

Cd Gv264 Living Under Pressure Master

by George Verwer

Living under pressure requires learning to deal with sin, accepting our humanity, and practicing commitment with balance in all areas of life.

Scripture: Matthew 6:25

Topics: "Financial Discipline", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being selective in the material we consume due to financial limitations. He mentions two books that are tied to the seminar, one of which is written by the current North American USA president of Inner Varsity. The speaker also discusses the importance of discipline in living a balanced and fulfilling life, stating that discipline actually leads to more freedom. He concludes by acknowledging the pressure of speaking on this subject in a short time and highlights the significance of books in contributing to our spiritual growth and leadership.

Transcript

Living under pressure. And to try to speak about this in a one-shot, one-hour seminar, because that's all this is, you'll notice this changes every day, this is it for me. But to speak on this subject in this short time creates considerable pressure.

And some of us learn to live with it. One of the things that's an enormous help are the books that we have to follow up on the spoken ministry. Without apology, we would like to say that the literature available here in the long run will probably make a more vital contribution to your spiritual life and leadership than perhaps what you receive in terms of spoken ministry.

And I know it's hard because we're all limited in our finances to get all of the material that's available, so you're going to have to be highly selective. I'm going to give this seminar a head start because I'm sure we're going to run out of the key books. There are two books that especially, three actually, tied into this seminar.

One is brand new, and it is one of the books making the biggest impact in North America right now, written by the man who is presently the North American USA president of InterVarsity. Over here, Christian Unions, all part of the same movement. And that's a book by Gordon MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World.

More pastors, more Christian leaders are grabbing this book right now than anything in print in the last year. I have only seen a very expensive hardback edition. Because he's not known here in Britain, they have bypassed the hardback, I never saw it, and come immediately out with a paperback.

And so you will be way ahead of a lot of people who eventually will declare this book to be one of the great books of this decade. It's a book that brings out a lot of spiritual balance. It's a book that if you share it with your pastor or leader in your church, he'll probably be indebted to you the rest of his life.

Because putting this kind of thing in practice, I'm sure would save at least 25% of the nervous breakdowns. And the burnout, Christian leader burnout, which is so common today. So it's a joy to present to you *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon MacDonald.

You'll have to contextualize it into your own situation if you're a student. He was a pastor, now he's an executive leader of the large mission. And of course every book is brought into balance by other books.

Perhaps my favorite book along this line of what we're dealing with this morning is *Healing for Damaged Emotions* by Dr. David Siemens. And we have pushed this so hard in O.M., an unknown book when we got a hold of it, that the publisher finally produced a British edition at half the price. And it just came out a few weeks ago.

So this is the first time I've held up in public the British edition of Dr. David Siemens' *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. Probably the book that the Holy Spirit has used the most in O.M., our own fellowship across the world in the past couple of years, in terms of ministering to us as far as challenge and a kick. Other books perhaps have been used.

But this is one that is dealing with what we're touching on in this seminar. It would be worth your coming to Salford just to get that book. And believe me, if you don't get ministered to, and if that book doesn't become vital in your own ministry and counseling to others, because that's our concern here, not just you, but the people you are in touch with that you need to be ministering to.

Because I can tell you with the tremendous increase of extremism and confusion in the body of Christ in Britain, there are more people within the Church with damaged emotions perhaps than ever before. And we need this material. And praise God that it's now available in this British edition.

Now an old-timer, take *My Life* by Michael Griffiths. Does the message of total commitment, believing that people are lost, world evangelism, does it fit into living a balanced, sane, down-to-earth life on planet Earth? Or are we all destined, if we become committed, to become a bunch of raving fanatics running down the street with giant posters, turn or burn, or some other thing? And I tell you, when you get a blend of these three books, you won't believe it's possible. So I want to bring these two into balance with Michael Griffiths' plea for balanced fanaticism called *Take My Life*.

He spoke at the Leaders' Conference some years ago. Let us now turn to the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount. I remember as a young missionary in Bombay, India, picking up an amazing book, *The Psychology of Jesus and Mental Health*.

Now people think my book reviews are a problem. But the bigger problem is when I mention books that you can't find. And I have people writing me from all over the world, I heard you mention this book on one of your tapes, like H.A. Hodge's book on spiritual warfare, because I mentioned this heavy quote on spiritual warfare from that book.

I've never seen the book. I don't even know if it exists. I got the quotation from somebody else.

But there I was in Bombay, and I got a hold of this book, *The Psychology of Jesus and Mental Health*. And discovered basically it was an exposition on the Sermon on the Mount. And you can find more to help you in terms of living under pressure from the Sermon on the Mount than perhaps anywhere else in the world, at least in a few words.

In fact, this book went on to say that if you took all these books on psychology, and I'm not anti-psychology, though it easily goes out of balance, praise God for Christian psychiatrists and psychologists that are being used of God. But he said if you took a lot of books on modern psychology and you threw away the straw, what you would have left would be less than you'd find in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's read from Matthew chapter 6, verse 25.

Matthew chapter 6, verse 25. Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on. Is not the life more than food and the body than clothing? Behold, the fowls of the air, they neither sow, neither do they reap nor gather into barns.

Yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by being anxious, can add one cubit unto his stature? Why are you anxious for clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? With what shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles and the heathens seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Be therefore not anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil, or its own evil or trouble. We don't have time to expound this great passage.

