

Cd Gv501 Handling Guilt 1988

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of handling guilt through God's grace and promoting unity in the church while engaging in evangelism with love and sensitivity.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:6

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Spiritual Balance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the subtle tactics of the enemy and urges the audience to be aware of them. He also emphasizes the importance of not basing one's entire spiritual life on someone else's testimony or experience. The speaker highlights the guilt-producing extremism of our time, particularly the excessive emphasis on spiritual gifts. He encourages a balance between negative and positive statements, and a deeper understanding of God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Transcript

Well, I hope you got a good night's sleep. Sleep is a valuable gift from God. Let's just pray again.

Lord, just help us as we consider this important subject and as we have our hearts prepared for the day's ministry. We thank you that you have not given us a spirit of fear but of love and of power and of a sound mind. And we really look to you now as we go forward together.

In Jesus' name, Amen. I'm sure that since our meeting last night we haven't really had much time to look at books or to pick up some of those tapes. I decided to leave these tapes that I have brought and we're selling them for just one pound which is less than what I pay for them.

I would like to mention this particular tape on the subject of discouragement. I believe this is one of the enemy's most subtle tactics and I hope you'll listen to that. I'd also like to leave this message for some of you who are family people, married, we're all family people in one way, we're survival of the family and this tape that I mentioned last night about Lagos and what happened on the Lagos.

I know a lot of people that come to Easter evangelism don't always have a lot of money and I would just follow up on what Dave Armstrong said about this power pack because in this power pack you can get six books that normally you pay about two, three pounds for each book. You can get six books for two pounds. The only difference in these books is that they're in magazine form.

They're mainly produced for Africa and Asia but we're finding a lot of people like to save money also in the UK and the USA. Dale Roton's Logic of Faith. There may be, yeah, ten, thank you.

Ten bookazines. Gems from Tozer, Logic of Faith by Dale Roton, William MacDonald's True Discipleship, Why Revival Tarrys, I say it plus two further titles. So there it is.

That is certainly, I know at Leadership Evangelism they all sold, didn't they? And I'm sure that's going to happen here and you'll have a lot to read and a lot to study. Another book I'd like to mention which is in line with what I want to share this morning is Healing for Damaged Emotions. Again, I'm almost hesitant now to share this book because other books are coming that are similar and yet going what I feel, you know, over the bounds of Scripture and into things that are very subjective and very questionable.

But this is a very down-to-earth book on this subject. Very biblical. A man who was a pastor in a Methodist church for 30 years.

And so despite the dangers of people getting into extremes, that can happen in any area. I commend this book to you. The whole area of Healing for Damaged Emotions.

A quarter of a million copies of that book are already in print. Well, there's so much more I would like to say about the books, but I said a lot last night and I think many of you wrote down the titles. So I think the next step is for you to go yourself and just choose some books that you feel will be helpful.

I wanted to just say this word before I read the Scriptures that when we come together in a week like this, we can be a little bit naive and not count the cost of what it takes to make this a really profitable week. Just the unity factor to get a group like this, many of you have never met each other before, come from different churches, different backgrounds, probably quite a few of you are quite strong-minded, that's why you got this far in your Christian life. Now, how do we, you know, how do we function together here in love and in unity? And some people just presume, they just think, well, we just pray a little prayer for unity and, you know, that's it.

The Church throughout Britain and throughout the world is in great tension and division at this time. My ministry is not mainly within OM, is mainly within churches. And I've seen enough disunity in churches, both new churches and older churches, both cathedrals and house groups.

And we have it at times in our OM teams to realize that unity comes with a very high price tag. And unless day by day we let self be crucified and really let the Lord deal with our egos, unless we also purpose to lay aside some of the things that we know are controversial, we cannot resolve all the problems of the Church this week. I know some of you are hoping for great things.

All the things that people are fighting about, all the things that are bringing disunity. And one of the main principles of the OM fellowship, which you for this week or so are part of, is to emphasize the things that unite us. There are many things that unite us.

Our belief concerning the Bible being the Word of God, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the condition of the lost that we believe are separated from God and need Jesus Christ, our belief concerning the indwelling and the reality of the Holy Spirit, our belief concerning the second coming of Christ. Many, many major doctrines that we believe and principles that we believe, more than enough to absorb all of our energy and enable us to move together one heart and one mind. I've often had to say, you know, if I saw all the things going on in these OM evangelistic thrusts, I don't know what I would do.

It's just better. I don't see some of it really. I just, I'm too idealistic.

But one of the things that grieves me is if we use offensive approaches in evangelism, especially among Asians. These people have not been loved and accepted by the British people. They have been treated as second class citizens.

