke of the pen, another thousand prayer meetings across America were wiped out of the evangelical and Bible-believing churches to be replaced with nice programs, slick gospel films, and an increased dependence on gimmicks that I believe is dragging us further down into spiritual unreality. Oh, my beloved, let us wake up and pray before it's too late. Let us wake up and fast and pray, as the New Testament teaches, before it's too late.

Without that, we'll never evangelize the world. Without that, we'll never uphold the men who are sinking fast in Washington and accomplish that which God wants us to do. Yes, that combination of wisdom and zeal is unstoppable.

And let every one of us decide that's what we want in our Christian life. Fifthly, there needs to be balance between freedom and submission. We're aware of a whole new movement in the United States that teaches an excessive form of submission, where people totally give their wills over to the leader of their church.

And he is then responsible for all major decisions in their life. This movement has rapidly jumped the Atlantic from the United States and spread across Great Britain. And it has caused more wounds than I know.

One church that moved into that teaching had 200 people leave the church, wounded, some of them never to come back in fellowship with other Christians. Extremism is ugly. I'm not talking about this subject

tonight because I want to talk about negative things.

I'm basically, after everything is said and done, an optimist. In 25 years of spiritual warfare, I've seen things that hurt. And I yearn for God's people not to get into extremes, not to allow people to manipulate your life, and yet at the same time know something of biblical submission.

First Thessalonians 5, 12 and other verses, one in the book of Hebrews, teach that we should submit to those who are over us in the Lord. That's why when there's no biblical authority in the church, there are no men who have some degree of leadership. The church will not function properly.

It may be a difficult area to find the balance, but it's worth it. And young people, please do not come on ON this summer if you are not willing to submit to the one over you in the Lord, whether you like the color of his eyes or not, whether you agree with everything he says or not. It's basic to your own spiritual growth.

There is always freedom to petition. There is always freedom to negotiate. There are always other leaders that you can also talk in fellowship with.

Nobody is going to manipulate you around Europe. But at the same time, there has to be biblical submission and a respect for those who are over us in the Lord that we may grow spiritually and know their protection. This is one of the reasons in the very beginning of the work, before I ever left New Jersey to first drive that old vehicle down to Mexico, I asked a few older spiritual men to be my counselors and to be the board of directors that I could submit to.

And some of those men have been my helper, my advisor, my protection, my counselor for over 23 years. Since 1957, when an old black Dodge truck rolled across this highway not far from here to begin the work in Mexico. And then, number six, we need to find the balance between the spiritual warfare and the rest of faith.

We have many verses about the warfare. Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Fight the good warfare.

Stand fast. We read about the weapons of our warfare in Corinthians, which are not carnal, but mighty unto God, to the pulling down of strongholds. We go to our churches and we sing onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war.

We say that we believe this, but how many of us really live in the light of this warfare? It's so easy for this spiritual schizophrenia, this dichotomy to come into our lives, where on Sunday and in church we're one person, but the other days of the week we're almost another person. Yes, spiritual warfare needs to be re-emphasized. You will never understand O.M. unless you understand that we actually believe there's a war going on.

This has been one of the most encouraging things with my wife, is that again and again I have seen her do things that are very hard for a woman, because down in her heart, from her earliest days on O.M., when she had very difficult experiences in Mexico, she believes, as I believe, that we are in a warfare. And we also believe that we are bought with a price. That doesn't mean we're on some kind of a punishment tour, and that's why I'm speaking on balance tonight, not spiritual warfare, because I know that that particular teaching must be brought into balance by other beautiful scriptures about how God wants to bless us, about how God has given us so many wonderful things to enjoy, about the rest of faith, talked about so often in Hebrews chapter 4. And to find that balance is a long-term program, at least for the likes of me.

It's not God's will that we be spiritually uptight, pulling the trigger of the gun, so to speak, until it burns up in our hands. We've got to read, we've got to refuel, we've got to relax, we've got to pull back. One of the reasons I have been able to so totally throw myself into these days, 17 or 16 hours a day with very little break, is because before I came here, I refueled, I relaxed, I read, I played a little golf, I played some tennis, I did a few things that I really enjoy, and I didn't feel guilty about it, and that warmed up my battery.

Of course, I also spent much time in the Word and prayer and reading. We've got to accept our humanity. We are not some kind of spiritual bionic generation simply because we read the O.M. discipleship manual or been through an O.M. conference.

We're still human. You may have a fantastic failure tomorrow when you get home. Lose your cool with your kid brother because he pulls your trousers down or some other silly little thing.

Spiritual balance is essential for the soldier of Jesus Christ. And then seventh, we need to find the balance between the basic principles of the Word of God and policies of the church or the movement we're in. And I've written a chapter in my book on spiritual balance on this very subject, and I'm running out of time, so I'm not going to go into detail.

