

# Discipleship or Survivalship: Survival for Strugglers

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon explores the journey from mere survival in faith to genuine discipleship, emphasizing God's grace amidst struggles.*

**Duration:** 55:14

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 7:15-25, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Galatians 5:17, Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 4:9

**Topics:** "Discipleship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of breaking his foot while kicking boxes. He emphasizes the importance of not becoming discouraged when growth in our Christian life is not immediate. The speaker mentions six concepts that are important for believers to understand, including the reality of praise and thanksgiving, living in the rest of faith, and learning how to be hurt. The sermon also includes a discussion about the need for discipline in order to live for God and the challenges of adjusting to a different lifestyle during a storm. The speaker encourages the audience to develop a disciplined life and make necessary changes in order to survive and thrive in their faith.

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## Transcript

We have to finish more or less on time, so I'd like to make a start. Thank you for coming back for the last segment. Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to again consider your grace toward failures, your grace toward strugglers, your grace toward us.

We just thank you that you are using weak, ordinary people. The Apostle Paul prayed so much to have a particular struggle taken from his life without it happening that our God, we want to be a little more patient when perhaps there's something in our life that hasn't gone, even though he prayed many times. Guide us in this session together, in Jesus' name, amen.

Let's just again give a little bit of an opportunity for questions. I feel that's so important, maybe even as a result of what I said last night in either the main stage or at that other late night special I spoke at. I don't know if any of you were at that.

Or as a result of the seminar, if there's something that you would like to ask while other people continue to come, let's just take a few minutes to do that. I have brought with me this morning, this finally only just

came, some literature about the Ministry of Operation Mobilization, which I really haven't said that much about. This is our new format prayer letter that you can get free a number of times a year.

You can just subscribe to that. Here's the little leaflet you can use to subscribe to that, how to be an OM partner, prayer partner. So after the meeting, this is available and it includes information both about the ships as well as information about all the different work on land.

Here's an interview with our American director. I'm the international leader of OM, but David Hicks is the American director. I haven't yet got him to cornerstone, but you can have that, of course, free.

Who has the first question? Something that's been on your mind in the last few hours, the last couple of days, about God's grace, about what we've been sharing about in this seminar. Some of you wanted to know what point six was yesterday because I was going a little fast, and I'll try to review that, at least read it so that you can get that. Okay, we're not good at getting first questions on this group.

Who's got the second question? Not in the question mood, huh, yet? Still... How many got at least six hours sleep last night? Anybody got six hours sleep at least? Oh, good, a few. I got about five and a half, but I feel really great. It's amazing how God puts things together.

There's so many people here I want to see, and one of them is my friend from New Delhi, Vishal Mungawati. But it just didn't happen, everything's just... And I went out running early this morning and I decided, because I haven't eaten much in the last 20 hours or so, to have a little breakfast. And there I saw the McDonald's, so I was jogging that direction anyway.

So I went in there, hardly anybody there, it just opened at seven in the morning. And there, who was there, standing in the line, Vishal Mungawati, all on his own. God, I mean, I get such a hassle trying to get things organized.

God put him there, we had breakfast, talked about all kinds of things concerning India, and had a time of prayer. That was just, it was just the right start for the day, to just know the hand of God is on this particular day, the people I meet, and whatever. Okay, anyone would like to ask a question before we get in to the final seminar? Yes.

Beautiful question. The question is, how do you know when you're in to extreme on something, or whether what you're doing is that extreme? And to go back from your extreme would be compromise. I think that is an issue we're dealing with all of our life.

And I would give a number of suggestions. I believe, first of all, we've got to get a real saturation of the word of God, so that we really know the Bible. Not just one verse, one chapter.

Many of the cults take verses out of context and use them. You've had them at your door. But to be able to see a wide range of scripture.

Another thing that I would suggest is that you read at least a variety, a few different Christian magazines. Now I know some people are quite proud that they don't read any Christian magazines. Because when you pick up a Christian magazine, there'll always be some stuff there that's really just, you feel, what a waste of ink, what a waste of trees.

But I personally find, for example, Christianity Today, a magazine that gives a fairly balanced viewpoint on things that are happening in the body of Christ. Cornerstone magazine. They won't write about something unless they research it.

And I read a number of Christian magazines to get a picture of a wider range of what God's doing. And when you get a wider range of what God's doing, you find it very difficult, especially if you're also in the word of God, to just go and do your own thing. Now some people, if they're hurt and they're bitter, and they're angry about the established church, and they left the whole established church in one big boat, and then they try to sink it.

