

Don't Be Lukewarm

by George Verwer

The greatest problem in our society is lukewarmness among God's people, and it can be overcome by repenting and turning from it, and by seeking to strengthen one's spiritual life.

Duration: 43:22

Scripture: Revelation 3:1

Topics: "Lukewarmness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts by sharing a humorous anecdote about a young preacher who was preparing the congregation for a long sermon but was interrupted by someone asking for condensed milk instead. The preacher then references Revelation 3 and speaks about the importance of being watchful and allowing the Holy Spirit to control our lives. He emphasizes the need for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit and not allow others to walk over them. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the mark of lukewarmness, which includes a lack of vision and goals in the Christian life. The preacher encourages listeners to have goals and aims, particularly in the area of world mission.

Transcript

Because I know you're a church that tends to welcome me and accept me as I am, I am just going to take a couple of more minutes to mention a couple of other books. I just felt led to go back there and grab some books that I know are so relevant. I don't know if any of you have struggles in your marriage, as I do.

Humanly speaking, I'm a mismatch. But we've just had 35th wedding anniversary, and seldom have I ever gone to sleep at night without being right with God and right with one another. Believe me, I might be a blessing to some when I preach, but I can be a real pain as a husband.

And I just thank God for books on marriage that have helped me. *Opposites Attract*, absolutely brilliant book. But there's a line through *Attract*, and underneath it says, *Attack*.

So, have you ever noticed that? That if you are very opposite from your wife, that you do attract, but sometimes things go wrong, and suddenly you're attacking each other. There's a brilliant book by the Navs. I don't know if you know this magazine of the Navigators, but it is the highest quality Christian magazine in the world.

It's called Discipleship Journal. This one's on anger, why there's a hell, and 23 ways to jumpstart your spiritual life. Some of it's a bit American, comes out of the States, but it's just, if you know the Navigators, you know they're a movement of integrity, a movement that God has greatly used.

That's their magazine as a sample. Philip Morris, one of our longest term workers, died a few, two weeks ago. The funeral was last week.

I just came back from Korea at the time. Some of you prayed for Philip, 50 years of age. Somehow, after two years of prayer, battling cancer, God took him.

Not easy for us. This is the book that the Lord was using during his struggle with cancer, Ronald Dunn's brilliant book, When Heaven is Silent. Sometimes when we pray, it does seem we're not getting very far.

And I think that's one of the reasons some people get discouraged in their prayer life. So there's just an absolutely brilliant book. And for those of you who have been around for years, you know that I often produce and push this book called Personal Revival by Stanley Volk.

I believe personal revival is plan A. Any other kind of revival is plan B. Praise God for both. And I would encourage you, you can have that free of charge. Turn with me to the book of Revelation.

My heart is full. And I just appreciate prayer that I might be precise and brief. I tend sometimes to go a little too long.

I'm reminded of this young man who was preaching at a very long sermon. He was trying to prepare the people for his long sermon. Just a young preacher.

And so he was in preparation to get the people ready. He talked about how we need more and more of the milk, milk of the Word. One of the elders popped his hand up and said, That's fine, son, but we'd like condensed milk tonight.

Probably you already heard that. I want you to turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 3. I'm in Romans 3. I've got to go a little further here. Again and again, God has used these verses to stir me, get me searching my heart.

Speaks about being watchful. Start right at the first verse. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars, I know thy works.

Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. A name that you're alive. We have people around the world that are called Oemmers.

If you're on O.M., you're called an Oemmer. If you're in Weck, you're called a Wecker. We're bigging our culture into abbreviations.

And if you have that name, I guess people think that you're alive, you're committed, you're zealous, you're a missionary, you're winning people to Jesus. But it's not necessarily so. And so these words can become very relevant to those of us who are a part of movements that are known for being very much alive.

You have a name that you're alive, but you're dead. Your church has a name, Helmwood Church. It's known all over the country, being a good church, a committed church, evangelical church, can be in a church that has a good name.

Therefore, your name will be connected with that church when you tell people about where you worship. But you can still be dead spiritually yourself. Amazing.

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect or mature before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Powerful. A little later in that same chapter where God talks about the church of Laodicea, down there at verse 14, And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write these things, that the Amen, the faithful, the true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot, so because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

That's powerful. I remember speaking on that text at the Keswick Convention many years ago. Maybe that's why I don't get back there.