Some of you know that Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones and I'll be mentioning his book this evening has turned out two volumes, two volumes just on the Sermon on the Mount. And what brilliant material that is. Some of you have probably read already books on this subject.

Some of you know that in OM and in our concept of training leaders we have this slogan total commitment with spiritual balance. Total commitment with spiritual balance. We find that some people when they first come in contact with us they hear the total commitment message.

They pick up one of those old Verwer tapes 25 years old on the warfare. In fact, though I've asked the OM leaders to change the orientation tapes for some reason they keep using some of the old tapes. And if you're coming on OM this summer already you have been through probably that tape on the spiritual warfare.

The man who's been copying those tapes for 22 years is down here recording the messages again this morning. And he can tell you a lot about those orientation tapes and the problem we have had in terms of also the quality of those old tapes. That predated the cassette, the video cassette, the audio cassette.

That just shows how old I am. Some of you were born with a video recorded at the end of your bed. But I found in those days and I learned the hard way that people to some degree hear what they want to hear.

We are psychological beings. Do not think that you're going to make some deeper commitment of your life to Christ, be filled with the Spirit during this weekend, and go out of here living happily ever after. Though that may sound funny, a lot of people are teaching more or less that kind of thing.

And yet it's been my experience in this quarter of a century to have the problem of not only picking up the pieces of some people who thought the Christian life was that kind of an easy answer, but also to pick up quite a few of the leaders. There is no shortcut to being a disciple and a persevering soldier of Jesus Christ. There is no shortcut to just developing biblical stability.

And our great burden as we share so much with you this weekend, and as you get different books and you get different messages, that somehow you will be able to receive this material and find balance, stability, and how to contextualize what you receive into your own life, your own temperament. Even this interesting book on *Ordering Your Private Life* is a book that I have to contextualize into my own temperament, my own approach as someone perhaps about the same age as this man, a man I greatly appreciate and respect, because I have a totally different job, I live in a different nation, I'm a different temperament, I've got different problems and hang-ups, and if I hadn't learned over the years how to contextualize all these challenges that come at us as Christians and not somehow be destabilized or just overloaded with guilt in the process, I wouldn't even be here. Because there's no greater pressure that can come upon us often than the pressure of endless guilt.

Let me say that again, that there is no greater pressure that comes upon us often than the pressure of endless guilt. We're never good enough. We're never spiritual enough.

We never pray enough. We never win enough souls to Christ. We're never loving enough.

We can't seem to maintain long-term relationships. We're still having hassles with our mother, though we've been praying about it for at least several months. That's why David Siemens in his brilliant book *Healing for Damaged Emotions* talks about perfectionism.

Some of your guilt may be conviction of sin. All you have to do is repent of that sin, allow the blood to cleanse you from that sin, and then bounce back set free by the Lord Jesus Christ. Roy Heshin once said, and he and Stanley Volk used to be together in those early days as they were greatly influenced out of the East African Revival, Roy Heshin said in one of our conferences that when you repent and you deal with some sin, even if it's something that's been besetting you for many years and it goes under the precious blood, it is gone.

It is as if it never happened. And if somehow in the midst of a struggle a few days later you sin again in that area, that is the first time in history it's ever happened, so it shouldn't be any big deal to deal with it if it's the first time. And so you receive God's cleansing and you bounce back and you're back on the road.

The key to living the Christian life under pressure is knowing how to deal with sin, knowing how to deal with the basic struggles and problems and failures that come to you in your Christian life. Otherwise, you get overwhelmed with guilt. This increases your pressure and a lot of other problems come as well.

Of course, when I first started to speak forth my strong message on commitment and discipleship, you know, little verses like Luke 14, 33, except you forsake all that you have, you can't be my disciple, and all

the rest of the strong message on discipleship, some people went off balance. Of course, other people thought I was completely bizarre and they expected me to have a nervous breakdown any day. Way back years ago, people would write to me about it, slow down, take it easy, beware of this, watch out for that.

And I never did have a nervous breakdown. I haven't even got close yet. I'm willing, I want to be open.

But somehow it doesn't seem it doesn't seem that I'm the nervous breakdown type. It seems that more of a problem is the possibility of me causing other people to have nervous breakdowns. This is why over the past years I have been trying to be more sensitive and balanced in my spoken ministry.

This is why I have tried to make an extra effort through books like those of John Halesby and Tim LaHaye and Eugenia Price to understand other people of other temperaments like for example my wife. You know, in some of the marriage books you read that as the years go on, especially if you pray together, in your marriage everything becomes more and more wonderful and you're more and more like-minded like, you know, two little peas in a pod. And, you know, sometimes you see these older folk occasionally going down the road at 50, you know, holding hands with a big engagement period grin and you say, boy, wow.

You know. Now, my marriage hasn't quite been in that category. In fact, the more we've lived together, the more we discovered how completely different we were one from another.

Some of you have heard my tapes and so you know some of the interesting things about my marriage. We found it difficult even to walk down the street together. I'd have to stop on the corner giving out tracts waiting for her to catch up.

We've been traveling a lot for the last 26 years. We just had our 26th wedding anniversary. Travel is just part of my life.

I'm on the road more than I'm home by a long way. But my wife found travel very difficult from the very beginning. And yet she stood with me in traveling all these years.

Cut it down in recent years at least for her. For me, packing a suitcase, this is nothing. You just grab whatever's lying around you think you may need it, throw it in the case and jump on the lid.

