

Cd Gv275 the Labourer Is Worthy of His Hire

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the biblical basis for financial support for missionaries and the vital role of the church in this process.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:7-14

Topics: "Mission Work", "Financial Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the problem of overemphasizing a simple lifestyle while trying to evangelize the world. He shares his personal affinity for saving money and recounts finding an open can of Coca-Cola while walking his dog. The speaker highlights the struggle faced by average members of the mission organization OM who feel bound by rules and regulations that hinder their ability to honestly share their financial struggles. He emphasizes the importance of prayer and seeking God's guidance before embarking on missions work, and mentions the availability of a financial explanation sheet. The sermon also mentions the close association between OM and over 1,000 local churches, and the speaker acknowledges the generosity of these churches in supporting the work of OM. The passage from the Bible is referenced, where it is mentioned that one person's extra can help those in need, and the goal of OM is for everyone to aim for full support.

Transcript

1 Corinthians, chapter 9, starting at verse 7, verses 7 through verse 14. Very important biblical principle we're dealing with tonight. How many of you are fairly sure in your mind, you're not positive, but you're fairly sure God is leading you into longer term missionary service? Not just, you know, raise your hand.

That's amazing. Now I can tell you this message tonight is for your sake, not for mine. Because if you are talking and thinking about longer term missionary service, on the practical level, your greatest problem will probably be in the area of support.

Last night, before I went to sleep, I was reading, it was quite late, an article from the Wycliffe Bible Translators. And this article pointed out the agony that many of their long term people have in finding the necessary support to survive. And they're known as the, you know, one of the outstanding, 50 year old, outstanding mission organization with enormous links with the church, especially in the United States, but also England and Australia and other countries.

And this article so ministered to me the biblical basis of how a worker is to be supported in the work of God. So let's try to get this from the word of God tonight. And we'll have a foundation stone for the rest of our life.

I put some copies out yesterday of Peter Maiden's book on the subject of giving. If you're fortunate to get one of these, do share it with other people. All right, let's read, starting verse seven.

Follow in your own language through verse 14. I'm reading from the New American Standard. Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Isn't that clear? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses, he shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.

God is not concerned about oxen, is he? Or is he speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written. Because the plowman ought to plow in hope and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right.

This is the unique calling of the Apostle Paul. We did not use this right, but we endure all things that we may cause no hindrance to the cause or to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple? And those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar.

So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. May God give us understanding from his holy word. Most of your pastors receive a salary.

This is not necessarily the lack of faith. It actually is quite biblical. Some mission societies pay their missionaries a proper salary.

And in OM for many years we have been trying to bring things into balance by saying though we don't feel led in that direction, we certainly do not condemn other groups that have that particular method of getting the money out to the worker. At this point we need a good message on the birth and the growth of what is called the faith mission society. But we don't have the time to do all that we'd like to do tonight.

And this is something that within Operation Mobilization we have wrestled with for many years. I believe at our general council this year we came into the greatest honesty and reality in the area of money that I have known at least in the last 20 years. Because at times due to our own failures and the criticism we received when we failed, we have reacted in pride and got into a dangerous form of extremism in certain cases.

And among many of us in Operation Mobilization it was almost wrong. We felt a twinge of our conscience if we even talked about money. Though there has never been any policy against that.

Our conservative policy of course forbade us to get into fundraising and it still does. And if you read our literature carefully you will see that we believe in information but without solicitation. Because of other complexities it actually became information except money without solicitation.

Now in a number of OM countries that changed quite a few years ago because different countries took advantage of different freedoms they had as an individual country. And there has been increasing disunity

on this subject over the past few years. So after much agony of heart I made this cassette tape called the Financial Crisis Tape, the most widely listened to tape I have ever produced.

And OM has come into a great new freedom in this area. And it is biblical. Because the New Testament and the Old Testament talks about money.

We are not talking about any kind of high pressure gimmick ridden fundraising. We are not talking about that. But we are talking about the need for you to be able to share with your prayer partners and your church what actually OM believes and expects of you in the area of finance.

And of course the foundation for this is found in this scripture. You are in the work of the kingdom. If I didn't believe that God had raised up this fellowship with all of our need and with all of our weaknesses I would excuse myself and I'd get out of here tonight with or without a ticket.