It's a very offensive, very offensive verse. But I really believe the greatest problem in our society is lukewarmness among God's people. When you go over to the States, as I do a few times a year, they're always going on about different things.

The big thing there is abortion and homosexuality and crime. I guess bigger than that is the high percentage of Christians who are against Bill Clinton because of his position on abortion and a few other things. So people, even when you listen to the radio, they're all on about issues.

The whole church has become issue conscious and getting more and more political so that in the United States, Christian and Republican political parties get sort of synonymous and it really is quite dangerous, quite confusing to many people. I remember driving into Chicago, listening to the Moody Bible Institute radio station, realizing I was speaking the next day on that program and someone was going on about all these different problems and how they felt that was the greatest problem in our society. I think the next day on the radio, I shared what I felt was the greatest problem.

And I feel the greatest problem, of course, there's so many problems, we don't like to generalize. Different people are facing different problems. But I do believe the end of the day, the way God sees it, lukewarmness among His people is an abomination.

It's a terrible thing. And yet many of the Lord's people seem to be satisfied with being lukewarm. I believe one of the reasons so many have gone into very, very emotional experiences in Britain lately, often referred to as the Toronto Blessing, is because many have been so aware of their lukewarmness and that has looked like the kind of electric jolt, spiritually, that could get them out of that.

But myself and 40 years of counseling Christians have had to discover that these crises experiences do not necessarily keep people out of lukewarmness. They can be used of God if they're followed by His process. And His process always involves repentance.

It always involves an ongoing work of grace. When you don't feel like walking with Jesus, you don't feel like loving your wife, or you don't feel like going to the church prayer meeting, or you don't feel like sharing your faith. And I'm concerned that if we have another wave of emotional experiences, and I've watched wave after wave hit Britain.

For 32 years I've lived here, I have the privilege of watching it in 50 other nations as well. If that's not followed by the disciplined life, I shared that with you, I think, a year or two ago. If that's not followed by denying self, taking up the cross every day and following Jesus, then sometimes it's like the dog returning to his vomit.

That's another unpleasant scripture that we don't like to preach about too much. And I want to, before I go on to some other things on my heart tonight, I want to appeal to you in the name of Jesus, if lukewarmness has come into your life, to turn from it tonight. The Lord knows we struggle.

Lukewarmness comes in my life so quickly. I'm constantly dealing with it. You say, well, how can I spot lukewarmness? How do we know if we're getting lukewarm? Especially when we understand scriptures like that verse that says, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

Is that just the unconverted? Haven't some of the most bizarre things in the world been done by believers? Let us be more realistic about our Christian lives. No matter how filled we are with the Holy Spirit, we're all still incredibly human. We can be deceived.

I've been deceived recently in an investment of some funds in a thing in the United States where we expected to get a lot of money back, and in fact we lost it. Some of you may have read about that in the newspapers. It was in the Financial Times.

No British money went into that. You can be happy. Our British board had the discernment to avoid that, but some international money went into it, and we've been humbled.

Three hundred organizations went into that. They were all humbled, believe me. It's good for the soul.

A little heart on the wallet in this particular case. The heart is deceitful. Christians can be deceived.

Christians can make mistakes. We're human. That's why we need each other.

That's why we need the teaching of the Word that you so wonderfully have in this fellowship. That's why an occasional itinerant speaker who comes in with a different viewpoint generally will not harm us, though many, many churches now are closed to itinerant ministry, and their churches are highly--pulpits are highly protected, so they're always hearing basically the same person. And I think that's less sometimes than the best.

I know I get such a blessing by listening to a wide range of people by cassette tape, and it's interesting. I just picked up this journal, and in this 23 Ways to Jumpstart Your Spiritual Life, it talks about one way, reading books, being exposed to people outside of the normal group that you're in contact with, outside of your own denomination or your own particular fellowship. Very, very interesting that that was mentioned in here.

What are some signs of lukewarmness? Just very quickly, number one, of course, lack of love for the brothers and sisters. The mark of the Christian is love. And when I don't sense love in my heart, I just immediately repent of it.

The greatest work of grace in my life through salvation in Jesus Christ was to turn me into a lover of people. And for 40 years, I've never found hardly ever a person I couldn't love and didn't love when I've had the opportunity. Our hearts go out to individuals.

Our hearts go out also to the multitudes. You'll find some people that do have love for a few individuals, but they have no concern for the multitudes. They don't feel Algeria.

They don't feel Somalia. They don't feel Bosnia. They don't feel southern Sudan.