Whereas there's a tremendous variety of reality and commitment within what some people call the established church. Can't throw them all into one big lake. So reading widely, making sure you have a good, wide knowledge of scripture, and then reading a wider range of books.

Books are only sermons in print. And also, wherever you live, try to be exposed. Now I know this is risky, but be exposed to different Christian ministries that come to town.

Always praying that the Lord will give you discernment. As Tozer said, we need a little bit of reverent skepticism about some of the things that we read or hear or see. Another thing that can help you is if you really have a true love for other Christians, then you want to be positive rather than wanting to be negative.

Now this is why the person that doesn't have an emphasis on truth and has only an emphasis on love he's often a little bit naive and he gets caught into things that prove to be dead-end streets. So again, we need that balance between believing the best, letting love cover, and the discernment, the reverent skepticism that Tozer talks about. Now a lot of people, to be quite honest, haven't even heard what I've just shared with you in the last five minutes.

So they don't have this way of thinking programmed into their spiritual life. Of learning how to look at different sides of an issue and look at different scriptures and read different books. And I was going to end up by saying fellowship with different people.

Not only go and hear them, but get to meet different people. One of the reasons I ended up coming to Cornerstone way back in 84 was linked with the fact that I had gone to a Jesus festival in Canada back in the late 70s, which was a little similar to this. And that began to prepare me.

And I started to meet people like Barry McGuire. I started to read magazines about Christian music. And there was no way, after reading all that I was reading, that I could write the whole thing off as being from the devil.

Even though some of the things were quite new to me. And I didn't know quite where to fit it in my many little boxes. So I hope that will help you a little bit.

This is why I just so urge Americans, if they can, not everybody can do it, to get a discount ticket and get over to Europe. You can fly to Europe from some parts of the States cheaper than you can fly around the States. Again, we know nothing is cheap.

But I think those who can go to Europe and get involved in evangelism, then at the same time, they will meet Europeans and get to listen to their viewpoint. And I just think all of that is helpful. But it still will be an

ongoing struggle.

Also to understand that you can be balanced and still have a bit of extremism. There is some extremism, if you want to use the term, and every term needs definition, that's not a big problem. You're not going to go to the perfect church.

You're not going to go to a church where they don't say some off-the-wall extreme things from your pulpit or a visiting speaker doesn't say something that may be off-the-wall or a little extreme. And allow that to bring something else that you believe perhaps into balance. So God uses extreme statements.

God uses extreme people. And the kind of spiritual balance I'm talking about, I know this is going to jump a circuit in your head, is in fact extreme. But it's a good extreme.

Someone else? Yes. Absolutely a brilliant question and one of the biggest issues we are dealing with. You seem to have three categories.

Just for thinking we'll divide into three categories. You've got the group over here, as strange as it may seem, that any Bible-believing person could be in that group, that feel they're saved, they know they're saved, at least they say they know they're saved, and they're very, very light about sin. They're continuing sin, maybe they're confessing it.

Confession is different than repentance. We preach confession and repentance. We see that in the Bible.

So that's one group over here. They're really in deception. Some of those people may not even be saved.

Certain people would feel that they're in such deception they may never have been born again. It's just a head trip. I have this conviction that when a person is really saved, radical change begins.

It may not be big in the beginning, but something begins to change toward holiness. If nothing at all changes, at the moment of professing faith in Christ, I tell the validity of the conversion. That's my own viewpoint.

So I'm quite big-hearted compared to some people way over here. We'll get over there in a minute. But I'm not way over here either.

You just profess Jesus, and you're born again, and nothing really happened, and then you go tell the church, and you get baptized, especially in the southern part of our country. It all happens very quickly. It's all like a ritual, like a routine.

Surely there's deception in there if there's no change in life. That's why John MacArthur's come out with his very strong book, which has upset so many people. It's sad in the sense that we have to have a big, thick book on the lordship of Christ, because to me it's just so basic.

It's so scriptural. But that's the way it is. Then we have the group that I would like to think are in the middle.

That's where I would be. And there's plenty of scope for people on both sides of me. I'm not claiming to be perfect.

An absolute commitment to holiness. This is the passion of our life every day. We see it in the Sermon on the Mount.

We see it in Jesus Christ. We see it in the apostles. How can anyone read the Bible and not want to be God's best? Now this man is right to move over here.

If he doesn't maintain the balance, understand the human factor. I've been touching on that. Understand 1 John chapter 1. If we say we don't sin, we deceive ourselves.

Understand the conflict that goes on in the flesh against the spirit. The spirit against the flesh. The two are contrary.