If you're not convinced that God is in this and that there is, spiritually speaking, a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day leading us then I wouldn't want to get in one of those trucks and head on to eastern Bangladesh villages. OM now has a close association and linking with over 1,000 local churches. Many of these pastors and churches believe in this work more than I do.

They don't know as much as I do. They believe this is the work of the kingdom. How many of you have been sent out in a definite way by your own local church? Would you raise your hand? Raise your hand.

Please hold it up high. That's way over 50%. We didn't send you.

We didn't even know who you were a few months ago. We were praying that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth laborers. But the Lord of the Harvest, and this is clear in many passages and acts, has chosen to use his church to send forth the laborers humanly, on the human level.

Of those who did not raise their hand at that moment, how many of you sense that you are sent forward by other people who have prayed for you and committed you to the Lord, even though they may not have been an organized local church? Would you raise your hand? That's another great number of people. Now we won't get into what the rest of you are doing here. But this is where God has mightily used this fellowship of OM.

To take people who don't have a very good church relationship, but they love Jesus, they want to grow in their faith, they want to serve the Lord, they may not understand yet church truth, and yet it has often been through OM that those people later on have become more church-centered than the people who came to us from the churches in the first place. A couple of years ago, Jonathan McCrosty wrote a leaflet about, with the help of other leaders, about OM's financial policy. In our traditional conservative way, we said, any church that asks us for this can receive it.

Then we had a great debate and a lot of prayer, and we said, now we're going to send it to the churches anyway. This year we had another debate and more prayer, and now you can enclose it and send the leaflet to every prayer partner that you have. That will be the new revised edition.

It's not a big change, but for the likes of us, it's quite a radical step. The Word of God teaches that you working in the kingdom shouldn't receive what you need materially to do that work. Simple ABC biblical principles.

You don't have to feel guilty that people in your church are giving their hard-earned money so that you can go to India. You shouldn't be feeling guilty about that. And we often have difficulty when we think of a dear old-age pensioner who's sacrificing and giving to you, and she doesn't have a cassette recorder.

She doesn't have a typewriter. She doesn't have a lovely colored Indian shoulder bag. She may not have a car.

She may not have some other things that you have. And when you visit her house, she hasn't painted it for several years because she's given you all the money that she was going to use to buy the paint, and you find out she's fasting every third day so that she can send other missionary support money, and you find out she doesn't have any more Christian magazines because the subscriptions cost too much, and then you find out she doesn't go to church on Sunday because she can't afford the bus fare. She's given it all to you.

I dare to say the average Joe ever could walk out of there feeling fairly guilty about the whole thing. Now, I can assure you most of our prayer partners are not like that. When I fast, I think of my poor prayer partners.

And when I blow some money on a nice big pizza, I think about one of my overweight businessman friends. Just a matter of keeping the balance. It is difficult, isn't it? There's a little memo out on the table if you can ever find it.

It's one of the more dull-colored ones in which I share about the problem of overemphasizing simple lifestyle while trying to evangelize the whole world, 4.7 million souls with two ships and 400 vehicles. Now, in myself, I love the simple lifestyle kick, really. I just love to save money.

I have a miserly route. I just love to squeeze pennies and even watch them dance. One of my great victories last week when I was walking the dog in the park picking up tins and bottles and checking what was around, I found a tin or a can.

We're even in England calling them cans now. Terrible, really, what's happening. I found an unopened can of Coca-Cola.

I brought it home, checked it for radioactivity, put it in the fridge, and on the journey from England, I had the joy of opening that free, miraculously provided Coca-Cola. I mean, there's a joy in this, in being simple and seeing money saved for the glory of God. I haven't bought any shoes for 28 years.

I get vibrations walking in shoes that don't fit. And I collect old shoes that people don't want. I even wore two different shoes That always helps in the evangelism.

But you know, the fact of the matter is, if we're going to evangelize the world, if we're not careful, simple lifestyle becomes a subtle tangent. We certainly would never have gotten two ships. We would have never printed and published three to four hundred million pieces of Christian literature.

I shouldn't say printed and published. A lot of it was printed and published by others. We just distributed it.

That's why we've written this leaflet on releasing finance through prayer, because it's going to take money to evangelize the world. And if you're going to be a long-term missionary, you're going to have to learn to handle this problem. Now, some of you may work with a society that pays you a salary.

