

Fruitfulness

by George Verwer

We need to repent, surrender to God, and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to experience fruitfulness in our lives.

Duration: 46:01

Topics: "Fruitfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a life and fire for God that leads to winning souls. He mentions historical figures like Darby, Whitfield, and Wesley who were known for their evangelistic efforts. The speaker believes that as leaders, they need to repent and seek God's forgiveness for not seeing enough fruit in their ministry. He encourages listeners to be disciplined in the little things and to fully surrender themselves to Christ in order to see more fruit and impact more lives.

Transcript

Let's look at a few verses in the book of Acts that should charge our spiritual batteries a little bit. In Acts chapter 2 we see in verse 47, Acts 2 47, verse 47, praising God, having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Notice verse 41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about 3,000 souls.

Not 3,000 books sold or 3,000 tracts given out, but 3,000 souls were added to the church. And if you go on to Acts chapter 5, it gets rougher as you read further, you see what God did through these disciples, the people that were saved. Notice Acts chapter 6, verse 1, in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, the number of disciples was multiplied.

Is that what happened on your field? The number of disciples was multiplied? Notice verse 5, verse 7, the word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem. I believe God wants to give us more fruit in this coming year. And I don't believe the problem is whether or not God wants to give.

The problem is whether or not you and I are willing to be the kind of men and the kind of women that God can use in bringing forth fruit. Now you may be the strongest Calvinist in all the world, but that doesn't relieve you of one single responsibility in regard to what the Bible commands. And a man who truly believes in the doctrine of grace will be a Whitfield and nothing less.

We've got a lot of Calvinists in Britain today, but not many Whitfields. We've got a lot of Arminians and not many Wesleys. A lot of Brethren and not many Darbys.

So easy just to pick up the words, so easy to have the same theology, but it takes something quite different to get the kind of life, the kind of fire that these men had that made them soul winners, all of them. Darby in his early days was one of the greatest soul winners this country ever knew. The same could be said of Whitfield, the same could be said of Wesley, the same could be said of most of the men that our churches look to as their founders.

I believe God wants to give us fruit. I believe that we as leaders, as we meet in our coordinators conference, are going to have to repent and fall on our knees because we could have seen much more fruit. And though we can talk about God's sovereign overruling, that's never an excuse for laziness, unbelief, pride, lack of prayer, or anything else that hinders us in the work of God.

We see what happened in the book of Acts, but we don't really seem to believe it can happen again. Souls being added daily, it hasn't only happened in the book of Acts. It's happening right now in some places in the world.

And I believe that you can see fruit this year. Don't you want to see fruit? Don't you want to bear fruit for Jesus Christ? I believe with all my heart that the power available to those disciples in the book of Acts is available to you and to me. I believe the same God who added daily to the church in that day can add daily to the church in our day.

How thrilled I was this morning, or was it yesterday, when Daniel Gonzalez mentioned how fifty souls have been added to the church there in Barcelona. I believe he must have been referring to the church in Barcelona as they've gone on planting their second church. God has added to the church there in Barcelona, these two churches that have been born out of the work there, especially of Brother Daniel.

In Indonesia, I saw tremendous work of the Spirit of God. It was only the beginning, and in the midst of a few disciples, there were, of course, many false believers. I'm sure that's true in every situation.

We know that many of the countries that we have chosen to work in, you know, are countries that are not at present fruitful. They're the hard lands, and boy, it is tempting. It's tempting to go to somewhere else right now with our ship other than the Persian Gulf.

My, we could stay for another two months in Asia and Indonesia, probably see several thousand more come to Christ. But God has told us we must go to the hard places. This is going to mean that this fruit may not come as quick as some of you desire, but I believe it will come if you and I are willing and ready for the kind of life that God can use to bring forth fruit.

I would say there's not enough, not enough fruit, because there's not enough reality in your life and mine. Maybe we could be specific. What are some areas that, if we're honest, we could say there's not enough? I would say there's not enough faith.

There's not enough reckless faith in these days to just believe that God is going to save men, to just believe that God is going to penetrate some of these countries, and to refuse to take no for an answer, to refuse to be sidetracked. I believe basically missions is sidetracked, and I know many mission leaders would agree. We've been sidetracked into organizationalism, and we're over organized.