They have been persecuted. If you read and you watch television, it doesn't mean no British people get persecuted. All kinds of people get persecuted.

So we, as we go into this kind of evangelism, must go with great love and sensitivity. We must be good listeners. We must demonstrate with our life, that may mean little things, that we love them.

Many of the people you meet are born in Great Britain. They may not look the way you think English people should look, but your ideas are out of date. English people can be of many different colors, many different races, and they're born here and they're English citizens as much as anybody else, including MPs.

So there's no second class, subtle forms of racism that are going to be demonstrated by this body, by God's grace. There's going to be, I hope, a high degree of wisdom and discernment and sensitivity. Now we don't want to go to the other extreme, where we're not afraid to open our mouths and declare the gospel, where we become fearful and inhibited and afraid we're going to make a mistake.

We've already spoke that failure and mistakes can be the stepping stone to victory. The answer is, if you're too offensive or you're rude or discourteous in any way, you apologize as quickly as possible and try to put things right. So as I have to rush back to London, I rush back with this great burden, that we will emphasize those things that unite us this week, that we will exercise wisdom and discernment and sensitivity in our witness, in our sharing, that we will realize especially what some of these Asian people have had to suffer in this country, sometimes in their own country.

We're not saying Britain is any worse or better than somewhere else. And the incredible complexities of what we're going into. Now you realize that this kind of work we are doing is criticized by some people.

It's considered superficial. And we can be made to feel at times very inferior because we're going out in short-term evangelism. We're not here to build houses for these people, and some people need to be doing that.

We're not here to resolve all their racial problems, so we may be able to help. And this is why it's important to realize as we come here, we come as learners, but we come realizing we are only a small part of what needs to be done. Edwin Orton, please come up, just stand over here.

He drove me here this morning, he needs to... Edwin Orton is one of the reasons we're in Birmingham. He's the director of the Birmingham City Mission. These are the people, with many others, that are doing the real long-term work that needs to be done.

Thanks Edwin, I hope many people get to talk to you. But it's because of people like Edwin and local churches that believe in evangelism that we are here. Let's not put evangelism as we are doing, very limited here, in opposition to social action, justice, helping people in their physical needs.

We believe in both, we don't have teams in relief work among Afghans, because we think that's a waste of time. But what we can do in a weak training, exposure, evangelistic thrust is limited. And I know some of you will be disappointed, because revival may not totally come to Birmingham this week.

They got just had 15,000 people praying for revival in Birmingham. If they didn't do it, I'm not sure we are. You know, forgive me for my lack of faith, huh? I'd love to talk to you about revival.

I hope you live in personal revival. That's the biggest thing you should be concerned about. Then the second thing, revival in the church, revival in the city, revival in the nation.

And sometimes around the midway in a campaign, when we don't see all the breakthroughs we want to see, because we're going to be going home in a while, people start doing foolish things. They start saying foolish things. And we get people on these campaigns who actually go home hurt.

We get other people who go home with a distorted view of what OM is all about, we never ever hear from again. That's sad, because even if you never come on OM, since it is now one of the biggest international mission agencies in the entire nation, over 300 people, and I hope some of you get to meet Tony Kirk, who's here, who's actually the British director, he actually yielded up his time last night, because he's got so much humility, and maybe for other reasons, and let me speak. He should have been speaking.

He's incredibly busy. 300 or more full-time British people are serving around the world. It is now one of the largest mission agencies in Britain.

So even though you don't feel this is the greatest week in your life, you may not agree with some little thing about OM, we need your prayers. And so we're praying, we're believing, that those of you who go, and maybe never make contact with us again, because you get caught up in your own church or other missions, praise the Lord, that's no problem. You'll at least pray for us, because I tell you, we need prayer.

And you know, one of the biggest burdens I have for prayer, and then I'm gonna get into the message, is that so many British people, especially once they are families, cannot get even minimum support to remain on the mission field. It's very demotivating for me, as I've been recruiting in this country for 25 years, and apparently many people have chose to go to the mission field because of my big mouth, I hope mainly the Holy Spirit, and now we can't see the finance to support them. And then people throw out some little cliché, well, I mean, God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply, obviously these families are all out of God's will, right? Problem solved.

Maybe you could find that cliché in the New Testament, I'll send you 50 free books if you do. The fact is, Satan is trying to hinder God's work on every side. God's work done in God's way will certainly get God's blessing.

That's a little closer to the truth. And that will include financial breakthroughs, it will include people coming to Christ, it will include many things, but it will also draw Satan's opposition. And Satan is trying to dry up and sidetrack the financial resources of this country.