You need about a half hour before you're going to leave, that's all. When my wife packs a suitcase, weeks of planning, preparation. You can feel the pressure as you get closer to the day of departure.

You can feel the pressure in the bedroom. Everything in that case is in its right place. Every bottle, every vitamin, every hairpin.

I don't even know what some of this stuff is for. And I will tell you, you can laugh but I can tell you in our marriage it has not been all laughs. And I thank God for his divine program of marriage because marriage is not just some kind of mutual pleasure trip to satisfy various instincts and emotions and loneliness.

Marriage is part of God's great training program to prepare you to reign and rule someday with Jesus Christ. You read Bill Heimer's brilliant book *Destined for the Throne* or *Don't Waste Your Sorrows* on the purpose of marriage in God's great training program. That's why the big ingredient that keeps marriage going is commitment with balance.

Love is vital but love in itself is commitment. More young people today are not moving in God's direction because of wrong relationships with the opposite sex and sometimes the same sex than anything else that

I know. And we need to understand that sometimes the pressure we feel is conviction because we're not living right.

And that's why worldly psychologists they don't do this as much anymore because they've seen the cost of it. If somebody's under some kind of sexual pressure and he's feeling guilty because he's having fantasy or he's in excessive masturbation or he's going off to X-rated movies or whatever they might even tell him to go out and get a prostitute if he's old enough. Psychologists have actually recommended that.

Some have proven you can prove anything by the way some have proven that this is a tremendous emotional release. And I thank God that the word of God is clear on the subject of sex. There are over 500 verses in the Bible on the subject of sex.

We have a brilliant new book on this subject by Erwin Lutzer the present pastor of Moody Church where Alan Redpath used to be pastor. Alan would love to be with us. Just spoke to him on the phone.

He just had another stroke in January. He's 80. One of OM's counselor advisors.

And this week for the first time since January he's back preaching again. Pray for Alan Redpath. And I believe with all my heart it is possible to have commitment with balance.

It is possible to learn how to deal with sin. To learn. Another book by Erwin Lutzer that failure is the back door to success.

His book on the subject of sex is called Living With Your Passions. And believe me we need that book. I find that many young people who write me and as a result of one of my earlier books I've had over 14,000 letters.

One lady when I mentioned this on a television program recently wrote me a really heavy letter. How could 15,000 or 14,000 people write to you? You said you read them all. That's impossible.

I don't believe you. What I failed to mention in the program was that I got these letters over a period of 20 years. And I have read almost all of them.

I don't answer them all. I now have some people helping me on that. But I answer many of them.

And many of the people who have written to me their struggle and their difficulty has been in the area of sex. It has been in the area of sex. And often there was no reason for a lot of the excessive guilt they were carrying.

They were going through normal adolescent problems. Christians are so quick to put themselves into excessive guilt because they don't have total, absolute, final, once and for all total deliverance of all sexual problems. And the number of people that come up forward in some meetings to have their hands laid on for deliverance.

Some people in the states have had their hands laid on their heads so much their heads are flat. I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, I believe that God can deliver. I believe in the fullness of the spirit.

I believe that God does give us crisis experiences but that crisis, if it's not followed by a process, will become an abscess and that's what a lot of people have today. Because they want the blessing, they want the deliverance, but they don't want the long-term learning process of being a disciple and growing in all

the different areas of the Christian life. And for 99.99 percent, there are certain areas, and sex is usually one of them, where as a human being, because when you're saved, you don't become an angel, I don't see any wings coming out of anybody's back.

As a human being, you will be wrestling with these things all of your life. And I tell you, one of the reasons I have a lot less pressure than I had when I was, say, 20, is because I learned in my early 20s, something about self-acceptance, balance, casting every care upon Him, and accepting my humanity. You know, we read a lot of spiritual books, and I was overdosed on Watchman Nee, Andrew Murray, F.B. Myers, and then I picked up the final book to blow me away.

It was called Quiet Talks. And this man, Mr. Gordon, all of his books were Quiet Talks. Quiet Talks.

And I got the idea that anybody who amounted to anything for God was a quiet, soft-spoken, spiritual-looking - no hope for me - spiritual-looking, gentle, never rattled type of person. Really. And then I picked up Andrew Murray's book Humility.

I wasn't even sure I was saved. And I will tell you, it was a glorious day in my life. It took a while.

It took Eugenia Price. It took that book, Psychology of Jesus and Mental Health. It took certain articles.

It took other people that I began to more readily accept what I call the human factor. I actually wanted to call my new book, No Turning Back, the human factor. And then Graham Green pinched my title.

He didn't even phone me. So they gave it this scary title, No Turning Back, and it doesn't sell very well, I can assure you. But in that book, I share the human factor of George Burwer.

The struggles, the failures, the weaknesses. And I share how to deal with pressure. I call it survivalship.

I'm always looking for new words, and when I don't find them, I just make them up. And since I've been preaching for a couple of decades on discipleship, I decided to develop a theology of survivalship. I actually got it practicing in the ship Lagos Lifeboats.

Because we had this survival at sea strategy. You could picture me. You know, the oar, I think, weighed more than I did.

But anyway, I believe that as Christians, the sooner we learn the basics of perseverance, the sooner we learn what it is to bounce back when we sin, when we fail, when we blow it with our parents. I even now blow it with a dog. I can't even handle this dog that's moved into my house and is taking over.