And other basic scriptures that show that we will be battling. We will be struggling. We will be fighting.

Not in our own flesh. I'm not talking about that kind of person. But even in the power of the Holy Spirit, there will be conflict.

There will be struggles. And as we grow stronger, there will be failure. There will be sin.

Maybe dispositional sins. Maybe sins in our attitude. But it's still sin.

Let us understand. Any of you that are way over on either corner here. That so many mighty men of God.

Talk about Finney. Talk about Jonathan Edwards. Both on the opposite side of the theological spectrum.

Talk about Murray McChane. Wasn't it? The great Scottish holiness preacher that said the closer he got to the Lord, the deeper he got in fellowship with the Lord, the more he saw the sinfulness of his own life. And that, of course, is the absolute opposite of this, which we'll talk about for a moment.

Perfectionism. A man that somehow has got some kind of teaching that the self-life can be totally annihilated. We know, living by faith, we die to self.

And, of course, at that moment of walking by faith and dying to self, in a sense, is similar to that. But it isn't the same. As the man who says, now he is totally sanctified and he can no longer sin.

By the way, very few people say that. You then get another group that's over in this extreme corner who are heavy into a certain emphasis on the Lordship of Christ, where they're saying, if he's not Lord of all, he's not Lord at all. And then he jumps off into a cloud and says, you're not saved at all.

A group of missionaries laboring in a very discouraging situation met a group of people from that extreme camp. This seemed to be such an easy answer to their struggles and failures on the mission field to just think, well, we've never really been born again. And so they all got saved properly and left the mission and joined this little extremist church and were happily, happy ever after or at least for a few weeks.

Now, I believe there's lots of scope for variety on both sides of this middle road. I'm not expecting you to be exactly like me. No way.

But I would say the closer you are to having a balanced view between the victorious life and the area of growth in which we battle sin and sometimes sin and fail, then the closer you are to what Jesus Christ taught, what the Apostle Paul taught, and what a high degree of men and women of God stand for today. I must confess that I have been influenced by great, what I call committed middle road evangelical leaders. Billy Graham, John Stott, Michael Green, David Watson, who by the way was a very balanced leader in the charismatic movement in England.

So these aren't all on the same side of the fence in regard to the charismatic movement. And I've been influenced by people from both sides. A.W. Tozer, though he's extreme, he's potent, he's powerful.

Tremendous balance in the teachings of A.W. Tozer. L.E. Maxwell, the founder of Prairie Bible Institute. Tremendous balance in what he's saying.

I believe of course that is the road that is going to enable us to run the race right to the end. Growing in holiness, growing in spiritual wisdom, growing in the use of the gifts of the Spirit, growing in discernment. So a strong emphasis on holiness, but reality about what it takes day by day to maintain that and a sense of discernment about people that go to either extreme.

Now we're going to have to get into my final thoughts or we won't have enough time. Let's review my basic points of strategy for survival. Point number one was knowing that you were accepted and forgiven.

Point number two, casting every care upon Him, 1 Peter 5, 7. Point number three, making God your goal, Matthew 6, 33. And I won't take any concept if there's only one verse. I've given you a reference, but every one of these concepts has whole chapters and the whole basic thrust of Scripture.

Number four, learning how to be hurt. Number five, learning the reality of praise and thanksgiving in our daily walk with God. And number six, that some of you missed, living in the rest of faith, Hebrews chapter four.

And let's use that as our Scripture reading, Bible reading for this afternoon. Let's turn in our Bibles to Hebrews chapter four. One thing when you're at meetings like this and you don't feel it's so easy to carry your Bible with you all the time, you may lose it or something, why not practice carrying a New Testament? You can carry that in your pocket and have a New Testament that you're always ready to give away.

So you can have it when you maybe go to a meeting and somebody's speaking from the Word of God, and you can also have it to give away to someone the Lord may lead you to. And many, many people have come to Christ through reading the New Testament. Hebrews verse nine.

Keep in mind these tapes are available at the tape table just across from our Operation Mobilization book exhibit. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Let us labor. There's a paradox. Yet some people, if you use any word like striving or labor, they say, hey, that must be in the flesh.

Don't fall for that subtle intimidation. To live for God, we've got to labor. To enter into this rest, our walk with God should be in the rest of faith, but to enter into this rest, we have to labor.

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the Word of God is living, powerful, sharper than any two-inch sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Powerful.

Do you know something about that rest of faith in your own life? To me, that is just so important. I believe some people enter into a rest of faith in a crisis experienced with God. My own wife had a crisis that perhaps could be categorized.