Do you know how much money has to be put into just restoring old church buildings where there's no one even meeting in the name of the Lord? Do you know how much money goes into just restoring old roofs? I'm not saying that should never be done. And it's interesting that some groups in Britain say, well, God's workers in Britain, they always need new cars. There's a prosperity movement coming into Britain from Oklahoma, and that's teaching that God's workers need brand new cars, and they need new houses, they

need new everything.

I'm not saying God doesn't give new things, no. But it's interesting that so many of the workers overseas are praying for bicycles. I noticed Mickey Walker's on a bicycle.

He's probably got a car as well. But Satan is trying to hinder God's work because of the financial situation of the country. Many people are unemployed.

That's a great burden on my heart. And we need more prayer to release finance. We need more concern to stand behind these families.

And if you know anybody that would like to stand behind a family that may be thinking of leaving God's work, leaving OM, we're already short-staffed because of lack of funds. You write to Tony Kirk and say, I'd like to become a partner with one of these families, even if I can only give five pound a month to see these families stay on the field. Scandinavia is facing the same thing.

Many of our people in Scandinavia are taking on secular jobs. I've got people on the International Coordinating Team in London. Same problem.

They're taking on secular jobs just to keep the bread on the table and survive in the age of inflation. Well, I share that burden with you. And now I want you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 12.

Let's start at verse six. For though I would desire to glory, I should not be a fool, for I will say the truth. But now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me, unless I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that were given to me.

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. Imagine, this is the Apostle Paul. Lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing, I besought the Lord thrice, three times, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.

I am become a fool in glorying. He hath compelled me, for I ought to have been commended of you. For nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostle, though I be nothing.

Truly, the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience. That is a strong word for me. All patience in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

We often want the signs and wonders and mighty deeds, but we're not so often to pay the price of patience and the fruits of character in our own lives. For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches except it be that I myself was burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong. Maybe you can read the rest of that when you have opportunity.

I want to speak this morning about guilt-producing extremism. Guilt-producing extremism. I have such a burden to see people living in the grace of God.

The Word of God says, the letter killeth, but the Spirit bringeth life. The Word of God also says that Satan, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour. Now, Satan has a lot of different strategy.

I'm reading a book about Satan right now that I would never recommend. It's the most famous book about Satan in British church history. It went out of print and somebody reprinted it.

It's not on our book table, and I would say that only very mature people should even read it. But certainly, in reading that book and reading many other books, and seeing what is happening across the world, at least in the 60 countries where I've been ministering, Satan is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. I don't want to talk much about Satan.

And every time, for every one look at Satan and his work, take ten looks at the Lord Jesus Christ and his glory and his grace, and all that he is doing, and work hard to be a Philippians, is it Philippians 4.8 Christian, thinking on that which is positive. I have a deep negative streak. It's deadly.

I don't know if any of you, do any of you have a strong negative streak? Maybe that's going out with this generation of British people. I'm a bit old, and this negative streak cynicism is going out. Do any of you have, you feel a little bit of a struggle with a negative streak? Just raise your hand, see if I've got any people, fellow travelers.

It's quite a few. Do you know that OM actually attracts people with a negative streak? That's right, because OM, our fellowship, is not happy with everything that's going on. We want revival.

We want holiness. We hate flippancy, and superficiality, and spiritual game-playing, and religiosity. And so people who find out, maybe read some of our books, or find out something of our stand about New Testament Christianity and holiness of life, they get attracted to us on the basis of mutual negativeness.

Now, 20 years ago, we were much more negative. We were almost a protest movement. I don't know if you've ever heard some of my old tapes.

Maybe some of them need to be erased. But God had to bring us, in order for the Lord to be able to use us, God had to bring us into balance, and let our negatives, because there are, there is a place for definite negative statements. Thou shalt not kill.

Ooh, that's really negative, isn't it? So, there is a place for negative statements. The prophets, at times, were very negative. But our negative streak had to be balanced by the positive streak, and we had to understand more of the grace of God.

We had to understand more of God's forgiveness. We believed in these things when the early orientation tapes, which aren't used much anymore, we believed in those things, especially if you listen to that tape on love, but it wasn't a strong enough emphasis in our work. You probably believe in grace, and mercy, and forgiveness, right? No one's going to stand up this morning, I don't believe in grace.

I'm against mercy and forgiveness. I don't think anybody would do that. But when it comes to our practice, when it comes to the way we treat other people, when it comes to the way we treat ourselves, we don't really put the grace, and the mercy, and the forgiveness factor where they belong.

It is easy within the present-day church scene, especially when you're reading a lot of books, to live in a state of perpetual guilt, and that is not God's way. We get people who honestly admit they go on

evangelism because of the guilt, the guilt they feel when they're not talking to people about Jesus Christ. You get people who give out gospel tracts because somehow they've heard a strong message about literature evangelism, reaching the lost, and so they're giving these tracts out out of a sense of obligation, a sense of guilt.