My whole Christian life, I've been preaching against dogs for dedicated Christians because I thought, how can we put money in dog food when we need gospel tracts, we need Bibles, we need New Testaments. Then my daughter got, she was growing up, she got a boyfriend and he kept coming over. And after that ended, she decided to get a dog and I thought that was a better deal.

And so she's had this dog, but she works long hours and guess who often walks the dog? Just guess. And the experiences we've had just with that dog, I am now absolutely in favor of dogs as part of God's training program for patience, perseverance, servanship, cleanliness. You know, we laugh, but it's amazing and you know, Watchman Nee touched on this in his brilliant book, Release of the Spirit.

It's a hard book to get, but in his brilliant book, *Release of the Spirit*, he spoke on how God uses revelation to minister to us. We hear a message, God reveals something to our heart. We say, Lord, I'm guilty.

We repent. The burden's lifted. But he goes on in the next chapter to talk about how God uses circumstances.

You write that down. Some of you haven't taken any notes yet. Circumstances.

If you want systematic note-taking, don't come to my sessions. Circumstances. During these two days together, God is going to speak to us.

God is going to reveal things to our hearts from his word. I hope there will be repentance. I hope there will be brokenness.

Brokenness is humility's response to the touch of God. We say, Lord, I'm sorry. We say, Lord, forgive me.

I don't go through many days without having to repent of something. It doesn't mean, you know, I fall down on the street with sackcloth and ashes. Oh, I've had another lustful thought as I was looking out the window.

Some of us would be, you know, spending all the time rolling around the streets. But we deal with these things instantly. It may be lust.

It may be a wrong attitude toward a brother or sister. God is concerned about our attitudes. It may be an area of pride.

It may be an area of jealousy. The one extreme is to make too much of it. Excessive guilt.

I'm no good. I'm evil. People have even committed suicide getting down into that dead end street.

The other extreme is to take it too lightly. It doesn't matter. I'm a lousy, no good, big mouth.

I'll never change anyway. By the way, I decided that it was possible, after reading all those books, to know Jesus and to walk with Jesus and still be loud, noisy, unpredictable, sometimes irreverent in the eyes of other people. You want to talk about irreverence, why don't we talk about Arthur Blessed? Ooh, is he being criticized.

I just heard another tape of his yesterday. Believe it or not, at Westminster Chapel, no man has shaken Westminster Chapel like this man since the day since Lloyd-Jones went to the glory. And yet, he's totally different from Dr. Lloyd-Jones.

Oh, we would have so much less disunity and confusion in the body of Christ today if we would accept one another more, if we would realize God's unity is in the midst of diversity. And I tell you, Arthur Blessed has made a great impact on this nation. And God is using him.

If you and I tried to behave like that, it would be ridiculous. It would probably be phony. We don't copy one another.

We learn from one another. We learn as we see godliness in the lives of other people. But we never copy other people.

We may pick up something without knowing it. Don't feel guilty about that. I've had people make ridiculous comparisons with me and other men of God.

And some of it's just a joke. People are blind. They can't hear.

God is using different people in different ways. So much of the pressure we face in the ministry is because we will not be ourselves. We think the Holy Spirit is out to destroy our temperament and our personality.

When he is out to work through us and when the Holy Spirit works through us, the human factor is always there. Part of the human factor is what I call the mess factor. I don't know if you've ever got into mess theology.

Maybe you haven't studied theology yet. That's spelled M-E-S-S. And believe me, if you don't understand that wherever men and women go, including the greatest Christian leaders, wherever men and women go and they do something, there will be the mess factor.

If you don't have any mess factor in your church or assembly, then you are the most unusual church or assembly in the history of the planet. Every church or assembly will have the mess factor. Some churches are better at hiding it than other churches.

Praise God for some that are now just being more open about it and facing weakness, failure, extremism. We have had to face O-M extremism head on. We're the movement that tried to out Mueller, George Mueller.

We tried to out Hudson Taylor, Hudson Taylor. All in the name of faith. We tried to do with money what other people in the United States do in the area of healing.

One church that's left 60 people dead in one congregation. Just extreme teaching on healing. The pastor in the midst of all the court cases last year died rather young.

What an unpredictable, wild planet we have been put into. And I'm sure some of you, if you're honest, you are probably somewhat discouraged in your Christian life, somewhat discouraged in your church life. That, in turn, is creating all kinds of pressure, even doubt, as to whether the whole Christian thing is true at all.

And then we sometimes get the idea from some places that the last thing we can ever talk about as Christians is our doubts, right? I mean, what if somebody thinks I'm doubting the Bible? I'll never be elected as president of the Christian Union. A man of God once said that great faith, great faith is not created or made in the absence of doubt, but it is created and grows as we battle through doubt. I am a doubting Thomas.

I've wrestled with doubt all of my Christian life, maybe because my grandfather was an atheist from Holland. I don't know. But when I see the problems in the world, the suffering in the world, the pain in the world, and then when I see some of the response of God's people, supposedly God's chosen people, often God's frozen people, and then when I see some of the tangents God's people get into, and the lack of love, the lack of reality, and joy, and what we read about in the New Testament, I ask, is it real? Perhaps the thing that causes the greatest pain is when we see Christians going against Christians.

Billy Graham says we've taken the sword of the Spirit and we're using it to carve one another up instead of going forward in a great offensive for world evangelism. There are quite a few people now who do not

even believe we should have interdenominational meetings like this. They believe only the local churches, God's program for world evangelism.