It's difficult sometimes to put a category on various crises we have with God. But she was struggling in various ways when she was a student in night school at Moody. She was working in the daytime as a secretary.

And I went to talk with her and we had some fellowship and of course we were in love. But she had three or four psychosomatic illnesses linked perhaps with her background. She made a commitment at one of these meetings of Keswick where they emphasize holiness, emphasize a deeper walk with God and work of the Holy Spirit.

But still she had these illnesses. And it was in the quiet of her own room she realized the principle of the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. She fell asleep.

She woke up healed of those illnesses. Now some people might have said they were psychosomatic illnesses. Psychosomatic illnesses can be as real as regular illnesses.

They often convert from being emotionally induced into being real illnesses. So it's not a matter of thinking oh it's just in your head. It's not that simple.

Don't feel excess of guilt because you have an illness that is emotionally induced. We are complicated people mentally and emotionally. We are more complicated than I'm afraid some preachers want to admit.

And many preachers have psychosomatic illnesses. Worry. Doctors tell us, Dr. MacMillan's brilliant book None of These Diseases point out that worry can bring more than 52 different illnesses on the body.

That's why it is important to know how to deal with stress. It is important to find your own pace. It is important to know your own limitations.

And I just feel that this is not preached enough especially to the zealous crowd. It's almost as if Satan has two strategies. First of all to keep you from real commitment.

To keep you from experiencing reality, the Lordship of Christ, the fullness of the Spirit, whatever terminology you want to use. Satan will do everything possible. And it seems that when people commit themselves and they begin to move into reality and prayer and witness and zeal, Satan changes his strategy and tries to get them into burnout, overstressed, overstretched.

And it's pathetic when you see it. Neglecting the family, neglecting basic human factors that are linked with our very mental and emotional survival. I had a woman on my team who was uptight about something.

25 years ago I had a team in Italy. She went on a 40-day fast. She wasn't ready for a 40-day fast, this young woman.

And her motivation must have been really mixed up. Within one or two years after that she overthrew the Christian faith completely. I still have contact with her.

She's still 25 years later now following Jesus Christ. One of my greatest concerns is people who have spiritual burnout experiences. They get into some real hype church which demands so much from you and so many meetings and so much commitment, so many rules and so many regulations and the Spirit is leading and they get this word from the Lord and that word from the Lord and people just, they get burned out in those places all the time.

We've seen it for 35 years, some of us old coots. Don't do it. Learn your own limitations.

Learn that rest of faith. Now let's move on because actually yesterday I did get into number seven, realizing God is easy to live with. That's a quote from A.W. Tozer.

By the way, most of the books we've been selling in our book exhibit have been reduced in price. I just finally got to look at the invoice yesterday to realize what these books are supposed to be sold for. So do take advantage of those books.

And if some of you really want a book and you don't have any money or you don't have a checkbook, especially if you went to this seminar, you could take a book and send the money to me later on in the form of a donation. So number eight, this is a new one now, we're moving into new territory, accepting God's growth pattern for your life. Have you ever heard of Layne Adams? Layne Adams worked very close to Billy Graham.

Layne Adams, as a pastor, did some things that weren't too wise. Nothing that big really. Went through some struggles and started to develop mental and emotional problems.

And he had enough courage to get counseling. Not easy for a pastor, famous pastor, to admit he needs counseling. And God used that.

And he came through that. And I was in a meeting in England and Layne Adams came in to speak. And his speaking was tied in with a book that he wrote, which is hard to find anymore.

It's called *Why Is It Taking So Long To Get Better?* Now if in your life you're wondering why it is taking so long to get better, you may want to go to a bookstore and see if you can find an old copy of that. And I read that book and it's so ministered to me. Because in my struggle with temper, my struggle with lust, which is usually in the mind, my struggle with other areas, especially after living for Jesus 30 years, I guess when I met him it was maybe 25 years, I was wrestling with that.

Why is it taking so long? I especially felt great failure as a father and as a husband. I'm not a naturally good father or a naturally good husband. I would have made a better Muslim.

Muslims have five wives. That's probably more, in line with my cleric, high energy. One wife for secretarial work, one wife for domestic duties and chores, one wife for the bedroom, cleaning the bedroom, one wife for evangelism and for travel, and then one just, a real attractive one just to look at.

But the Bible teaches that as Christians, I know some of you women you're high energy, you have five husbands, but the Muslims don't teach that, neither do the Christians, so you're in big trouble. But the word of God, of course, is clear about marriage and about one wife. My wife and I went through quite a few struggles in our marriage.