We want the grace of God to be the motivator this week. We want to operate as God's forgiven people. We want to be conscious of God's mercy to us, for saving us, for cleansing us of our sins, and then moving us out into his spiritual work.

I believe that extremism is perhaps destroying and hindering more people than even spiritual lukewarmness and the lack of commitment. Because, you know, God doesn't need that many loving, committed disciples to shake a city, to shake a church, to shake a nation. So my concern isn't the great... my first concern isn't the great numbers of lukewarm people, some of whom have never been born again, some of whom may know the Lord Jesus but have lapsed back into discouragement or lukewarmness and are drifting.

My first concern is not those people, though that is a big concern. My first concern are those who supposedly are alive. That's why I have to say that one of my greatest burdens is the care of all the churches, all the churches, all the OM teams that I'm involved with across the world.

I spend quite a lot of time just visiting ordinary OM teams, especially in the area of the world where I'm especially involved, places like Pakistan. But I've just come back from visiting our team in Belgium and visiting some of our team members in Germany. Nothing as much as I used to because there's so many teams and so many other things to deal with.

I know you're here because you love the Lord. You're here because you want to get involved. You want to reach people.

Probably you are, to some degree, on fire for Christ. What does that term mean? That's a tricky little term, isn't it? It doesn't mean that I need a fire extinguisher to keep you from dying or speaking spiritually. In fact, the Bible says our God is a consuming fire.

And if we know God, if we're walking with God, we should be on fire for Jesus Christ. That'll mean the fruit of the Spirit. It'll mean some of the gifts of the Spirit.

It'll mean reality. Satan seems to, first of all, and it says don't be ignorant of his devices, to keep people from catching fire. He's got a dozen different diabolical fire extinguishers.

By the way, before I was converted, I used to sell firefighting equipment. I owned a business for the sale of firefighting equipment, including fire alarms. And when I got saved, I slowly sold that business.

First year after I was saved, I had got into Christian literature and fire extinguishers, and actually go to people's doors and try to sell them a fire extinguisher. And after that, I sold them a fire extinguisher. I used to light a fire right on their porch with gasoline, petrol, and then put it out with this little fire extinguisher.

The women would just go bananas. Women are petrified of fire. And I sold a lot of these extinguishers.

We got a lot of trouble with the husbands who came back and found the wife had spent the week housekeeping on six fire extinguishers. I tried to sell six at a shot. But after I got saved, I started phasing

out of that business, and I went into Christian books.

And for a while, I would try to sell them a fire extinguisher. And I sometimes even said, this is the gospel of John. This is to handle the eternal fires of hell.

That approach did not always work. But it does seem that Satan's first strategy is to keep us from catching fire, to keep us from real commitment, real zeal. Now, some of you, you've won some real victories by God's grace against Satan, and you're catching fire, and you're beginning to move, and you love the Lord.

Any day now, Satan might change his strategy. Maybe he already has. Now, his effort is going to be to push you over the hill.

Edwin and I were just talking about that last night. How many Christians we've seen start out committed, sincere, in the Word of God. Satan changed the strategy and pushes them over the hill.

Gets them beyond their own limits. Gets them into some kind of extremism. They pick up one book, and they think, this is the total answer to everything.

This book. This is the book that's the answer. And this is a big book.

And it doesn't give such simplistic, lovely little black and white answers as some of those books. And in OM, we can't control even the books we sell. I personally don't.

If I chose, we'd take some of these books off here, because I know some of those books, without more of this book, lead people into extremes. And I am so concerned about the guilt, the guilt and the hurt and the pain that people are left with after they get into extremism. There's a book there about the cult, the children of God.

It might be a good one to read. It shows how so many sincere young people got caught up with that cult, the family of love, the children of God, led by a man who must be paranoid, definitely immoral. They came into Bromley.

The woman who wrote that book was crowned queen of the children of God in the warehouse where STL is operating today. The man who owned that warehouse was deceived by these people. He lost two of his sons to those people.

He got one back. Praise God, that son is now working with Weck as a missionary in Africa. It's a long story, an awesome story.

That night Deborah was to go and have sexual relationship with her father, because he was king. That's what they taught. And she never did it.

And she slowly was drawn out of that movement and has written that book, exposing the children of God. Satan as a roaring lion seeketh whom he may devour. And if we don't get a balance of God's word, if we don't develop what A.W. Tozer calls spiritual discernment, so we don't make two plus two equals twenty-two.

It looks like that, doesn't it? Write it on the paper. Two plus two equals twenty-two? No, four. Yeah, I studied mathematics.