They don't weep for lost souls in India and Mongolia and Pakistan where hundreds of millions are headed out into a Christless eternity. And it's an area where we need balance, we need help, isn't it? It's quite overwhelming when we think of it. Do you think I'm any less overwhelmed than most of you? I live on the cutting edge or the precipice of just being overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the task.

OM is now 2,600 full-time people, 700 children. We have dozens of problems every single day. Faxes, e-mails, everything you can imagine.

Very critical letters come to us because with this number of people we do make mistakes. With two ships sailing around the world, it doesn't all go well. I just had a woman on the phone two days ago really going on how when the ship came to her particular town, it was delayed because of the repairs.

When it got to her port, she felt the whole thing was just terrible. She is known for being a little bit negative, but still she may have had a good point. One of the marks of lukewarmness is lack of love for individuals, for the multitudes, for the people of the world.

And therefore, when we find that creeping in, we repent of it, we turn from it, and we fall at the feet of the Lord Jesus in honesty and openness. Another mark of lukewarmness is prayerlessness. I'm amazed at these surveys being taken even among Christian leaders in which they're acknowledging they have no prayer life.

Can you imagine? How in the world is a church ever going to be on the cutting edge? We can learn something from the Koreans, I will tell you, where they've seen more conversions to Jesus Christ in the past few years than we've had in almost the whole of Europe. And the priority of the Korean church is not preaching, though they have great preachers. The priority of the Korean church is intercessory prayer.

Even pastors sometimes are up these weird hours in the morning with their congregations in prayer meetings. They go up to Prayer Mountain. We know there's other factors in church growth in Korea, but prayer, according to the New Testament, is absolutely basic to accomplishing God's work.

Spiritual warfare through prayer, intercessory prayer, praise in prayer. People will acknowledge prayer is important, and they say, well, it's a very personal thing. So our prayer is just a very personal thing.

When you dig a little deeper, you find that often people saying that are justifying their lack of prayer or their unwillingness to be involved in the prayer life of the church. I don't think it's a coincidence that you have a prayer meeting tomorrow night. How difficult it is to get to a prayer meeting.

I confess the bad attitude I have at times to our prayer meetings. We have a prayer night every Tuesday, and I've been in it for about 39 years. And sometimes I can feel that sinful nature in me, that lazy part of me, that rebellious part of me, just saying, you know, I'm not going to go to this thing.

I've had enough of these meetings. I've got plenty of other things to do. I can pray at home.

But as we look through the book of Acts, we see that it wasn't just personal prayer. There was the prayer meeting, Acts 13, prayer meeting, Acts 12, prayer meeting, Acts 4, prayer meeting. The place where they

were gathered together was shaken.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit, went forth and spoke the word of God with boldness. Do you think these refreshings that are coming on some churches in these days, and I believe refreshings come in different ways in different churches and different people at different times, do you think this is going to really lead to that much if we don't get down to the business of serious prayer? If we don't get down to the business of seriously, day by day, living for Jesus, which means denying self, taking up the cross and following Him. I'm sure you know enough about the word of God to answer that question.

Beware of lukewarmness creeping into your prayer life. Some people, I believe, are just naturally boring. That's sad.

I don't know if you've married someone who's naturally boring. You've got a real problem. But I don't believe that Christian life is boring.

I don't believe Christians should be boring. I don't believe churches should be boring. Many young people say they left the church today around the country because the church is boring.

This is ridiculous. Christianity, following Jesus, is the most exciting, mega-motivating, mind-bending thing anybody can ever get involved in, if you get involved in it biblically. The challenges, though we have probably more difficulties right now than we did a month ago, I'm finding myself more motivated than a month ago.

I'm always motivated, but I have different levels of motivation. My wife sometimes is praying that I could be a little less motivated, at least at certain moments. When she's trying to talk to me, my kind of character, we're not good listeners.

Probably I've offended some of you. You probably wanted to tell me something after the meeting, and we talked for four seconds, and I tried to sell you a book, and then went on to the next person. Actually, you can keep praying because I want to be a better listener.

The marks of lukewarmness, lack of love, prayerlessness. I believe another mark of lukewarmness is lack of generosity. When we're filled with the Spirit, we're moving in God's grace, we're generous, we want to give.