We discovered how different we were and I felt I was really failing her. And why wasn't I becoming more sensitive and more loving and more laid back and more everything that she perhaps would like me to be. Wasn't it? Why wasn't it happening? Faster.

Even after having my quiet time, praying, letting self be crucified, under the pressure of marriage, I would lose my temper. Now, some of you never have this problem. Fine, we don't all have the same problems.

I don't want to project my problems on you, but I'll never forget one day on the ship. The carpenters, I live in a very small room. You can barely get in a room on this first ship.

You can read about that ship and some of you will be so fascinated with this book. And by the way, it's a book you can give to unconverted people. They didn't put the story in the book.

There's a lot of negative things in this book. It's a realistic book, but they left out some juicy ones. You get 130 people living together on a ship from 25 nationalities with an 80% seasickness factor.

And I tell you, you're talking about advanced training and sanctification. I was the director on the ship as well as the director of OM Worldwide 20 years ago. All day long, dealing with problems, dealing with difficulties.

I felt at times on the ship that people were so petty, so selfish. Have you ever felt that about God's people? So petty, so selfish. Some of them arguing over their room.

Their cabin was smaller than someone else's cabin. Why do they have a bigger cabin than me? Can you imagine a Christian in God's work coming up with this kind of thing? I was really uptight. And I got back to my wife about six o'clock.

The carpenters had just built our new bed which had a sliding piece of wood which was very sophisticated to build. And then the mattress pulled out and laid on top of that piece of wood. And my wife laid some moan on me.

She's very gentle in the way she moans, but she laid some little moan on me. And I don't know. It was just, I was at breaking point.

I just, without thinking, blew my cool. I knew I had to kick something. My leg moved out into action almost before my brain could catch up with it.

Bam! I kicked the end of that bed that had just built and broke it in two. The leader of Operation Mobilization in action again. Now that was 20 years ago.

I repented of that. I asked God for a greater victory. And I seldom did anything like that for another 20 years.

I had ongoing struggle with irritability and with impatience. But I generally control myself. It's not good to hit your wife, right? And if you're hitting your wife, you need to repent.

You can get put in jail for that in the United States now. So it's especially worth avoiding. But just a few weeks ago, I'm very embarrassed to say this.

Again, I was under pressure. Things were bothering me. My wife was going on about some things that I felt were trivia.

Does that ever happen in your marriage? You have your concepts of what's big. She has her concepts of what's big. My wife is very committed to making video cassettes for the ship.

And she has a little video recorder and she's got it all organized. And I came in and I touched some button that bothered her program. And she came in and said something to me about whatever.

I couldn't handle it. I just went. I just freaked out.

And again, I had to kick something. I knew I couldn't kick her. And so what happens, split second, I saw a box.

Wow! As fast as I could kick. Now if that box had been empty, I would have been in good shape. But that box was filled with some notebooks.

Heavy notebooks. And I'll tell you, when I kicked that box, I'm an emotional kind of person, especially under pain. And I was upset.

I'm getting out of this house. You know, you read in the books when you get upset with your wife. You march out of the house.

That really frightens the wife. She thinks you're never going to come back. She chases you down the road.

I ran out of the house. My wife stayed inside. Because of books like Calvary Road, because of God's grace in me, a weak, struggling character all these years, I couldn't get through the door without repenting.

I repented as I went through the front door. I went to the back gate. I ran to the back door.

I apologized to my wife. I said, forgive me, I'm a jerk. And she just broke down and started laughing.

Praise God. Brothers and sisters, I don't know how many of you are married. But great marriage is not in the absence of these struggles.

And I don't justify that. And I'm praying it's never going to happen again because I had to go down to the hospital. I had to get my foot x-rayed.

And then all my team members, I'm the leader of the team. I'm like the senior pastor of the international coordinating team. By the way, we need workers if you want to join.

And the team, at the morning devotions, we pray together every other morning. I come in limping. Oh, what's wrong, George? Then you're tempted to tell a little half truth.

Any of you have any trouble in that area? Oh, household casualty. But somehow I decided to tell the team the truth. And here I am in front of my whole team, long-term O.M. leaders, telling about the box experience.

Then off to the hospital. Of course, this gets on the O.M. grapevine literally around the world. Vera Wars lost his cool again.

He's kicking boxes. He's broken his foot. Praise God, I didn't break my foot.

It's all better now. One more lesson learned. Have, if you're my kind of person, a few empty boxes laying around the house at all times.

No, that's not the lesson. But how many people have become discouraged because they haven't grown quicker in a particular area in their Christian life. And so they've thrown in the towel.