And one of the reasons OM is changing its policy a little bit is so that when people leave OM, they can live with what they receive in the way of teaching when they're on OM. Because most people, and we've had 25 or more years to watch them, if they want to be career missionaries, they leave the present OM emphasis in order to get into another mission society, because most mission societies will not have what OM has been teaching for the last 20 years. But here's what has happened over these 20 years.

Many people who have felt in agreement with what we have taught have used that as a determining factor that they are not to be long-term missionaries, but they are to go and take up a secular job. I wish I had time to speak about that. Because especially here in Europe, there is enormous pressure not to be a so-called full-time Christian worker.

In countries like Germany, you're going to get very little encouragement to be a full-time Christian worker, especially with an interdenominational OM type thing. And in the past 20 or 30 years in Britain, the general message coming to the young people is get a career, get a good job, then the Lord can lead you later on if you prove yourself, and if it be His will, then maybe, perhaps, He can lead you into full-time Christian work. So what do we see on the mission field? Especially up until, say, 15 or 20 years ago, more and more and more Americans and less and less and less Europeans.

And this, we believe, is one of the reasons God brought OM into birth 25 years ago, this very month, here in Europe. To work with the Church in Europe and to help the Church in Europe continue to be a mighty missionary force for God on a worldwide level. That is the cardinal goal and principle of OM in Europe.

And we have seen many, many answers to prayer in European churches. And there is not a single European missionary in Christian society that doesn't have an XOM or more, sometimes a dozen or two, laboring in their missionary force today as a full-time worker. But there would be many, many more if we were more biblical in our approach to money.

And we would not feel guilty about doing deputation work for BMM Mission Society or some other missionary group. And we would not think only in these extremes. What are the extremes? Over here, extreme, very off-putting fundraising.

That's one extreme. The other extreme, the conspiracy of silence, total silence. I only talk to God about money, not to man.

And we have seen in OM that both of these extremes are ugly. But we have discovered that sometimes this silence extreme leads to a more subtle kind of pride than even this funny fundraising extreme over here. And in OM we have seen some very ugly pride at times.

People almost boasting that their money came in and they're waving their yellow receipt slips. What about the young person on the same team who didn't get any yellow receipt slips that month? Is he praying less? Has he got less faith? It's as simple as that. When we pray in the area of healing we see some people healed.

Others are not healed. I was watching Jonathan McCroskey as he got into his van out the window. Every time I see him, all on his own tonight, get into the van, it takes quite a time, it's quite an event, and see him drive away, I tell you, it speaks deeply, deeply to my heart in a way that I cannot easily express.

I had the joy of coordinating the medical rescue operation when Jonathan had his accident. We mobilized immediately tens of thousands of people to pray. But then we acted.

We didn't just pray. We know God could have raised Jonathan up right from the back of that vehicle where he was crushed. Or from that hospital bed in Spain.

Everything within us as Christians tells us we must pray and then we must act. A top doctor was taking care of him. But through various contacts I had in other countries I got to a better top specialist in Barcelona and we flew him at considerable expense immediately to the hospital where Jonathan was.

And we continued to pray. He could have died. Then, after consultation with those doctors, we got the best Swiss air rescue service we had ever heard about.

We had already been in touch with Switzerland. In fact, I was in touch with about ten different countries. And Jonathan was flown in a special air ambulance from that location in Spain to one of the best spinal cord hospitals in Europe, which just happened to be a few blocks from his home in Brussels.

That's quite an amazing fact. Not just prayer. Prayer and obedience.

Prayer and common sense. We've always said this in OS. But we found it difficult to put it together in certain ways.

And we still will. We'll still have to grow and learn. We have not arrived.

Now you're going home to your churches. What are you going to do back there? Will it be the conspiracy of silence? Or will you be able to be open with people about what God is leading you to do in your life? You have been accepted into the work of God. For the last twelve months or two years, we have been processing applications, preparing for this particular week, right here, right now.

For two years we've been working on this. Many have not come this far. Some have gone home from here.

Most of you now have been accepted into the Operation Mobilization family for the next couple of years. We are doing a work that is on the mind and the heart of God and that is commanded in the Word of God to go and evangelize the world. You are the oxen that is spoken about in this passage.

And we don't want to put a muzzle, some kind of brace on you so that you cannot do that work. You are the laborer that's worthy of your wages. Historically, that puts us in a very challenging situation.