There are many churches now and fellowship groups where an OM speaker cannot even get in the door because he's classified as parachurch. I don't like that word. It sounds too much like paralyzed.

And each group, each group with their subtle super spirituality seems to communicate that they are the best group or the final group or the last revelation or the more full revelation. It's wild. And we're reading articles every month in the press attacking this thing and that thing.

At the same time, praise God, in some places there's an increase of unity and leaders are coming together and there are many encouraging signs and that's what life is all about. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. The spirit against the flesh.

The two are contrary one to the other. Don't be surprised by the mess factor. Don't let that shake your faith because if you read the Bible you'll get a greater understanding of man, his weaknesses, his needs than any other book perhaps you could read.

And therefore, you should not feel overwhelmed or under so much pressure when you fail, when you make a mess. But you will learn something about God's growth program. You will learn how to cast every care upon Him for He cares for you.

1 Peter 5, 7. And you'll learn that failure is the back door to success and that God uses failures. Sometimes when I go to speak in a church some word goes ahead of me that I'm some great heavy recruiting missionary speaker. Sometimes that word actually keeps me closed the door even to go into churches because they don't want that kind of speaker.

And I was speaking in a big church in Chicago. I live actually here in England. I have been for 23 years except when I'm in Asia or other parts of Europe which is a good part of the time.

Once in a while I travel and minister in the states and I was ministering in this big church Sunday morning and I guess they expected a real heavy challenge on discipleship and world evangelism and all that kind of thing. And I just shared this burden that the Holy Spirit put upon my heart which I call the confessions of a weak missionary. And I shared eight areas of struggle.

And you know it's because I've been able to share my struggles often just with one or two other people not necessarily in public. Most of you don't have the opportunity to speak to 500 people and share all your failures and struggles. And you need a little bit of training and communication before you try to do that except in a very careful way.

Go step by step when it comes to sharing negative things especially heavy things like for example in the area of sex in public. I've had people go from my meetings hearing one of my messages on sex and immediately go back to their fellowship and open up on the whole area of sex just about blue people circuits. One brother they took him aside and said you're not speaking here again for a long time.

But that Sunday morning I shared the confessions of a weak missionary. I shared about my ongoing battles with fear and worry. Don't be surprised when you have struggles with fear and worry.

Don't think you're weird or you're neurotic. Probably most of us if we love Jesus Christ and we believe in hell and that men and women are lost and we believe the teaching of the New Testament probably at least the way the world classifies us we probably are a little bit neurotic. I don't think that's any huge problem if it's kept in balance with the rest of faith casting every care upon Him.

Yes, we have Luke 14.33 except you forsake all you can't be my disciple but we also have Philippians God will supply all of your needs according to His riches and glory by Christ Jesus. What a verse. What a verse.

Fear brings torment the Bible says but love casts out fear. The major study I made when I was a young Christian was on the subject of love. The major biblical message that has helped keep me in balance and I'm still learning and balance for me doesn't mean exactly the same as it would for you because balance spiritual biblical balance includes a tremendous variety of ways of living.

Some of you are called to be medical doctors some of you are called to be engineers. I'm called to be an international traveling teacher an evangelist and a leader of a spiritual movement and so of course our lives and our lifestyle are going to be different. You know I found through sharing a lot on fear and worry that this is probably the biggest pressure most people find and I tell you if you think I'm totally absolutely free from it right now today I'm not.

In fact my wife and I in comparing notes discover that this is why I find life a little easier than she does because I have learned and I think sometimes for men I'm not sure of this but I've learned to live in perpetual struggle. Struggle problems headaches difficulties criticism misunderstandings all kinds of things are just my daily portion. Just the letters I have read in the last 24 hours from people to me seeking counsel are enough to put me in a depression.

If I don't know how to bounce back to battle through to realize how God can minister to me not just through spiritual means but through my humanity. It may be a nice meal. It may be a nice piece of music.

It may be a walk in the woods. It may be a private jig around the back of the room. We are human beings and you have to discover what helps you to survive in this pressure planet and you develop a strategy for survival.

With me it includes jogging it includes a bit of tennis. Now that I'm in the mid years you know I picked up this book Midlife Crisis. I was feeling great until I started to read this epistle of doom.

So I decided one more extreme step in my relaxation program golf. I want to tell you if there's any sport that can give a man a nervous breakdown it's golf. But I've learned how to handle it.

I go late in the afternoon when there are no other golfers I hit the ball and then I jog between the different holes. And I don't get concerned about the score. In fact it's better if you just develop your own program and figure the highest score wins.

It's good to know that some of you know a little bit about golf. That encourages me especially when there's so many Chinese people. But it's exciting and the Christian life is exciting and we've got to learn to accept our humanity and realize that we're going to struggle.

And many of us there's going to be a degree of struggle all of our life. Now we have to know when that struggle is getting too much and is moving toward neurosis or is moving toward being out of control can't

sleep at night psychosomatic symptoms many things can come to show you that those struggles are not being kept in control. My wife has found that continual struggle much much more difficult.

Years ago she went into a depression. Before that she had hepatitis she had this operation this problem. She comes from a much more difficult background her father was killed in the war.

Don't have time to go into more details. We're all different. One person jumps up and gives his testimony how he was wonderfully delivered from this and from that.

Other people try the exact same thing and it doesn't work. And they get depressed they get discouraged and sometimes do extreme things in that moment of discouragement. Beware of victorious life testimonies.