But don't get confused. We often in Europe during the summer crusade, not the year, we have to sleep on the floors. We sometimes live in tents.

We sleep in barns. We're on church, in church premises, sleeping underneath the piers wherever we can go. We had someone go home one summer and they thought that sleeping on the floor was the height of spiritual reality.

And the first thing she did when she got home was ask her mother, her dear tender mother, waiting for her daughter to come home from this incredible movement that she was frightened about. And the first thing the daughter shares is that she really would like the bed removed from her bedroom. She was sleeping on the floor from now on.

You can imagine what the dear mom thought about Operation Mobilization. I could almost have a book of the letters I've received from parents over the years about some of the interesting little tangents that their young people get on, because it's easy to see half of the truth and not the whole truth. It's easy to take that which is done in expediency, and because you sort of enjoyed it, and maybe it sort of warmed some kind of a spiritual twitch you had, to make it some kind of major doctrine in your life, and then to judge others and look down upon others who have not come into these enlightened realms of spiritual depth.

May God have mercy on us if we ever get into that kind of thing. God works in different people in different ways. We don't want O.M. to become some kind of spiritual zoo.

We don't believe that everybody who is committed to Christ is some kind of weirdo going down the street with tracks flowing out of every pocket, who's forgot to comb his hair for several weeks because he's too busy in the work of the Lord. When people see these types, they back off about six feet. One of the ladies I talked to on the doors just yesterday, not far from here, just shared how much she appreciated that I was not trying to push religion down her throat, and she wanted to talk with me all afternoon.

Surely this is God's way, and we can find that balance between some things that may be expedient in certain situations, and that which is biblical, and we can learn to adapt it and make it fit any cultural situation that God will allow us to get into. And the number nine, we've got to find the balance between the

work and recreation. There's a danger in a movement like O.M. that will become workaholics.

Someone was sharing with us today, I believe it was David, your pastor, David Vernon, from a book, how one of the problems in our society is over-commitment. We're committed to so many different things. We're being pulled in so many different directions.

And this is why we're getting very, very little push toward world missions, because people are incredibly committed to that which they can feel, that which they can see, that which they can touch. So how can they become committed to that which is sort of low on the list, and is sort of distant and untouchable? And I wonder if there are some of us that should pray about pushing certain things out of our life that are not really priority. They may be good, but the good can be the enemy of the best.

And it is in our society, that's for sure. And without that, I believe we'll not know spiritual balance in this area. I don't have the easy answer to this, but I know it's got to be one of my goals and one of my aims.

And the next principle, because I lose track of my numbers, is the balance between fellowship and worship. This is so important. Some churches are very heavy on fellowship and weak on worship.

Others are weak on worship and heavy on fellowship. Somehow, as we move forward in the Christian life, we need to see, as Tozer said, that worship is the missing jewel of the evangelical church, and have more emphasis on worship, private worship, small group worship, church worship. I find many Christians who don't even know what worship is.

You say, as we do often in worship, immediately they're praying for their grandmother, or they're praying for a lost suitcase, or they're praying for this or that. That's not worship. That's prayer.

That's intercession. There's nothing wrong, but we ask for a time of worship. Praise, exalting the Lord for who He is, for what He is, not just for what He gives you.

Thanksgiving is also important, but it's not exactly the same as worship. This has to be kept in balance. And then the balance between the church life and the family life.

This must be incredibly difficult. I know this is why more people have perhaps not come out on Monday and Tuesday, and I understand that. People with children, they can't go out to meetings very easily in the week, and probably many have made a right decision in being home with their families.

I just pray they are home with their families, and spending extra time with their children, and not just sitting there, feeding on the tube, or whatever you call it in America these days. Oh, how we need to spend time with our children. Quality time, but also quantity time.

And if I hadn't taken a ruthless attack on my own life many years ago in this area, I just don't know where my family would be. And I tell you, one of the greatest privileges I've had in my life was to be at the baptism, not so long ago, of my own three children. That doesn't mean we're over the hill in the spiritual warfare, but I believe we're moving in the right direction.

The time you spend with your children, being with them, which I started when they were four years old, taking them with me on trips, will pay big dividends, because one of the greatest efforts of the devil today is to destroy the family, and to create a generation of pagans out of the second generation of children of Christian leaders. May we stand firm. It doesn't mean we should judge people who may have one or two

children and gone astray.

And John White's book, *Parents in Pain*, is an excellent book, I believe, on that subject, though I haven't finished it. Praise God there can be a way of balance between the family and the church. And I believe as we know the disciplined life, as we take up the cross daily, as we get our priorities sorted out, it is possible in our spiritual living.