The biblical response should be that we go to our churches, we share how God has led us, and we believe and pray with them together and seek their confirmation of what we are doing. This is complex because I don't believe we necessarily need a full-scale missionary commendation for someone to come on a one-year spiritual training program. This is what makes the first couple of years at OM a little bit complex in some of this.

Some of you are financing yourself. There's nothing wrong with that. Other people have seen money come in from their parents or from some other source.

And many of these things we have as our goals because it takes time. Because many churches don't have a missionary vision. And because of the nature of the missionary situation today, the false ideas, the traditions, the lack of vision, we at times have to go and convince people that world missionary work is worth their investment in the first place.

That should not have to be. It should not have to be that the likes of us have to help convince the church of the task of world mission. But the truth is, that is where the situation is in many places today.

That's why sometimes it is difficult to explain and describe the ministry of Operation Mobilization. There are many sides to the OM personality. OM was partly born as a protest movement crying for renewal and revival among God's people.

That was as important as evangelism in those early days of OM. And from those earliest days we were selling copies of *Why Revival Carries* and giving out *Herald of His Coming* and distributing *Calvary Road* that there may come revival and vision for the church of Jesus Christ. Our first burden wasn't to get them to send us to the mission field.

Our first burden was that the fire of God may come down upon the church and that they would send workers with all the great mission societies to complete the task that was in front of them. Satan, of course, counter attacks in many, many different ways. I believe every spiritual movement has blind spots.

For many, many years I beseeched God to show OM, to show me my blind spots as I seem to have an ability to see them in other people. At least, I thought I did. And I am... God is merciful.

He uses us with our blind spots. He's patient with us. He doesn't say, now when you get everything in perfect order then I'm going to use you.

His treasure is in earthen vessels. OM from its earliest days to this days had areas of immaturity and areas of spiritual blindness, practical blindness that God has slowly, slowly helped us with. Isn't it interesting how we can see the blindness the other group has? Sometimes in OM we have spoken negatively and despairingly of other groups of the practices we felt they had which we didn't feel were the best.

Praise God for people who have not been afraid to challenge us concerning some of our blind spots. Including quite a few of you who have been here in this conference. And OM, I can assure you in the months and years to come is committed to greater honesty, greater integrity and to a more biblical position concerning money and concerning our relationship and submission to the local church wherever we may be coming from.

And if your own home church doesn't feel that you should be coming on OM then we feel one of our leaders must go there and pray together and talk this thing out. Not a matter of you sneaking out the back window and showing up in the OM van in Lahore. It's not a matter of you selling your car and draining your bank account and by that purpose bypass the church and come into OM through the chimney.

Because it's not firstly the money we want to see the church is giving to support you and world missions. It's the prayer. It's the fellowship.

It's also the fact that when you return to your country OM does not have the structure to care for you. It must be your church who welcomes you back and helps you get on your feet in your own hometown, in your own community. We cannot possibly do that.

Right now OM doesn't have the manpower even to type out the receipt slips for the gifts that we're receiving. I know on the ICT, International Coordinating Team one of the married women who already has several jobs is also right now typing up receipt slips and she has two children and is her husband's

secretary and is working part time as my secretary as my secretary is on leave but she's been going the extra mile into the office to type up receipts. You see the key in sending out the workers is the local church but the key to receiving the workers back including some who may be casualties is also the local church with all their roots and the God-given structure that they have.

Now in OM we're in so many different countries and just the differences between Germany and England and some of these things are very, very great. Some of our German young people come from little evangelical fellowships which are just a part of the big Lutheran church in their city and some of these people until they came in touch with OM and we gave them some information never understood anything about personal financial support. They just give their money to the organization and let the organization divide it up among the workers.

Our OM system was far more linked to the way things have been done because of certain movements of faith in Great Britain and then in America. When we gave the German churches some information and when we told them on the telephone in person to person the basic rules of the game because it's dangerous to use cricket rules in a baseball game or football rules in a basketball game then many more of them started to send the money in designated to the particular individuals and oh how they were praising God that finally the Lord saw their need for personal support. The worker is worthy of his hire.