Because for every guy that can testify he got great victory I can show you ten other Christians who tried a similar thing and didn't get the same kind of victory in the same way. I get letters along that line almost every week. And that's why some people are so ridden with guilt after they've been prayed for after they've had spiritual blessing after they've gone through this particular spiritual experience and somehow they're still struggling they're still failing they're still saying stupid things as I sometimes do they still feel uptight and have wrong attitudes or bitterness even though they've had all these spiritual blessings and the fullness of the Spirit and the O.M. summer training experience and the jumping over Jesus barrier experiences and whatever else they're manufacturing in these days for quick instant guaranteed spirituality.

I will tell you that a lot of people listen who were running the Christian life 20 years ago that I met are not running today and I believe one of the biggest reasons the lack of spiritual balance the unwillingness to face the human factor of life including their own weaknesses their own emotional needs emotionally you are not me and I am not you my own emotional needs are very different from my wife the things that help her get through life that she enjoys even in the area of culture you know it doesn't it doesn't really turn me on for years she tried to get me to go to the ballet and the opera in the early years of O.M. you wouldn't even mention such things you know except you forsake all well after we got a little bit of balance from some books by Dr.

Schaffer and men like a man named Taylor who wrote a book on discipline and culture O.M. came into a glorious day and let me tell you O.M. which has largely European roots also owes Europe to a large degree for some of the balance that we have developed we were born in the states very small spread to Mexico jumped the Atlantic and were triple hyper when we landed in Madrid Spain and it was meeting Europeans of different churches different backgrounds different nationalities that helped me move in some of my convictions from extreme position to a more moderate and balanced position which is where you will find O.M. to some degree today though we're constantly growing and constantly changing meeting Spaniards who drank wine at their meals when I came out of my little home area I was you

know the most fanatic anti-alcohol character in the town even before I was converted I was into that down with booze Billy Sunday was one of my idols Billy used to in the prohibition days break bottles on the pulpit my grandfather was an alcoholic hated the guy and I believed that alcohol was a devil's brew and if you had even a drop even a drop in a glass the enemy had you down by the nose and then my full-time workers my full-time men these are God's men that are going to turn Spain upside down I went over to their house for a meal and they also embrace in Spain and you know this one brother embraced me almost got drunk slowly slowly as I went to France as I went to Germany as then I moved way back in

March 62 to England Anglican land moderation in all things it was a long road for me

but I tell you I thank God for the cross section of culture we have in Europe I thank God for the privilege of going across to that continent and living and working with Spaniards and Italians and French and Germans and getting to understand how other Christians think because I'll tell you often in Britain without knowing it we lapse back into an imperialistic mentality and we tend to think that when it comes to the Holy Spirit He always starts in Britain and probably in my church I remember in that same meeting sharing my struggle with temper and my big mouth and how God has been so patient with me over the years and teaching me how to deal with that sharing my struggles with lust and how again and again I experienced God's cleansing and forgiveness especially over lust of the eyes

tremendous failure I've had nothing that the world thinks is a failure but as a very idealistic perfectionistic young Christian to me it was a huge failure like the time I was witnessing in the street and suddenly I got attracted I wasn't married I was single I was babbling while every other single man is babbling suddenly all these you know half-dressed women in lustful pictures were around and my mind was going and I did something as a young Christian I had never done as an unconverted person I went into a striptease place I always wanted to do it before I was a Christian but I lived in the kind of community where you know we didn't have these places you had to go into New York City which I did and saw a lot of funny movies and a lot of things that were along that line but I'd never

gone in you know live you know real standing in front of you here I was 19 years old started out giving tracks in the street end up that evening you know I will tell you I knew that night I was a Christian because I was miserable and I walked out of there after a few minutes through the I almost hit the man at the door I was getting my hostility was then moving and I went into a phone booth some of you know this story from my tapes and there in that phone booth I felt condemned I felt I may not even be a Christian and God gave me that message from his word there in 1st John chapter 2 verse 1 first part of the verse sin not second part of the verse so essential to Christian living if you sin you have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous and I confess that sin of lust I

confess that I'd gone into that wrong place I didn't feel forgiven I didn't feel forgiven but I stood on God's promises and if you want to deal with pressure and if you want to deal with guilt and sin in your life you've got to learn how to stand on God's promises even when your emotions are going the other way and I walked out of that telephone booth and the first person that came up to me it was in a bus station the first person that came up to me you know what he said you think well how do I get the bus to Washington he said what must I do to be saved have you ever had that experience in a Manchester bus station I couldn't believe it what did he say and he opened his heart that his marriage was going through divorce his wife had somehow fallen in love with Jesus and he didn't know what

was going on and he wanted to know how he could be saved and an hour later on that Indianapolis war memorial I'll never forget the moment he bowed his head and gave his life to Jesus Christ the Bible says in the book of Proverbs the evil woman hunts hunts stalks for the precious life you read Proverbs 4, 5, and 6 he wants an ammunition against the lust of the flesh and often when God wants to use you Satan will set up a booby trap did you see the film The Sting what a film I've seen it twice well I'll tell you Satan has a sting Satan has some booby traps that make that look like child play and one of the problems today is we don't have enough grasp of the spiritual warfare we are in a warfare Satan is going to try to set us up let us get into a position of leadership without getting