And I know that God's Spirit in your midst has been demonstrated by your giving to your new program with the building, to World Missions. And I was so encouraged to hear that you were able to keep your missions giving going while you're also putting up a building because so often one jeopardizes the other. So surely there are quite a few people here who are not lukewarm if we make that a basis for measuring.

Don't put yourself down by sort of aiming too high and getting an unrealistic view of what I'm attempting to share. To think that sort of, if you're on fire for Jesus and you're not lukewarm, then all these things are happening in you every moment of every day. That's not what I'm talking about.

These things come through times of dryness. These things come through times of doubt and struggle. These things come through times of pain and questions.

But at the end of the day, after battling through, getting some counsel, sharing with someone, we find ourselves at the foot of the cross and we prefer to go to bed at night with a clear conscience and knowing

we've walked with Jesus on that particular day, even if it's been a day of great pain. Another mark of lukewarmness is just so clear. It's so clear we don't even want to mention it.

It's our failure and lack of even desire sometimes to share our faith with other people. Now, there are other reasons people don't share their faith. People might be fearful, and that's not necessarily lukewarm.

They may love Jesus. They may have a fervency in their love for the Lord. They may have some reality in prayer.

They may be generous. They may have love. But they find sharing their faith is really the thing that knocks them over.

And that may be more fear. It may be some emotional struggles. A lot of people are shy.

And I thank God for this little book on how to share your faith conversationally. I don't believe God is wanting everybody to go door to door with Christian books. I used to believe that, I think, about 25 years ago.

I remember dragging a reluctant sea captain door to door in Manchester. I thought the guy was going to have a heart attack. Never did anything like this in his life.

God uses different people in different ways, and it's not easy to find the balance between doing that which is hard and doing that which you're comfortable with. And I find a balance of those two things helps me to keep on keeping on. You can't always go against the tide.

And so sometimes to take an easier route and engage in a kind of evangelism that you find easier for your temperament, God understands that. At least we're trying. Like this one woman, I heard her testimony in Birmingham, one of my top 30 cities in Britain.

In Birmingham, she couldn't get the courage to give out a gospel tract, so she left it in a telephone booth and prayed. Well, who knows? I've heard of people converted through tracts that they found. But if there's no desire, if there's no concern, if this is not even an issue, so that we're willing to read a book about it or talk to somebody about it, that is the mark of lukewarmness.

That means something is perhaps more seriously wrong with that person spiritually. Another mark of lukewarmness, I believe, is gossip. I believe when we're lukewarm and we're spiritually cold, things upset us easily and we more easily gossip.

We gossip about the pastor's sermon. We gossip about some woman's new dress. We gossip about somebody's car that's better than our car.

If there's anything that surprised me in my 40-year pilgrimage in missions is how carnal missionaries can be. If you think missionaries are a special, super-spiritual breed, you probably haven't met too many or they conned you because missionaries are very ordinary people. They're often quite hyper in certain ways, like me.

And they can be very, very nasty. They can be nasty with one another. And gossip can come in, and judgmentalism.

This is why I run around the world telling everybody to read Grace Awakening, that great book by Charles Swindoll, because it talks against judgmentalism. It talks about love, about having the right attitude. God's concerned about our attitude.

I don't believe... I don't believe we can aim too high in this area, provided we're willing to accept ourselves and realize that in our high aim we will fail. But my burden is to have the right attitude toward all God's people, and especially any ones that don't like me or don't like O.M. And I am a natural enemy creator. I have my kind of accent, temperament, hyperness.

I create enemies. I probably created a few here tonight. This is a very user-friendly church, like these new computers.

But the fact is my kind of temperament does rub people the wrong way. And just being American background, I've been 32 years in this country now, but I haven't been able to figure out which accent I'm supposed to speak, you know, Lancashire or Cockney or Cornwall. So I just sort of speak the way the words fall and people nail me as an American as fast as I can get out my first sentence, sometimes even swear at me, just, you know, especially if one of my words is something about Jesus.

It's interesting on British Rail. Just mention the name of Jesus, you know. I dictate letters on the train.

I make phone calls. People are listening in. I start going on about Jesus.

Boy, you can hear the one guy swore at me. So do pray for my protection on the trains. There are many other signs of lukewarmness.

And as you read the New Testament, I'm sure the Holy Spirit will reveal those things to you. It's God's will, brothers and sisters, for all of us to be on fire for Jesus. Is that asking too much? He went all the way to the cross.

He wept in Gethsemane and said, Look, if this thing can be removed, hey, take it. He went all the way to the cross. He was the Son of God.