But it's so easy, especially if we're always excited by the latest red-hot testimony, the latest person who's been maybe delivered from a demon, or the latest person who got a special experience when they fell off the second floor and landed on an old mattress that someone left there and felt that it was divine and miraculous deliverance. Probably was. But to listen to this testimony and that testimony and to base your whole life on somebody else's testimony, somebody else's spiritual experience, becomes confusing and often dangerous.

God is working in different people in different ways. Let me be specific about some of the guilt-producing extremism of our day. The first thing I think of is the emphasis on spiritual gifts.

Now, I believe in spiritual gifts. O.M. gets criticized because we don't emphasize some of the gifts enough. Our research has shown that overemphasis on the gifts have split not only the older churches, split new churches, split whole mission societies.

There's so many divisions and splits on the overemphasis of gifts. I don't know why people are so surprised that something that is interdenominational, that is absorbing people from many different Christian camps, many different Christian churches, is just a little bit cautious. Do you know there are things that I personally believe very deeply that I don't even preach in an O.M. pulpit because I want to keep the unity.

Now, if I as a so-called founder can keep quiet about some of the things that I personally believe, then it seems to me somebody who's a new recruit shouldn't feel that this is the world's greatest compromise. We are committed to deep fellowship with the side of the body that's referred to as the charismatic movement, which of course is in about 15 different streams at least. But we are very involved with that side.

I preach in many of the biggest Pentecostal and this is an Elam Pentecostal church. That is an older non-Pentecostal church, came before the new modern charismatic movement. Actually, many of the old Pentecostal churches have had the major collisions with the newer charismatic movement, which then split those who remained in their churches, those who left.

I just had a most significant meeting in December with leaders, some of them are actually called apostles, of the new church movements. We're in dialogue, there's an increased appreciation, there's a greater awareness of one another's mistakes. We're meeting again this year.

At the same time, our roots, the roots of our whole movement go back into the more, what some people have called evangelical churches. Their grandfather were, and the father and the grandfather of the evangelical movement were called fundamentalist churches, a term that's no longer understood. Billy Graham was a fundamentalist.

I went to Moody Bible Institute, it was a fundamentalist Bible college. It's less understood in England than it is in America. We keep changing the terminology, but we're trying to reach out very widely.

In Germany, we're mainly involved with Lutherans. In Britain, the Anglicans are one of the main support groups, partnership groups, that OM works with. And we want to move ahead in love and unity, and I tell you, it's getting more difficult.

And I find people within, within the dear Pentecostal churches that I'm linked with, and charismatic fellowships I'm linked with, I find many of those young people are living in perpetual guilt, because they haven't got a particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Do you know some have been seeking it for over 15 years?

20 years? Do you know that 30 percent, according to many surveys of all Pentecostal churches, and Pentecostal young people, and adults, 30 percent approximately, have never spoken in tongues? Can you imagine being in certain Pentecostal churches with that emphasis, and never having that gift yourself? Do you know what that produces? Do you want me to be really honest? I'll tell you, it's produced nervous breakdowns from one end of Britain to the other. I'm very proud to announce that I have never spoken in tongues, because I believe, though I'm willing to have that gift, God has purposely kept that from me, to keep unity in the body, that it's possible to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

I've never had a Pentecostal leader doubt that I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I've had many say they believe George Vore has gone beyond charisma. I would be a little frightened of that statement.

But I'll tell you, brothers and sisters, what burdens me is not the non-Pentecostal church down the road, where they don't even believe in that. What burdens me is Pentecostal young people who have been seeking, who have been fasting, who have been praying. Some have had nervous breakdowns, and feel they're second-class citizens, and God can never use them, because they don't have this particular gift.

And there must be at least 25 books just pushing that one gift. It's crazy. It's crazy.

Billy Graham doesn't have that gift. D.O. Moody didn't have that gift. Winfield didn't have that gift.

A thousand of the greatest men of God that have ever lived have never had that gift. So if you don't have that gift, especially after you've prayed, and rolled on the floor, and done whatever else you've done, then once and for all, you ought to leave that with God, and get on to justice, and righteousness, and love, and peace, and 100 other things that the Bible emphasizes. We need spiritual balance more than ever before.

Now, another thing that leads people to a lot of excessive guilt is the whole area of emotion. They meet other Christians who seem to feel their religion. Now, I tell you, one of my greatest heart-linkings is with the black people of America.

When I first got saved, one of the first things I did was go into New York City, get one of the great black choirs, and bring them out to my little white, middle-class ghetto, and have them sing. I thought they were singing an African song. I loved it.