wisdom and knowledge and discernment and discipline let us become a little bit popular among some of our friends and then he will just try to pull the carpet right from under our feet that's why we need training before we get into some of these leadership responsibilities don't wish that leadership will come upon you too quickly the Bible says don't lay hands on a man too quickly and I believe there's a great difference between a leadership training program that we put many of our young people through over there on the continent and here in England there's a great difference between that and making a person a spiritual leader in the church which is what some of these references are about and if any of you have struggles in some of these areas whether it's fear temper the tongue worry or

lust I want to just say this which I hope will encourage your heart if God can keep a character like me going 31 years I've just had my 31st spiritual birthday I've not had a single day not a single day in 31 years when I haven't known the grace of God and the forgiveness of Jesus and the joy of the Lord through many miserable moments and if a character like me can find God's strategy to deal with pressure can find God's strategy for survival then I know there's hope for all of you and some of you probably feel pretty weak at times quite overwhelmed maybe you're already in leadership and you feel it's beyond you and if you're honest you're scared what are people going to say what happens when I fail the fear of failure can create neurosis as quick as almost anything else how much happier

we are when we learn that failure is part of God's program if you hurt someone through failure then go to them and apologize if you hurt yourself through failure bounce back and claim God's healing and God's cleansing as Dr.

Siemens talks about in this book all these great men of God you read about if you read I hope you do or you hear about or that stand in front of us and speak they all have their failures they all have their weaknesses they struggle with the same things that you struggle with and sometimes they fail it's not all victory often we have too many victory testimonies I'm not against that and praise God I think we should have testimonies of victory but I once in a while love to hear a little testimony of failure I love it when men of God just open their heart and admit they've blown it or they've failed or this or that because it helps a character like me struggling along sometimes saying and doing the wrong thing I'm a natural backslider I don't know about the rest of you if God doesn't touch me every day if I don't get something from his word or from a friend or from somewhere every day my heart begins to so easily grow cold how easily we condemn ourselves as Christians once we are committed once we know Christ as Lord and we get into these spiritual books and we get involved in evangelism we get involved in prayer so quickly we get into excessive self condemnation and that creates the pressure that blows us away in the process don't do it learn how to refuel learn how to be honest and open of course I have many other struggles with ego especially when criticism comes you really show love to someone and they misunderstand it all and think that you're trying to pull something that's a great blessing have you ever had that special experience problems in the home doubts and unbelief fiery darts of discouragement I don't know about you but I never get through a week without some discouragement when you're idealistic you're involved in prayer you believe in world evangelism your whole life is built on what you're reading God's word you launch out in all these various visions and burdens that you sense God has given you the vision for Turkey the burden for Afghanistan the thrust into the communist world the big move of the ship to Africa when it involves you every waking hour of the day and this doesn't go right and that doesn't go right and this person dies on the field and this one's in jail and this one just has a health problem and this one backslides or something else I will tell you when you're in the spiritual warfare there are fiery darts of discouragement are going to come on you almost every day but we have Ephesians 6 Ephesians 6 is part of God's plan for handling pressure

put on the whole armor of God the shield of faith the helmet of salvation read that chapter memorize that chapter there's a powerful book on my little special table on how to memorize scripture I offered it at the leaders conference two years ago because I forgot to bring it.

I was Avalanched with letters requesting that book on scripture memory Because I believe one of the ways we learn to handle pressure is Filling our hearts and our minds with the scriptures With a word of God so that instead of that worrying thought we get cast every care upon him. He cares for you and the Word of God has tremendous therapy power and It's vital if we are going to know Perseverance and ongoing victory in our Christian life In this last just few minutes I'd like to just mention or give you my list of other What I call secrets of survival you can find on our tapes whole messages on this subject Similar to what's on these tapes Let me just give you as many as I can of these points in my strategy for dealing with pressure and survivalship I've already touched on a number of them Then I finally focused this down and put the list in my Bible Some of them are in my book.

No turning back Number one knowing that you are accepted and forgiven. Absolutely Knowing that you are accepted and forgiven Number two casting every care upon him first Peter five seven casting every care Upon him and you have to often practice it every day. I had to practice it this morning Because I'm carrying a few extra burdens right now with the problems we are facing, you know, I'm around the world Number three making God your goal not success not leadership Not pleasing people God that's why we push books by a W Tozer and Knowing God by Packer because we want people to be God-centered and Being God-centered and making your God your goal and realizing that everything else can go wrong with all the pressure that creates but God doesn't change and so you can have a time of worship and a time of praise and that will be an enormous Help in dealing with pressure in your Christian life.

I'm just reading a new book on praise called the praise factor The last two years I've been big on factors. I've been looking for all the factors. So I got this new book the praise factor Put it next to my mess factor message Number four learning how to be hurt as a Christian leader, especially you're gonna be hurt.

You're gonna be misunderstood If you don't want to ever be hurt ever be misunderstood You don't want anybody to ever reject you ever walk on you Let me tell you a big big bit of truth, which you probably already know You're in the wrong planet and you know, it's amazing how God can work through hurts Misunderstandings you ever get a letter and really hurt you I get him quite often. I thank the Lord for I Thank the Lord for the hurtful letters for the criticisms because I know that's the anvil Which God can do a deeper work in my life Doesn't mean I always accept it all passively. That's another dangerous extreme Hyper passivism, we never speak we become sort of evangelical masochists We eventually think everybody else is wrong or unspiritual.

We are suffering for the sake of the gospel we will not open our mouth and explain something that would probably completely resolve the misunderstanding and reunite and Heal the relationship. So beware of that extreme as well Silence is not necessarily Spirituality. Otherwise the Apostle Paul was in a real mess Number five learning the reality of praise and thanksgiving Plenty of emphasis on that these days Tozer said worship was the missing jewel of the Christian life.