We know the amazing message of Philippians chapter 2. God becoming man, becoming a servant, and going all the way to the cross. The least we can do, those of us who are saved, and I hope it includes most people here tonight, the least we can do is now just honor Him day by day in worship, in praise, in allowing our hearts to be tender toward the wooing of the Holy Spirit, in dealing quickly with sin, in repenting when God convicts us of anything. I had a conversation on a phone, a difficult conversation on the phone this morning.

The person was upset about something and sort of hung up on me. Within a few minutes, the person called me back and said, I repent. I repent.

The problem was solved. The problem was solved. The spirit was grieved one minute, the spirit was freed the next minute.

Don't be afraid to repent. Don't be afraid to repent in front of your wife and say, Hey, look, I'm sorry for being irritated with you this morning when you drove the car through the garage door. I'm sorry.

It's good to say I'm sorry. It's good to humble ourselves. Now, I know certain kinds of people, when I share this way, it's dangerous because they're already down on themselves.

Have you ever met people who are saying sorry when they don't need to say sorry? I've got a friend, he's apologizing. He doesn't need to apologize. He's just, from his background and from super sensitivity, he's apologizing too much.

He needs a different message on perhaps holy boldness and perhaps 25 ways to stand against intimidation. There is a lot of intimidation in our society, isn't there? It's a miracle of God's grace that's enabled me to stand against phenomenal intimidation. I would have left this leadership of OM years ago.

I felt it was so beyond me. I felt so intimidated at times by the size of it, the complexity of it, and then my own failures. But God wants us to be bold.

God doesn't want us to be some kind of evangelical, some kind of gospel wimp, if you know that word. We need to be bold. We need to be brave.

And sometimes that means standing our ground. It doesn't mean always letting someone sort of roll over you because you've got some weakness or some failure. You let someone just walk right over you.

No. That's another factor. We don't have time to go into that.

The final mark of lukewarmness, you've probably guessed, there are many, but this is my final one tonight, is our lack of vision. I believe that on fire people, of course, they're in the Word of God and we can never overstate the importance of being in the Word of God. They are people of vision.

And it could be that you're finding your Christian life a little bit of a drudgery, even though you've had tremendous Bible teaching and you love the Lord. It could be that you're still finding it a bit of a drudgery. And it could be you don't have a vision.

You haven't got goals and aims. We as individuals should have goals and aims. No, I'm the kind of person that has too many goals.

If I shared with you my goals and aims for this two week on the canals, you know, you would think I was loony. So I'm not going to share those goals and aims. But we're all different and I'm not expecting even my wife to necessarily do the things that I do.

That's so important to accept God's different ways of working. But we also should have some goals and aims in spiritual things, in practical things. What about around the house if you're an untidy person? You need some goals and aims to clean up that mess that you've made.

It's getting on your wife's nerves or it's getting on your husband's nerves. Goals and aims in your prayer life, in your Bible study. I got some new goals this year in my Bible study.

I was just sitting reading the Bible and I wasn't getting into it. So I made a commitment. Every time I have my Bible study, I got a notebook.

I'm going to write something down. How many of you write something down when you study the Word of God? Raise your hand. You write something down.

Not too many. Don't you find that just sitting there, just reading your Bible, that an hour later if someone says, Hey, what did you get from the Word of God today? Hey man, don't get too personal. God wants your church to have goals and aims and I know you do.

God wants us to be motivated people. Do you realize? Do we realize tonight how close we are to one another in the work? If it wasn't for committed churches like your church, I can only speak now about OM for a moment, but if it wasn't for committed churches like your church, OM would not be accomplishing very much in the 80 nations that God has now put us in. As one member suffers, we all suffer.

More and more missionaries are not returning to the field because when they come back, even in the States, the churches have come apart or they're no longer that interested in world missions. There's a lot of false stories going around now that, well, the Koreans and the Brazilians can do it, so the Brits aren't really needed that much. And these things are just ridiculous.

We need British missionaries as much as ever. But unless we see the importance of this partnership we have together, I fear that missionary work from our British churches may start going backward. I don't think it is at present, even though the number of career missionaries is dropping because the British missionaries who are out there are training nationals, and those nationals are now doing the job, and we're partners with those nationals.

Ninety percent of our workers in India are now Indians. Used to be many from Britain. That's why God put me in this country because when I came here, British people didn't need a visa, but Americans did.