The Bible does not go into the great details that some of our mission societies do on this issue. Of all the people I admire I guess in my Christian life one of them is Billy Graham. I never met him I was saved through his preaching I followed his life all of my Christian life He receives a salary A salary! Billy Graham receives a salary and I think it's about twenty grand twenty thousand somewhere around there dollars 283 on today's market but right now many school teachers in the United States receive a salary near that and he did that for a number of reasons because he easily could have received ten times that much money and some of these famous people do I am convinced and I always have been this isn't new God works in different ways through different fellowships and different groups Billy Graham is worthy of that salary as God's instrument In fact there's an interesting verse that has given me no end of difficulty in my particular position Let those who minister in the word of God have received double honor What does that mean?

We blow the trumpet twice as loud for preachers?

It seems to mean that the demands of their ministry maybe hospitality, maybe other things means that they should have a little extra money so that they can do what God wants them to do You read that passage and then also turn to 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 This whole chapter is concerning the collection for the poor at Jerusalem It gives the example of Macedonia 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 Now brethren we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given the churches of Macedonia that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of your liberality That's about money, that's about giving Look at verse 3 For I testify that according to their ability and beyond their ability they gave of their own

accord begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints And this not as we had expected But they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God Consequently we urge Titus that as he had previously made a beginning so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well Now I'm becoming very aware of the time as I often do There's so much I want to say We discover in this passage that one man's extra helps the person who does not have This is why in OM we have our goal everybody aiming for full support But when it comes to the practice once we're out in the

Bible front of OM one man's shortage of funds is the other man's opportunity to share Now this sometimes is difficult to work out And in OM we have abused this because at

times we presume that somebody else was helping out our field when in fact that someone else was expecting us to help his field So neither had the money and the bills therefore did not get paid We don't believe that it's right that even as we sit here tonight there are so many overdue bills that we have failed to pay And we believe we should mobilize special prayer and today, tomorrow again is the night of prayer half night of prayer But we don't believe we should just pray That's why last December we wrote an honest letter about the generator crisis concerning the blue locks How can we expect our prayer partners to pray intelligently for the ship if we don't share with them projects so huge as a quarter of a million dollar generator That was the most honest letter in the history of OM

And for England we even explained why the ship was still stuck in Europe We had to tell them something And so we humbled ourselves and we admitted in the letter that we had financial trouble And the number of people that wrote to me every single letter and I had dozens and dozens and dozens of letters every single letter was positive I heard some criticism from within OM People said, ah, he's hinting for money First of all we could debate is it a sin to hint for money But I'll tell you the sin in OM We have overreacted whenever we have been accused of hinting for money in our super spirituality we have overreacted and panned to the table we're not hinting we don't believe in hinting OM doesn't hint for money God forbid The truth of the matter is if you want to be as some people OM has

always hinted Who decides what a hint is?

When I announced in 1964 to the Christian public in our prayer letter completely out of the blue that we were praying about an ocean going ship for world evangelism would you say that's a small hint or a big hint or a wet hint or what? OM has always communicated quite clearly on many issues We did go all over the world preaching on Luke 14.33 Except you forsake all that you have you can't be my disciple that can lead to some pretty heavy fundraising And there are all those glorious early stories of OMers selling their possessions and living on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and traveling in vehicles miraculously supplied from petrol from above But here was the problem People like George Verwer had a lot of freedom Preachers have a lot of freedom But the average OMer who is not a great verbal communicator he found himself gripped by these rules and by these regulations in a way in which he could never really share honestly his financial agonies and what the movement was expecting of him if he was to go out to India or anywhere else I know this message tonight doesn't give a lot of easy answers But I believe it can deliver us from some false ideas And it can let you know as you go back home it's not just prayer At present still we pray and ask that people would take at least some initiative before we start sharing too many details There is however a financial explanation sheet that you can give to people It'll be some months before we have the new sheet When people ask you can share them about projects like Project Africa And if you want to see some of the best put together information on any project in the history of OM then you can talk to Mr.

Information himself Dale Roton for Project Africa And he has a new picture brochure that communicates very clearly that something big is happening in Africa and we're looking for a few tens of thousands of people who want to get involved And we're not talking about fingerprints And I hope you find some people who really want to support you and will count it a privilege to support you in this great work How do you do that? You give them the information You tell them the truth And then you let the Holy Spirit direct them in what they should do You don't put the pressure on You give the facts and let the Holy Spirit If people read

some of this literature and the Holy Spirit is speaking to them they may ask you Do you need any support?

And how many of you would like someone to ask you that question back in your hometown?