His new book on worship has just been published six learning the rest of faith spoken about in Hebrews 4 Learning the rest of faith. It's a way of life. There can be the crisis, but it has to be followed by the process And number seven realizing God is easy to live with That's a quote from a W Tozer.

God is easy to live with Even a cup of cold water will be rewarded Some people are uptight about God Their God is a big legalistic man with a big stick waiting to hit them on the head the moment they do the next thing wrong God is a God of love and mercy and forgiveness and we must build on grace Not on the law number eight accepting God's growth pattern for our own lives We're all growing in different ways Lane Adams has a book on that You're happy to send you a copy. I got a bunch of them. I don't think we have it here Why is it taking so long for me to get better? I Was just with him a great man of God ran into difficulties and was willing even to get Psychiatric counseling to get sorted out that takes humility with what some Christians say about it and yet God use that and he became the pastor of Second Presbyterian in Memphis a church of three thousand is now in the Baltimore area pressing on I heard him speak at finally years ago Why is it taking so long to get better? We're growing at different rates different speeds If you have a rough family background a lot of damaged emotion if you've been through rape or through some other difficult experience It's probably gonna take a little longer for you To arrive in your Christian life where maybe some brother in Christ seems to have arrived so very quickly by the way He may not be there as much as you think Being patient with God's program of growth in your own life number eight accepting or nine Learning the freedom of a disciplined life That's why we emphasize Discipline in the ordered life as spoken about in that book by McDonald and this book spiritual depression by Lloyd Jones The freedom of a disciplined life.

It's not bondage Discipline gives you more freedom discipline in life And Enables me to play a little golf It enables me to have a little time of tennis with my son it enables me to go see a good film or a concert But if my life is disorganized, I can't you know, or get my work plan Then I'm constantly living in in a sense of neurosis and just the thought of relaxation I'll say how can I do that? How can I go off for a walk in the woods? I got to do this letter. I got to do this. I got to do that Discipline is the road to freedom if I hadn't learned discipline when I was 17 18 19 20 I wouldn't even be here today.

It takes time number 10 learning to refuel and relax We're not always on the run. We're not always an invading army an army has to rest an army has to relax number 11 learning real fellowship have at least one person you can take the mask off with Even at the risk of losing your reputation. I'd rather lose my reputation and keep my sanity And so many people all bottled up they won't tell anybody they got this problem They won't tell anybody that they've got this particular difficulty and they bottled it up.

They don't talk about it sooner or later Something's got to pop No matter how much spirituality you think you're bringing in in the process. I Thank God that I've been able to unload my burdens on my brothers and on my wife And I think it needs balance, but it's part of God's program for survivalship Number 12 keeping a positive attitude and a positive lifestyle based on Philippians 4 8 Because I can assure you if you have a negative streak, I have a heavy negative streak and a strong Cynical streak and I didn't even go to a British University But I will tell you if I don't keep that under the blood and Continually deal with it because I so easily see the negative. I won't make it there's so much negative there's so much that's wrong and Every one look at a negative thing I want to take ten looks at God of what he's doing on the greatness of his creation of a greatness of his Personality and are the wonderful things he is doing in the world today Despite man's falling and failure and difficulty learning to be a Positive Christian with a positive attitude is absolutely dynamic And let me just say being positive and having an outgoing view of life.

I believe actually develops energy Now we're all different but negative is negativeness Cynicism weary fear actually can drain you of physical energy These things are linked. You cannot separate the practical from the spiritual That's why God commands us to love him with all of our heart soul mind and strength

And that's why often neglecting the body creates spiritual problems and then just very quickly number 13 Remaining constant in the word and prayer Something you've already had mention of number 14 being active in his service with your eyes on him. I Know people are warning us about being workaholics.

I'm not sure that's the biggest problem with the average evangelical today But we have to my type of person has to watch it And I believe it's important however to be active and when you're young if some of you were active for God if you were serving Christ if you were loving others and Serving others and serving the church and evangelizing a lot of the problems you have At least some of them would disappear. You know what you wouldn't have any time Excessive time and excessive money often leads to some of our difficulties. So there's nothing wrong being biblically busy for God Lloyd Jones brings that out in his writings I may touch on that tonight and then number 15 don't neglect the family a little fun a few laughs The human factor which I've developed a lot more since this original outline Number 16 finding spiritual balance at every whatever the cost With love in Christ reigning and ruling in the heart as the pivot point of all you do And number 17 we've got to go back to the basics Simplicity that is ours in Jesus Christ Sometimes we read too many books Especially on sanctification and we get more and more introspective and confused and this leads to Argumentation and division in the body as we fight over periphery and secondary issues and lastly struggle is Normal, none of that is a substitute for the fullness of the Spirit the crucified life Christ living in you that's not the subject of this seminar But these are some practical Points of survivalship that enabled me to live under pressure These last Years, let's pray father.

We thank you for your word and all the practical material we find in your word We thank you for the reality of a forgiveness we have in Jesus and Now when we fail you love us and you work in our hearts and You forgive us and cleanse us and put us back on the battlefield and back in the narrow road Lord as we receive so much this weekend. We're gonna just take in as much as we can and we'll leave the rest for another day So that we go from here with total commitment and spiritual balance But we pray in Jesus name Amen

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