And then of course the balance between the anointing and the training. Some emphasize that the whole Christian life, especially when you go in Christian service, is mainly anointing, special experiences. God can anoint you, and we need anointed preachers, but also it needs to be balanced off.

There's need for training. There's need for getting into the Word. That's why we're trying to keep OM firstly as a training program.

Again, it's the crisis and the process. And then we need the balance between faith and common sense. Some people think that we got the ship *Doolas* simply because there was a wild prayer meeting one night, and somebody with a so-called gift of faith trusted the Lord and there was the ship.

The first ship was six years in prevailing prayer. Six years I did research about ships. Six years I visited ships all over the world studying, calculating, reading books on merchant navy terminology, looking for merchant navy men.

Then those men joined. It took two years to get the first man. And then a few others.

These men contributed their wisdom. And the whole movement of the ships was born out of a combination of reckless faith, trusting God for the impossible, and using the skills and the ability and the wisdom that God gives even to His children. That is an unstoppable combination in the work of God, and it's an area of spiritual balance that we desperately need and that we will constantly be learning more about as we move forward.

Yes, God wants us not to be nibblers of the possible, but grabbers of the impossible. Betozer's little statement might keep that in balance, for he once said it's good in the present day religious scene to develop a little bit of reverent skepticism. And I would certainly say that for those of you who watch American gospel TV programs.

A little bit of reverent skepticism may keep you from the bogs and quagmires that too many people are falling into in these days and ultimately being hurt through it. And there are now many bitter people in America on the backlash of exaggeration, on the backlash of generalization, on the backlash of an infiltration of Madison Avenue in Hollywood into the work of God. I fear it, and I praise God for old prophets like Tozer who was far from perfect, who cried out that we may beware and that we may develop a little bit of reverent skepticism.

Oh, he was a man who believed strongly in holding on to the word of God, and we need to do that. And then just a couple of more items that you'll have to study on your own. The balance between repentance on one side and accepting yourself and forgiveness on the other side.

How do you put that together? The word of God speaks to us. We feel crushed, we repent, and then some people go further on and they run themselves down. That's not God's will.

That has to be balanced out by an acceptance of ourselves, knowing God loves us even though He knows all about us. Total forgiveness, Ephesians 1.6, you are accepted in the Beloved. Each strong, powerful truth balances off the other truth, and without it we cannot know balance in the Christian life.

And then the balance between the life of victory mentioned in 1 John 5.4, this is a victory that overcomes the world, even our faith, with the emphasis on being honest. Walking in the light. Perhaps some of my honesty about myself has frightened some of you.

I know it bothers some. I have found, I think through research, that far more people are helped by it than hindered by it, and in any case the only way that I can function is to be as honest as I possibly can, even though sometimes maybe I say something that shouldn't be said. Forgive me if I do that.

Write me and tell me what you think it is, but remember somebody may write on the same day telling me just the opposite of what you tell me, and so of course I become even more confused, which makes me even more honest, because it's my only hope. But I will tell you there is a victorious life, and from the day of my conversion to this very night, by God's grace, every day I have walked with Jesus, every day I have known His cleansing blood. I say that to bring into balance the concept that is often spread around that basically we all have to eventually backslide.

Sort of accepted now in fundamental circles that the normal Christian life includes at least a few years in the back desert or backslidden or running around in circles shooting fleas. I believe this is a lie of the devil. It's the will of God that when you believe in Jesus Christ, you follow Him every day the rest of your life.

And if you are not determined wholly to do that, then I pray tonight you would make that decision, to wholly follow Him, to never turn back, though discouragement, though the very winds and sands of hell blow in your eyes, you will follow Jesus. That's not perfection, beloved, that's reality. It means you know what to do when you do sin, and you know how to embrace the cross and come back to that place of victory and spiritual power.

There are so many other principles I would love to share with you about balance, and I'll do that when you get to Belgium in a couple of weeks. Yes, unfortunately you'll have to look at me again in Belgium, and probably again in September, but you can rejoice that after that and you go off to the regions beyond of Operation Mobilization, some of you will never have to see this rather interesting face and raspy old voice again. You should have heard it before I had throat surgery.

Hallelujah! God is alive, and if He can bring into balance a natural extremist like me, every one of you can get into God's road of spiritual balance. And I believe it's commitment, it's love, it's the Lord Jesus having a hundred percent sway in your life. It's putting your hand on the plow and not turning back, but it's also keeping the plow on the straight and narrow road that Jesus leads you on of love and compassion, and not off into some tangent or some extreme because you've taken something out of context or you've overemphasized one truth to the neglect of another truth.