I'll remember it to this day, though. That's 32 years ago. Yat-kik is easy.

Yat-kik is easy. I found out later they were singing, His yoke is easy. But it was a beautiful experience.

Now, those dear people from New York City, they generally feel their religion. Hallelujah! Maybe my great-great-grandfather was black. Hallelujah! But I'll tell you, I feel my religion.

And I get excited. And I jump. And I pray.

I do a lot of things, generally now, out in the woods, so I don't start another cult. The jumpers, leafers, prancers, and dancers. But, you know, I realize that is a very tiny part of reality in my life.

And I believe there is not enough emphasis on walking by faith, and not by feelings. Sometimes you feel great, and you want to sing. Why are we having so much singing? Twenty years ago, we didn't have enough singing and enough choruses in our worship meetings.

Singing and choruses is just one part of worship. Worship is a big thing. Now, it's gone the other way.

Now to get a solid hour of preaching the Word is difficult. We get a new chorus every week. We go on and on and on.

And this is considered the height of spirituality. Even though, if you take some surveys, you'll discover that people walk right out of some of those worship meetings with all that emotion, and all that singing, and commit fornication with their girlfriend in the same night. Psychiatrists and religious sociologists have showed us for years that the sex emotion and the religious emotion run very, very close.

That's why when people like Jimmy Swaggart get their prostitutes, and Baker gets his prostitute, that doesn't surprise me any more than Christians getting on trains. I have said for 25 years that immorality is out of control in the Christian Church. I've counseled British evangelists who've committed fornication.

I've counseled pastors from Britain who've committed fornication. It's under the carpet. It doesn't get in the press here.

And one of the reasons for this, one of 10 reasons, is that there's too much emphasis on feelings. We become feeling oriented. We want the next blessing.

We want to feel nice. And it is tricky because often it is God's plan for us to feel our religion, and to sing with enthusiasm, and maybe raise your hands. But if you don't know the disciplined life, if you don't know spiritual balance, if you don't know how to bring those emotions under control, and make sure it doesn't jump the morality track.

A man in London had a prophecy. He had a prophecy that he had the wrong wife. So he divorced her and got this other girl that was more in line with his present-day religious experiences.

We had a man in Thailand that got some verses out of the Old Testament that were in line with his feelings, because he was a very highly sexed man with a lot of emotion. And so he took on concubines and blew the work in two. Satan, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour.

Don't feel guilty if you don't always feel like praising the Lord. Don't feel guilty if you go into the streets and the first person you meet is a deep love. You want to reach.

Maybe the first person you meet is a leper, and you just want to reach around them and give them a great hug. Don't feel guilty because somehow you're not Mother Teresa, or not the Apostle Paul, and you continually chastise yourself and chasten yourself because you feel you don't have enough love. I'll tell you, I know I don't have enough love.

And I know often to get love moving in my life on any one day, I have to repent. There's a difference between repenting, being convicted of lack of love, being convicted of wrong attitudes. I still have as high goals in the things of the Spirit, I think, as I ever had.

I just know now it takes a long time to get there. There's a great difference between being convicted and repenting, and being convicted and wallowing. I wonder if any of you are spiritual wallowers.

Have you ever heard that word? You wallow in your guilt. You feel you don't have enough love. You feel that, well, how many people feel like they're always filled with the Spirit? We're actually given the impression that the filling of the Spirit is very much an emotional thing.

I don't agree with that. I believe the filling of the Spirit is a very spiritual thing, and that it affects different people emotionally in different ways. And I'm sure some of the most Spirit-filled people are very quiet people.

And it's incredibly important to understand this. Because unless we get people who can deal with their emotion, who can plod, William Carey said, give me plotters, who can press on when they feel it. I do often feel it, praise the Lord, but who can also press on when they don't feel it.

And I'll tell you, a lot of times I don't feel it, especially when I wake up in the morning. Now, I'm sure some of you are different. No problem if you wake up feeling all spiritual and you just leap out of the bed, into the Word of God, into doing great things, worship.

Wonderful. Write me a letter. How are you doing? What are your dreams like? But even after a great meeting in which I see people converted, I see people filled with the Spirit, I see people healed, or I see something happen.

The next morning when I wake up, sometimes it's just one passion gripping my entire being, basically to go back to sleep. This doesn't mean the Holy Spirit has left me. Some of you have, because we speak of a dove of the Holy Spirit, you've got the pigeon cage doctrine, where you think the Holy Spirit is like a little pigeon in the cage and he keeps flying away, keeps flying away.

Any little thing you do, any little sin, anything you say wrong, the door opens, the pigeon flies away. I believe the Holy Spirit lives in us permanently. He dwells there.