We've been sidetracked into secondary pursuits of all kinds. We've been sidetracked into too much social work. We've been sidetracked into professionalism.

We've been sidetracked into bureaucracy. That's why many missionaries don't like that little book, No Graven Image, because some of that is very, very true. It's so easy in missions to get caught just keeping the machine going and losing the vision for souls, people who are lost.

And I believe there's danger in OM. And when you're working in OM, I don't care what you're doing, and you have no passion for souls, you're in danger. You're in danger.

When you're too busy in the work of God to speak a word for God to an individual who's lost, you're too busy. And we're so busy running around organizing, and we haven't got time to stop and pray and exercise faith and believe God for a miracle. We're too busy.

The sin of being too busy. Too busy to win a soul for Christ. Too busy to stop for a man in need.

Too busy to say a few words of encouragement on the phone. Too busy to visit the local hospital and minister a little comfort, a little love. Too busy for the man next door.

Perhaps you don't even know who he is. Too busy for the milkman, except when he comes for the bill. Too busy, period.

Alan Redpath used to warn us all the time of the barrenness of the busy life. Watch out in OM for the sin of busyness. When you're too busy preparing for the next crusade to get involved with people now where you are, you're too busy and your crusade is going to be a blimp or a partial blimp.

Not enough faith. Not enough, not enough prayer. Oh, I want to tell you my heart has ached when I've seen how Satan tries to move in on the OM team and cut the prayer life.

Get it down smaller and smaller and change the prayer meeting to a discussion session and change the prayer meeting to a fellowship hour. All those things are good, but not as good as prayer. Prayer is communion with God.

Prayer is the Christians vital breath. Without it we can't move any more than you're gonna move without lungs tonight. Not enough prayer.

Not enough faith. Thirdly, not enough boldness. Not enough boldness.

My heart was stirred out there in Hyde Park on Saturday. I'm so glad I went. I was stirred.

I had to repent listening to Arthur Blissett. I used to have more boldness than I have today. Maybe I think I'm wiser now.

Maybe I feel that I don't embarrass people so much. Maybe I feel that I no longer can be accused of trying to push the gospel on someone. And many of us, in an effort to be tactful and careful and to watch out and not rock the boat, we've become a bunch of timid retreatists.

I think this is something the whole church must learn from the Jesus people. Boldness. Boldness.

I think of Arthur Blissett standing up in an airplane. I've hardly ever even given tracks out in an airplane. Very few places I don't give tracks out, but the airplane, only a few times I've tiptoed down the aisles, fear

and trembling, giving out any tracks.

Oh, I always witnessed to the man next to me. I don't remember all that was said, but Arthur Arthur Blissett stood up in an airplane and made out, shouted out some slogan for Christ, stirred the whole plane. You say, oh well, that's not the way to witness.

Who of you in O.M., who of the sum total in O.M., have won as many souls as that reckless young man? Boldness. Read the book of Acts. It's on every other page.

They spoke the Word of God with boldness. Now, of course, it's true. Some people try to be bold without a knowledge of the Word of God, without a knowledge of even Jesus.

And that just comes out almost stupidity. There's a difference between energy in the flesh and being in the Spirit. But I believe that God can overrule our blunders.

Praise God for that day, old Dick Dreyer stood up in a bus in Lancashire, started to preach the double-decker bus, all the foolish things to do. But Henry Pachinowski ended up getting saved through that. And it's amazing how God has used acts of boldness, that which seemed to be foolishness to the world, to save men.

Haven't we learned this from Ray Lynch, this man who came into our midst nine years ago, that went everywhere preaching? I'll never forget, he got some little shy O.M. girl, dragged her into a five and ten cent store or Woolworth's or whatever it was, had her on the stairways giving her testimony until they got thrown out. You say, well, that's extreme. Well, maybe it is extreme.

But those of us who have won those souls to Jesus Christ this year, what finger can we point at anybody? Ray Lynch has won hundreds, hundreds. May God give us boldness in the Spirit. He has people that you can win to himself, if you'll believe him for the courage and take that step of boldness.