It's God's way, it's God's will, and I pray, I pray somehow you'll go in that direction. It's 9.30, let's pray. Our God and Father, we thank You for Your Word, so many different scriptures that bring other scriptures into balance.

And Lord, to be balanced we don't have to agree with everything that's been said here tonight, because balance will mean different things to different people, and it will be worked out in different lives in different

ways. We praise You for Your sovereignty and we praise You for the unity that even comes in the midst of diversity, and we just worship You. And Lord, I know if You can take someone so naturally extreme as I, with a disposition so, so I don't have any more words as mine, then I know there's hope for everybody in this church to become a compassionate, balanced, beautiful believer and follower of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Let's just remain in prayer for a moment. I wonder if there are some just at this moment, you need the opportunity to openly, to openly recommit your life to Jesus Christ. He's spoken to you during these days.

The Bible says in Hebrews the word preached was of no value. Isn't that something? Because it was not mixed with faith. Will you mix what you've heard these days with faith? And in this act of commitment, say with me, Lord, I believe You're going to change my life and make me that committed disciple with spiritual balance that You want me to be.

Would you put your hands on that plow afresh and say with all your heart, I am not turning back anymore, whatever comes. It will be no longer an option in your life to turn back or to quit. No longer an option.

You're irrevocably, totally committed to Christ and abandoned to God. I feel the need to give a call to that kind of surrender to Christ. And if you mean it with all your heart, whoever you are, I'd like you just where you are to just stand.

I'm not going to ask you to come forward tonight, but just to stand up where you are and irrevocably commit your life afresh to Jesus and to these biblical principles of spiritual balance. No matter what your age, no matter what your background, I want to give that opportunity. It's the only time in this conference we've done this, but I feel constrained to do it tonight.

Hand on the plow, burn the bridges, so to speak, and give an irrevocable and deeper surrender to Jesus Christ. It's no magic to stand. It's not the total answer, but it can be a new beginning for some people who really do need a new beginning in their spiritual life.

Not just hearing, not just saying, wasn't that a nice sermon? Acting. Because we have the tendency to think and not to act. The tendency to feel and not to act, as C.S. Lewis once said.

And even this simple act of commitment, standing up, will cost you. It may cost you some of your pride. It may cost you some struggle.

But I believe it will help you. I don't say everyone has to do this. And you can recommit your life sitting down, and I'm not there to put a guilt trip on you.

God loves you sitting down as much as standing up. Praise be to God. But I believe there are some that will be helped in their pilgrimage with Jesus who will stand at this time and say, Lord Jesus, I'm yours.

For commitment, for spiritual balance. Some of you on a tangent, if you're honest, you've been on a tangent, come back and say, Lord Jesus, this way, a way of love, a way of balance. Praise God.

Anyone else before I close the meeting in prayer? Praise God. I don't want to rush. I never know where to find the balance in this area of how much time to give for this kind of invitation.

I know some of you are wrestling with this. I've had so many people write to me and say, please continue to give invitations. It's been such a help because I'm a natural weakling when it comes to invitations.

I don't like to give them. It seems that when you do, the old devil tries to say, oh well, somebody's going to be hurt by the invitation. Somebody's going to feel too guilty.

It's too emotional. Yet there is a place for some emotion, though I have not appealed to your emotion tonight. It's not been that kind of a message talking on spiritual balance.

And I appeal to your will and to your mind to simply commit your life by faith in a deeper way to Jesus and his work and this road of spiritual balance. Anyone else? Praise God. This will mean different things to different people, of course.

He can interpret your exact situation and meet your exact need. Peter says, casting all your care upon him, he careth for you, he careth for you. That's why he's calling you into a life of greater reality and power.

Praise him. Yes, God bless you. Praise the Lord.

Anyone else? I'm going to pray right now. Yes, God bless you. Praise God.

Praise God. Bless you. I don't know how to give a proper invitation.

I always feel I must sound funny, but you know God uses the weak things to confound the wise. And the folly of a simple act of commitment like this, I tell you, has confounded the enemy again and again. And there are people all over the world winning thousands to Christ because someone somewhere stood up and said, Lord, I want to be counted in your army.

I want to do your will, though I'm scared silly. I will follow you. Praise him.

God bless you. Let us pray. You can join remaining standing or whatever.

Lord, we commit our lives to you afresh as we stand before you, as we sit in your presence. Lord, take us, use us. We don't want to play around anymore.

We don't want one foot in the world and the other foot in the church. We don't want to be driven by every wind of doctrine, blown from one extreme to the other because we lack that commitment and that love for you and that that basic biblical truth that we've been hearing in these days. And so, Lord, we surrender our all to you again and say, take us, Lord, use us for your glory.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen.

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