And we sent army after army of British persons, British people, out to India. That day is over, so there's great scope for short-term British people. But I believe we will experience subtle counterattacks against the world mission thrust that is still going out of Britain in a mighty and a powerful way.

Lukewarmness. What about it, young person? How many young people here this evening? Those under 30 are definitely planning to move out onto the mission field. Just raise your hand.

This is not to put anybody down. I just want to get some hands up. We've got three on this side.

We've got nobody on this side. We've got three people. Maybe they even come in as visitors.

I don't know. We've got three people who are seriously thinking about world missions. Do we really think that is in line with what we read about in the New Testament? Antioch was a brand-new church.

You think they had a gifted Bible teacher at Antioch as you have? I don't believe they did because they were just beginning. They didn't have a New Testament. And from other parts of the New Testament and what we read, churches were really getting things upside down in those early days.

Remember, there had to be a big struggle even to bring Gentiles into the picture at all. And yet that early baby church in Antioch, we read in chapter 13 of the book of Acts, had five men who gathered in prayer, and God sent two of the five out to the region beyond. And I believe when somehow we are on fire for Jesus, somehow we're moving day by day in the reality of God's Holy Spirit, we're going to have a greater vision, and we're going to be open to do new things.

And I want some of you young people to dream some dreams in the next few days and weeks. I want you to pray about the possibility of being an ambassador of Jesus Christ in a people's group in the world where perhaps the church does not even exist. Can you imagine a group of people, like say the Welsh people? That's a people's group.

Any Welsh people here? Liverpool, you find a lot of Welsh people. There's a Welsh lady way in the back. Very young lady.

Wonderful. The Welsh are not English, and the English are not Welsh. That's two different people's groups.

Scottish is another people's group. Irish is another people's group. Great Britain is a nation of a number of different people's groups.

If you go to Africa, and by the way, if you don't have a copy of Operation World, this is the chance to get one on a donation basis. You wondered how I was going to get that into the message, didn't you? But as you read through that, you'll discover there's African countries, African countries where they have 25, 30, 50 people's groups in one country. I've just come back from Korea where we've had this big conference of 4,000 leaders from all over the world.

Then we had that meeting in the stadium. I don't know if you prayed for me as I faced 80,000 people, the largest meeting in the history of my people ministry, and shared with them this burden for world mission, both of them students, together with all these leaders who came in from around the world. But we have the goal at this conference, a church for every people, a gospel for every person.

People are criticizing the movement. They say these goals are too high. Is this a big problem in your life? Your goals are too high? Maybe you could write to me.

Dear George Burworth, here are my five goals that I feel are too high. Could you bring me into balance? I'd be happy to do that. Most people are not aiming high enough.

And I want to tell you, young people here, I believe if I could talk to you individually, I could prove that one of your great sins is the sin of unpotentiality, the failure to reach the God-given potential you have. Just being born in this nation, just knowing English, just being part of this dynamic biblical fellowship. And I'm sure other things that you may take for granted in your life, maybe because of ignorance, you have failed to understand the potential, the potential you have to be a builder in the kingdom of God.

No one looking at me when I was 16 years of age, I don't think anyone would ever say, this young man is going to help start a mission society that will give the gospel to 800 million people and train 90,000 people in evangelism and missions and send them into every nation almost in the world. We never know what God can do with us until we get mainstream, with the Spirit of the Lord controlling our days and our moments and our hours. No wonder the book of Ephesians has those powerful words in the 5th chapter about redeeming the time followed by that command, Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I close this heart cry tonight and ask you, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? I'm not talking about last month. I'm not talking about the blessing you got at Spring Harvest two years ago or when you went forward in a meeting in Manchester or you stood up at the Keswick Convention and you sensed the Spirit of the Lord filled you. Praise God for those past experiences.

But according to my New Testament, the Spirit-filled life is an ongoing reality that has to be constantly sort of reactivated by repentance and by the Word, by confession and by all the means of grace that I know you've heard about week after week in this great church. Be ye hot. Be ye cold.

Be lukewarm. I will spew you out of my mouth. Let us pray.

Let's just take a few moments for a silent prayer for repentance. Repentance doesn't have to be a public thing. Sometimes that happens.

There's sort of mini-revivals breaking out in colleges across America with a lot of repentance, a lot of people getting right, and some of it's public. Some people are putting things right. Students bringing piles of pornographic magazines and dumping them and burning them and all kinds.