They've given up. They said, I'll never be the husband God wants me to be. I'll never be the father.

I'll never be the pastor. I'll never be whatever. And I'm sure some of you came in here a couple days ago discouraged because of some difficulty, some area of failure or struggle in your life.

And by God's grace, though maybe you haven't been zapped by a lightning bolt from above, you're going to go out of here encouraged that God can use you. You're going to go out of here committed to the way of brokenness and repentance and Calvary road. Because it's as we repent of whatever sin we have got into, as much as we avoid that sin every day and we continue to build a stronger strategy, we experience ongoing personal revival.

God is easy to live with, but get to know God's growth pattern. All these men and women of God that some of you admire all have similar struggles to me. They just find it hard to verbalize.

Not everybody can verbalize on these things. And if you start verbalizing about your weaknesses, you might want to try it in small groups first. Before you stand up in front of your congregation and say, well, I heard George Berber and he's committed to honesty and I just have to confess to all of you people that though I've been masturbating regularly every week.

Whatever you do, please don't tell your church that George Berber told you to go there on Sunday mornings around the communion table and confess that kind of sin. You'll get me in trouble. So I believe a lot of people are struggling with these different things, but they find it hard to verbalize.

They have not understood, I feel, God's teaching about honesty. Also for a pastor, it is much, much more difficult than for someone like me in an itinerant ministry. Though within my own teams and with my own workers, I walk in honesty and that's only possible because within our land, most of our workers are committed to this way of revival, this way of reality, this way of honesty.

But if you're in the average church where they don't understand these truths, where there's somebody in the congregation who has as his goal to get things on the pastor so they can get them out, then it is extremely difficult for the average pastor to really walk in the light and confess his faults to other people. And you may be in a similar situation, but you need to have somebody. You need to have somebody somewhere, even if it's by phone or letter, that you can really walk in the light with.

Because bottling up all this garbage, things you have done that you're ashamed of, if you've repented, that's under the blood of Christ, that's God. But if you're continuing to feel the effects of that in your walk with God, you may need some counseling. Not for forgiveness sake, but for your walk with God.

Now it may help you in the process feel more forgiven, but in fact the purpose of that kind of walking in the light is the future, not the past. And I thank God that from my earliest days I just learned to share my struggles with one other brother. And then in my marriage with my wife, I shared with my wife this struggle I had with pornography, I believe, before our marriage.

She shared some of her struggles. And she has developed a strategy to help me with my struggles, and I developed a strategy to help her with her struggles. And that makes for good marriage.

We just had our 30th wedding anniversary. Though it's been a battle, we're both failures, we've experienced the grace of God. And in the process, the Lord has done a little bit in birthing operation mobilization, enabling us to reach 400 million people with the Word of God.

Now brought into being a mission society that I'm one of the leaders of with 2,000 full-time workers. Does God use ordinary people? Does God use strugglers, sinners, who have learned how to drink deep at the wells of living water? Yes, He does. But we're all growing at different speeds.

We're all growing in different ways. We need to accept one another's growth patterns. Now sometimes here, I have an initial reaction when I see someone smoking.

I began smoking because I just hate to see so many people getting cancer. But God has worked in my own heart and changed me so that when I see someone smoking, I don't immediately think he's not a Christian. I don't immediately think he's a backslider or he's lower down the pole than someone who's not smoking.

Life is much more complex than that. Inner sins in the mind and the heart are worse and more difficult than outward things such as smoking that someone would even debate whether it is a sin or not. I think most Christians would feel that it is.

So is losing your temper. So is impatience. So is irritability.

So are all these different forms of pride. Who in Cornerstone and who is walking across this place today that from the day we began a couple of days ago till now can say there's been no sin in his mind, in his heart, in his attitude. What about lukewarmness? People don't even think of lukewarmness as a sin.

Whereas Jesus Christ said, Be ye hot, be ye cold, for if you are lukewarm, I'll spew you out of my mouth. I would have thought that the sin of lukewarmness among God's people is worse than the so-called sin of smoking. You see, the whole extreme teaching about perfection is just loaded with holes.

It's loaded with holes. C.H. Spurgeon, one of the greatest men of God who ever lived, bumped into a guy who was into sinless perfection. And so the story goes, which I don't know is true.

This man was sitting in a restaurant after expounding his bit about sinless perfection. And Spurgeon walked up to him and poured a bowl of soup on his head. The guy freaked out in a burst of temper.

There was the end of his theology. Now I tend to think that story down through the years got changed. Maybe it wasn't soup.