Raise your hand, you're sort of hoping someone is going to ask that question There's nothing wrong with that This is the work of God We long to see God's people involved together with us for World Evangelism And many count it a privilege to know People wrote me after that generator letter And they said, thank you for feeling free to share that with us It makes us feel more a part of what you're actually doing That's what people wrote to me This famous financial crisis tape went out to dozens and dozens of counselors and advisors including some very conservative people representing this particular extreme I receive letters every day as a result of that tape Every single letter has been positive Some have given a few warnings Even a man, very conservative said that for myself I feel I

should operate over here but I have changed my view in terms of how I think the work of God like OM should go forward That's what he told me A very conservative man wrote to me He said, I never understood Operation Mobilization I never knew there was any kind of emergency like this And he gave a positive response And a check for a hundred pounds to encourage the postage Amazing letters I'd love to print a book with these letters I think one of the missionary organizations would print a book with these letters Men like Roy Hesschen He wrote, he said, you've answered all your questions in your own tape God bless you And a lot of other interesting responses I believe in the next five years OM goes slowly We will create a practice and a policy that will make it five times easier to shift out

of OM after a couple of years into an existing, dynamic missionary organization And by the time you make that shift you'll have your communication your prayer letter your financial foundation at least to some degree where the next step will be a possible and the result will be more committed missionaries on the field with all these groups I am absolutely convinced that that is going to happen OM will continue to be probably relatively conservative and careful We won't be taking offerings in our meetings We won't be asking for money in our letters But we will come out of this repressive fog that we have been in and speak honestly about the real life and death and important spiritual issues which includes finance We're praying as you go back to your church that your first goals will be

spiritual to bless people's lives to win souls for Christ to worship with your church to spread the vision but that when this area of finance comes up you will not feel awkward or think that to talk about it is unspiritual or represents a serious lack of faith on your part, naughty little faith missionaries And I believe we're going to see some real breakthroughs even though it may take a number of years And if you get this scripture into your heart even 60 years from now you go home for retirement some of you about 60 years from now you hobble back from Pakistan you've left your wife out there buried from some kind of disease and you go back home and you arrive at the door of your church you won't feel guilty because they're going to have to care for you if they're a biblical church That

is their privilege according to the scripture You have labored all of your life in Pakistan You're probably only going to live another six months at least they can afford that We'd never have to again feel guilty about receiving funds from God's people and from God's church if we know we are workers in God's work for the laborer is worthy of his salary of his material needs We are not beggars We are kings and priests How privileged this church is to take care of a few elderly kings and priests By the way, I know one dear elderly multimillionaire saint in Florida right now He's running around looking for retired missionaries like a hound for rabbits He's got empty houses He's there praying Bring in the old, cracked, beaten down

missionaries.

I want to fill every house with old, beaten up missionaries and he's not getting them These old coots like Homer Payne don't want to go to any retirement center. He retired from Operation Mobilization, went back to Canada, become president of a bible school with teeny boppers Let me tell you, if you learn how to preach and we hope you will as long as you've got a voice if you can preach you'll never be unemployed Not if the church is the way it is All month I've been listening to 80 plus year old Vance Havnan preaching away and he always stays in motels so somebody must be paying the bill. So God has many, many different ways of working and I hope you're willing to be part of his program even if it means, as some people put it, living off other people's money There's something that affects the pride zone in all this We're taught to be rugged individuals in our culture, right? We don't want anybody taking care of us They're not going to take care of me Who do you think you are? I can take care of myself And many, many, many people, they refuse to ever go into an old people's home and have somebody take care of them Old people 80 years of age Peddling bicycles, taking care of themselves Big signs, keep your hands off me, down with old people's homes There's something, something humbling I know I've had it thousands of times When you stand at the door of the church A little old lady comes up to you and she looks at you and she reaches into her purse Why don't you get yourself something to eat, sonny? But I tell you if that's what it takes to humble a naturally proud, obnoxious character like me, then hallelujah I'll take all that I can get Let's pray Let's pray, getting out of control Father, we thank you for your holy word We thank you that you have been so patient with us over the years We thank you that you have humbled us And you have taken us one step further in our understanding of your church and missions and the task that lies ahead of us Father, some of us feel like we could fly out of this room We feel that somehow we've been set free from some spiritual blindness, some shackles that have hindered us from being open and honest and loving and biblical Keep us from extremes in either direction Enable us to go forth as honest humble servants of yours We pray in Jesus' name Amen

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