Yes, he can be grieved. As I said the other weekend when some of you were there, the fullness of the Holy Spirit doesn't destroy the human factor. It doesn't mean it's going to be easy.

It doesn't mean you're going to be lifted out of bed, feeling wonderful. If we believe that, we should preach against early morning tea. That's a stimulant.

That's a substitute. You're using substitutes. You should just repent when you get out of bed and let the Holy Spirit fill you.

You don't need this stimulant. I tell you, it was a great day in my life when I learned the entire secret of the British race, early morning cups of tea. I arrived in London.

I was a total stranger. I was here one day. We were renting a little tiny apartment in the upper part of this little old lady's house.

And early in the morning, there was this rap on the door. We were both in bed. It was freezing in there.

They called it a bedroom. It was a refrigerator. And this little, little lady's on the door serving us cups of tea.

Total strangers. I tell you, that won my heart. Here I am 25 years later.

The human factor. We've had people say, oh, this OM, they're always emphasizing quiet time. People are in quiet time bondage.

Yeah. I went to somebody who was saying that and I said, well, look, what about breakfast? Are you one of these guys that's having breakfast every morning? He said, well, of course, breakfast bondage. It's

good that you laugh because I tell you, when you're in this work and you see some of the things that go wrong, you either laugh or cry.

So we hope you have some of both. Let's beware of getting ourselves in guilt, continual guilt, because maybe we're not always feeling the way we'd like to feel. Another extremism that leads people into guilt and bondage is in the whole area of results.

We want results. We want people saved. I know some people, they want results so bad, they get them even when the Holy Spirit is not working.

I was like that. When I went out to Winsouls as a young Christian, you accepted Christ whether you wanted to or not. People would accept Christ just to get me off their back.

Now, I didn't do that for very long. I don't want to give a wrong impression because God gave me the privilege of studying a course on personal evangelism and learning quickly that it must be a work of the Holy Spirit. But I get people feeling very guilty because they never personally led anyone to Christ.

Not everybody is gifted in getting that person to that final moment of decision and conversion. I'm not saying you shouldn't aim at that. You can aim at that.

But I tell you, my experience these 30 years is that a lot of people don't seem to be able to get that person. This is why the Lord brings harvesters around sometimes like Luis Palau and Billy Graham and others who can take people who have been witnessed to and they've had the message shared with them and bring them to the point of decision. That doesn't mean there are always conversions.

So your love and your follow-up is needed after that even as much as your witness was needed before that. But don't put yourself in excessive guilt because you're not getting results. And I add to that, don't chase in yourself and get into excessive guilt because you turn people off.

I wonder if you're willing to really accept your personality. That was a struggle for me. I think all of us have things about ourselves that we don't like.

To this day I have things about me that I don't like. The problem is my wife also feels there are things about me that she doesn't like. But she's stuck with me for 28 years.

And I know some people attack and don't like the terminology, but I still believe it communicates to most people. You and I need to accept ourselves in a biblical way. Love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

This may not be the problem of most people, so some books tell us. I'm not convinced. I believe a lot of people today are wrestling with self-acceptance.

They're not happy about their personality. They're not happy about the fact that maybe their nose is this way or their eyes are this way. Some of you may be emotionally weak people.

You easily come a little bit unglued. You easily find that you're not able to cope. If you find at any time this week you are not able to cope, you grab my friend Andrew Thompson or this, you get them whatever, how busy they may appear, and you say, look, I've got a crisis.

I know you're busy, but I've got a crisis, and if we don't deal with it, you're going to be much busier. That'll get their attention. Really.

And tell them, look, I can't cope. I'm sleeping between three people who snore like the QE2. I haven't slept for three nights.

The other night this person vomited on my nose. No, really, these details can really make a mess. And I need to talk to somebody because I think I'm going to punch someone.

Have you ever had a deep desire to punch another Christian? I have. So it is not necessarily spiritual to keep it all in and to keep your little gospel smile. Here I am, a good little OMer, at least for a week.

Oh God, I pray this week ends quickly. But God wants you to be real and to be open and learn to live by his power, but realizing that his power will not destroy and eliminate your limitations as a clay pot, an earthen vessel. The Apostle Paul emphasized that in this scripture we have just read.

He had his limitations. He prayed for this thing, and there's all kinds of comments about what it is, and nothing happened. And then he said, God, your grace is sufficient.

What a beautiful picture for those of us, those of us who have such high goals and such high aims. We want to know God. We want to evangelize the whole world.

We want to see people converted and churches established. We want to see the Holy Spirit moving in power. But if we don't face our own humanness, if we don't face our own limitations, and then add the spiritual growth factor, we have to grow in grace.