Maybe it was coffee. Maybe it was water. But definitely something like that happened somewhere in history.

And it's a good story and I'm going to use it. Oh, we're running out of time. Number nine, the freedom of a disciplined and ordered life. Have any of you read Gordon McDonald's book *Ordering Your Private Worlds*? A very intimidating book for a choleric temperament.

And I couldn't really relate to Gordon when that book first came out and we first met up in Madison, Wisconsin. Little did I know the struggle he was going through because he had had this major failure and it was still private. When we met at that meeting there was a linking of heart.

And I had just finished preaching on the text *Sorrowful Yet Always Rejoicing*. Six things that made me sorrowful and several things that caused me to rejoice. And our friendship began to grow from that very day.

Any book, especially like that, you have to contextualize it into your own situation. You read a businessman and you're a... You read a book by a businessman and you're a farmer. You've got to contextualize it.

Some of the things we hear from these musicians. If you're another musician, you need to contextualize it into what you are. You say, well what does this word contextualize mean? It's a missionary term that we use for example in taking the gospel to Muslims, which is one of the main thrusts of our whole ministry across the world.

We want to take it to them in a way they understand it. We want to use a language they understand. We make changes from our American culture to be culturally adapted to the country we're working in, the culture we're working in, so that we can maximize the message.

Basically it means adjust. It means adapt. Adapt what God has given you in Cornerstone, including in this seminar, with your own situation back home.

Blend it together with other truths you've heard and try to get God's best for you. At the same time, I'm sure any of us can learn something from that book *Ordering Your Private World*. In my own books, I talk quite a lot about discipline.

And I remember Billy Graham speaking back at the Urbana Convention in the 60s. A powerful message. I listened to it on tape at least 20 times.

And I think the cassette tape is one of the greatest ways for people that don't have a lot of money to get the equivalent to a Bible college education. A cassette tape. And in your car, on your bicycle, jogging through the woods.

And I listened to that cassette tape in some meetings I never went to 20 times. It was required listening for all the people that came on in the early days And Billy Graham said more or less this. If you don't develop a disciplined life, you'll never live for God.

My greatest concern for this kind of weekend is that to some degree we have to be a little bit indisciplined even to survive here. You also need a certain kind of discipline to survive. Now that sounds like a contradiction.

But it's a paradox. You have to make enormous changes from your normal lifestyle especially when a storm comes. Especially if you're used to having a nice shower everyday.

Especially if you're used to washing your hair and plugging in your electric thing and drying it. I wish I had my camera of this woman standing there sitting on the floor next to this place where you get electricity doing her hair in the morning. It's a brilliant picture.

I wish she had been studying *Operation World* at the same time. We need to just adjust back to where the world is. The world is not a rock festival.

There's all kinds of... It's a rocky festival. There's all kinds of discipline we have to learn. And I believe we make a great mistake if we stand up in a meeting even as people did last night.

And I'm part of that so I believe in it. And we don't follow that up with discipline in the word, in prayer, in every area of our life. And discipline, contrary to what some people teach, and the ordered life and

developing a practical disciplined life is a road to freedom not to bondage.

It's because I discipline my time and make maximum use of my time that occasionally I have time to do what I really want to do as far as that human side of me. And I just think that's so important. Let me close by reading the rest of my list because my time is gone.

Number nine was the freedom of the ordered and disciplined life. Number ten is learning to refuel and to relax. Music has been a major part of relaxation in my life.

Exercise is another one. Fellowship with people. Getting along in the woods.

There are many practical things that we can practice that will help us refuel spiritually. Refueling spiritually is not only taking advantage of basic spiritual means of grace like feeding on the word of God, prayer, praise, worship, exhortation, communion, studying the word of God, sitting under the ministry of men of God, involving yourself in the life of the church. Did you catch that? And some of you lack a practical strategy to be the survivalist and the disciple God wants you to be.

Well, I got stuck. I said I was going to read the list. It's hard.

Number eleven, real fellowship. Walking in the light as we've tried to talk about. Sharing.

And if I can be of any help in praying for you, don't hesitate to write. There's not that many of you today. And share your heart.

I may be able to send you a specialized book. I may be able to pray for you. Number twelve, keeping a positive attitude and lifestyle.

So easy to get cynical and negative. I have a strong cynical and negative streak. I have to deal with it all the time, all the time, all the time.

Any of you can relate to that? Even when I come to a place like this, I can so often get sort of a negative idea, a negative streak. Cynicism comes in. Philippians 4a has continued to revolutionize my life.