Every kind of sin has been confessed in those meetings at Wheaton College and other places that you can imagine. I know these things because David is with us. Biola is a Wheaton College graduate and his friend is sending an email about what God is doing there.

But there also can be that quiet moment of repentance in our own hearts as we cry out to the Lord in brokenness and confession and then say, Lord, fill me afresh tonight. Fill me afresh tonight. And as we appropriate that, realizing that doesn't mean it's going to be necessarily easy tomorrow because the filling of the Spirit works in complement with the basic challenge of denying self, taking up the cross and following Jesus every day.

There's not competition. But it's a flowing together and there's always an element of mystery in it as well. So let's have a moment of silent prayer.

Father, we thank you for grace. Father, we thank you for forgiveness. We thank you for Calvary.

Without that, really, there's very little we can do, especially to make any kind of spiritual impact. We're surrounded by a world that's caught up in promiscuity and confusion, in New Age double talk, political confusion, and we want to stand tall in the midst of this. We want to be your men and be your women.

We want to go where you want us to go and do what you want us to do. We don't want to just get sucked along with the crowd or go the way of carnal-minded, small-minded people. So, Lord, fill us with vision that, Lord, we may have goals and aims in our lives, even if in some of the things we fail.

We'd rather aim high and fail than aim low and somehow reach the goal. Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit tonight that we may declare war against all forms of lukewarmness in our lives, that we may know the reality of biblical Spirit-led witnessing, we may know the reality of a powerful prayer ministry and prayer life, that we would know the reality of generous, joyous, sacrificial, overflowing generosity in the work of your kingdom and world evangelism, that, Lord, we'd be willing to even deal with wrong attitudes as they so quickly creep in, even against a brother or a sister or within our own family. We thank you, Father.

You're not trying to hit us on the head. You're not trying to put us into some kind of legalistic straitjacket, but to the contrary, you're wanting to set us free through the work of grace in your Holy Spirit. Grant this, we pray.

Grant this, we pray, O God, as we're here tonight in the name of Jesus. Let's continue in prayer. I want to just give this opportunity.

I know you can make a recommitment and be filled with the Spirit and do business with God right where you are seated, but I believe some would be helped by just an outward expression, an outward expression of the inward transaction you just had in your heart as you repented and asked God to fill you afresh with His Spirit. And if you've done serious transaction in your heart and you mean business for God, you want to be on fire for Jesus the rest of your life, I'd like you just, if you feel it will be a help, just to quietly stand

where you are. And I want to pray for you that this will be a turning point in your life.

It will be a moment, not a quick fix because the battle is clear and I've already talked about that, but it could be a turning point in your war against lukewarmness, your war against anything that's less than biblical best in building the kingdom. If that will be a help to you, just stand where you are and I want to pray for you specifically in a prayer of consecration. Just in these moments, an outward expression of an inward transaction.

God bless you in the name of Jesus. God bless you, the two of you together, and you in this side, in the back. God bless you in the name of Jesus.

Many are praying for this meeting. Many are praying. The Word of God has been sown in your hearts week after week, month after month.

But this perhaps, as extra people are praying tonight, is a moment of quickening for some. Don't let fear keep you from just this simple outward expression of this inward transaction that the Spirit of the Lord may confirm this in a more powerful way upon your heart. God bless you in the name of Jesus.

Young people, other people, anyone else, anyone else, God bless you. God bless you. Praise the Lord.

I don't give invitations like this much. Somebody must have been doing a lot of preparation work here because unless I sense people are ready, I just don't give this kind of invitation. So it's the Lord.

Do respond if that's going to help you at this moment. Anyone else? Lord, you see those who are standing before you. You see those who are broken before you there in their seats.

And we ask, Lord, for a special work of grace in our hearts that somehow we would take at least one more step forward in biblical dynamic New Testament Christian living. We honor you, Father. We thank you that your Holy Spirit lives in us and we want to give him greater control of every area of our life that somehow we will know what it is to stay free on a day-by-day basis from subtle forms of lukewarmness.

We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Let's all stand and sing He is Lord.

I think many of you know that's my favorite chorus. It's so meaningful even after all these years where musicians can come and sing He is Lord. And young person, if God is speaking to you about his Lordship in your life, even to the point of being willing to go to some place where they've never heard, don't hold back.

Talk to somebody this week here in the church and get moving in God's direction if he's saying something to you. Let's sing this with all of our hearts.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23556.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/dont-be-lukewarm/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net