People are giving the idea that the Christian life is a matter of a couple of crises. And we've got more books about crisis experiences than ever in the history of the church. And we've got a great emphasis on miracles.

We've got an over-emphasis on miracles. People are freaking out and become miracle neurotics. God doesn't just throw miracles around like you somehow drop a bag of groceries if you trip when you're coming out of Tesco's.

There are basic laws in the universe. There are basic laws of health. Great theologians have been wrestling with these issues for hundreds of years.

Read books like Edith Schaeffer's book, Affliction. Read books by Johnny. Realize that God doesn't always heal.

We're not saying sickness is from God. That would upset people. But we are saying that God doesn't always heal in every situation.

And I don't believe there's always some simple little easy answer why this person isn't healed and that person isn't healed. And we can go and give all of our great healing testimonies, but some of us are ending up full-time almost. We could.

Counseling all the people confused and hurt and living in perpetual guilt because they were prayed for and this and that and they weren't healed. And then somebody put a further guilt trip on them when they weren't healed. Saying, well, it's because of, you know, unbelief or it's because your great-grandfather didn't sell his Ouija board or it's because when you were in the womb somehow your mother stopped at a traffic light.

And all kinds of theories and ideas that are floating around and leaving a lot of people not only feeling guilty, it's leaving some of them fed up with Christianity. They just want out. They just say these people are, they haven't got their feet on the ground.

And we're going to drive a whole generation of people away from the church if we don't have balance and love. If we don't acknowledge both the divine factor, hallelujah, and the human factor and stop throwing out little quick cliches for incredibly complicated problems that people have and that we face living here on planet earth. We all remember Hungerford.

How can we forget Hungerford? And we all, if we have any spiritual vision, ask, oh, if only someone had reached that man with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I believe as we go out with love and sensitivity, we are not only seeing people saved as some people say, but we are going to see social justice. We are going to see an increase of social concern because there's nothing that can do that more than someone being transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.

Don't feel guilty because this isn't a week in which we're building houses for the poor or feeding the hungry of Birmingham or carrying out a crusade for social justice. We are limited in what we can do in a short period. But I will tell you, if you leave even five or ten disciples behind in Birmingham, you don't know what you will have done.

If someone had reached that one man, then Britain would not have had its greatest disaster in 1987. Maybe some people tried to reach them. Maybe some people tried to reach him.

I don't know the story and I know it wouldn't be good for Christians of Hungerford to live in perpetual guilt because of that. We do fail. We do make mistakes and we must let that go under the blood and get up and press on.

Let's pray. Our God and Father, I feel this message is so incomplete in this great subject of grace and guilt. We've only just touched on a few important points.

And Lord, I pray this morning if there are people in the grip of guilt, that they would be set free. Not just in one crisis, but in their ongoing spiritual growth. In feeding upon your word.

In reading some of these great balanced books. In learning how to really accept themselves. To live in Holy Spirit power, yet within their own limitations.

And moving on your schedule rather than our schedule. Keep us from just trying to copy other people. Help us to be able to identify when our ego is locking into action.

And what we are doing is less than the best. Oh Lord, keep us from not being sensitive to your conviction of sin in our lives. And keep us from being oversensitive and getting caught into guilt that shouldn't be there.

We want, by your grace, spiritual balance. We want to be set free from extremism. We know that every man, every man and woman who shares with us here will be a clay pot.

Enable us to receive what we can. To look into your word and see if these things be true. And then contextualize it into our own spiritual life that we may move forward by grace.

We pray for people that may feel second class citizens in their own church. Because they don't have this gift or that gift. Or because they aren't seeing enough results.

Or because they aren't feeling the same way other people seem to feel. Oh Lord, set us free in our minds from these things. That we may know the reality of 1 Corinthians 13.

That we would know a deep level of self-acceptance because you have accepted us. That we would be able to discern between that which is clearly sin and that which just may be some area of weakness or the human factor that is not necessarily sinful. Oh Lord, you know those that may have special emotional needs and suddenly they're thrown into an environment that seems chaotic to them and makes it hard for them to relate.

Help them to seek counsel. Maybe there's some that should stay behind and sort things out here in the church rather than go out and face people head-on with the gospel when they feel emotionally unable, mentally unable to do that. Help us Lord to deal with rejection which so easily comes upon us in our society.

Help us to reach out to these people of other races and other backgrounds who have lived in rejection in this nation for years. That we may touch people in depth and things that like that which happened in Hungerford may not happen here. We believe we're involved in preventive medicine.

We believe that what we do has deep social implications and can be a balm and can be a blessing to Birmingham and to the Midlands. And though we feel weak and inadequate, we are going forth in bold faith to do this work. In Jesus name, Amen.

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