Thinking on that, which is pure and lovely and good report. Think on those things the Bible says. Thirteen, remain constant in the prayer, in prayer and the word.

When you don't feel like praying, you need to pray more. When you don't feel like reading the word, you need to read the word more. But maybe a little more variety would help you in that area.

Walk around when you pray. Go into the woods. Kneel sometimes.

Sit other times. Stand on the chair. Listen to the word of God on tape.

I just bought five or six, at least I told my friend, of that International Bible, New Testament. Eighteen dollars. The whole New Testament on tape.

I will tell you, most of us in America eat too much. I'd rather miss a few meals and buy something like that because to me that is just treasure. Do you know how much people pay now to go to Bible college? Do you know what they pay to go to a Christian college? The fees in these colleges? Part of the system.

Part of the system. It's a dilemma to me because I'm committed to those places. I know God uses them.

So how can you compare eighteen dollars or maybe a few other dollars to get the Bible on tape, get the messages on tape, get a few books, compared to what people pay to go to Bible college? You can start your own Bible college in your own house, loading those tapes out and bless people who maybe can't afford them. I wish I could share fifty ways to be innovative in using the little money you have to build the kingdom of God. But our time will not allow that.

Constant in the word and prayer, but seek variety in the way you go at that. Let's organize extended times of prayer across the country. Praise God for the prayer movement.

Let the Spirit of God is raised up for men like David Bryant who are helping pioneer that movement across the country. I've been involved in nights of prayer, five, six, seven hours of prayer almost every week my entire life. It's my bread, it's my meat to have time, extended time of prayer and worship and receive information from those coming from the field and can share the prayer requests.

And without that we're never going to see the world evangelized. Number fourteen, keep active in his service. Beware of being just passive.

Beware of sitting around too much. Not some of you need a vacation, but different people need different kinds of vacation. You take my kind of person and tell him to sit on the beach doing nothing for a day, the guy's probably going to have a nervous breakdown.

Tomorrow is my big vacation day and I'm hoping to cram in at least ten major roller coaster trips just down the street here. And I've also already got a couple of cornerstone people to go with me. And we're going to see if those young kids can keep up because I'm going from ten in the morning until ten at night because I only get this experience once in a while.

We don't have this kind of place in England. England's a very tame place. Now that's a vacation for me.

That's a vacation. Now if I tell my wife we're going to go on a vacation and we're going to go ride roller coasters she says, excuse me, I'm not going. My wife likes a vacation sitting on the beach under the umbrella with a nice novel doing nothing.

You see why my marriage has got a few bumps. But we compromise. One day we do what she wants to do.

The next four days we do what I want to do. And God has kept the marriage together. We're all different.

Actually, some of my vacation days playing tennis, playing a little golf, going mountain climbing have been more of a spiritual renewal to me in the midst of my struggles and hundreds of problems we have in this world. People being killed. One of my best friends has been missing for six months.

I have to talk to his wife on the phone every other week and say there's no word, there's no word. Some of my days of vacation and relaxation are more spiritual and invigorating than sitting listening to another Charles Swindoll tape though I believe in both. It is hard to bring my Walkman on the roller coaster.

Let me finish my list. Never neglecting family, a little fun, a few laughs. God gave you a sense of humor.

That's part of his program for survival. Number 16, keep the balance in everything at every cost. Paul was a man of steel and velvet.

Jesus was a man of steel and velvet. You need to be a man of steel and velvet or a woman of steel and velvet. Number 17, keep going back to the basics.

Back to the basics. Beware of every form of spiritual pride. 18, struggle is normal.

Struggle is normal. I get on the roller coaster just like on the airplanes and as it goes up on the first hill I say, why did I get on here? This thing is dangerous. Someone was just killed on one of these in England and we're getting to the top of the first hill and suddenly I'm paranoid with this old fear that I've had on airplanes a hundred times and I thought, God, I'm going to die.

I'm not sure if I'm ready. I'm not sure I'm going to die. I raise my hands over the first hill.

Jesus, Jesus, I'm coming home. Glory. And I'm enjoying it.

Life is struggle. Struggle is normal. I'm not talking about struggle of the kind where you're just sort of constantly falling and staying up one minute, down the other.

No, I'm talking about in the mind. I'm talking about spiritual warfare. I'm talking about struggle where committed disciples 95% of the time are probably getting the victory.

But there's that 5% which I hope can become 4% and 3% and be sure by the time it's 1% you'll be worshipping Jesus in heaven. Let's pray. God, we thank you for this little time together.

I just thank you for the freedom to share my heart.

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