I'll say something that may be very, very dangerous, but I'm dead scared of literature. I wrote that manual and maybe I'll have to get buried in a coffin of unsold copies, I don't know. But I'm scared of literature.

If you think the literature is a substitute for your lips, if you think literature is some kind of magic that's going to bring people to Christ when you go back and sit in your home in your little shy closet and drink tea, you're deceived. Literature's only a tool. We can fill Britain with literature, but without Holy Spirit boldness, very few will come to Christ.

We can give everybody in the world a gospel tract and a Bible on top of it, but until we're willing to get involved in the foolishness of preaching, like the Bible talks about in the book of Acts, we're not going to see many saved. We need boldness. This movement is not desperate for more books.

It's not desperate for more clever leaders. It's not desperate for more vehicles. It's not desperate for another ship.

It's true, we need these things, but we're desperate for men who can witness personally and who can preach publicly in boldness and the power of the Holy Spirit. One such man will win more souls to Christ than 40 teams playing with their literature. There can never be a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit, and that power will bring boldness.

Uction. Ravenhill in his book says, whatever you get, get unction. It doesn't have to be noise.

Don't confuse any noise that I give out with unction. I may have a little unction, but it's probably a lot of it is noise. Praise God, he can sort it out and still use it.

Boldness. Not enough boldness. That's what's marking OM, I believe, in these days.

Then I believe there's not enough compassion when it comes down to it. That's the crunch. Not enough real love for people.

Many places on OM, you and I know it, we have to push people out in evangelism. We got to encourage them, we got to coax them, we got to preach to them. We got to set times and set schedules and jump up and down and wave banners and motivate.

Sometimes you get out for two or three hours and people want to come home. There's a lack of compassion. There's a lack of love for souls.

And if the only time you go out in evangelism is when it's organized, then I would say spiritually you must be running on a very low horsepower. Evangelism, real evangelism, should be spontaneous. You don't need any leader but the Holy Ghost.

This is why many who leave OM or some who leave OM drop evangelism as quick as they picked it up. It was all phony in the first place. OM can be a hothouse of phony evangelism.

And as long as you're in the hothouse, you play the game, you carry the tracks, you say the words. When you leave OM, you drop it like you never saw it. Hothouse evangelism.

Not spontaneous, not real, not from the Holy Spirit. So easy. Oh, the words of Alan Redpath sunk into my heart like an arrow because the Spirit of God has said the same thing to me every month this year.

You and I can get into a spiritual hothouse and we can go through the motions and pronounce the cliches, but it's not real. Oh, we've got to get on our faces and say, Lord, give me that compassion. And then we've got to believe that He has and not doubt.

Compassion. Compassion for souls. There's not enough of it.

And that compassion for souls mixed with faith is that which is going to bring forth fruit. Not because, of course, it's our efforts, but because God, in His perfect sovereignty, knows how to mix man's spirit-led action with His sovereign act of grace. And you'll never figure out how He does it.

You never will. Praying Hyde had such a passion for souls, he entered into such a covenant with God in prayer that it said of him that his heart actually moved over a little bit. And he claimed a soul a day for Jesus Christ.

Could you ask Him for one soul this year? Not enough compassion. I would say another reason we don't have this fruit like we should is not enough discipline. Too many of us think we're going to sit back, pronounce some little evangelical cliché, or say, fill me, Jesus, with your Holy Spirit, and all of a sudden it's going to lift us up.

We're going to go sweeping out to the uttermost parts of the earth. I believe the Holy Ghost will bring a holy go, but it's not by force. It's got to be love.

If you love me, keep my commandments. That puts the shoe back on your foot. If you love me, keep my commandments.

There's got to be a revolution of discipline in this movement every year, or we've had it. We've had it. What about your letter writing? Someone you led to Christ, still haven't written them? Someone you knew was on the brink of conversion, you said you were going to write them, you knew that letter might have just done the trick, just pushed them over by the help of the work of the Holy Spirit.

You never wrote it. You lost the address. No discipline, no ordered life, dropping the ball all over the place.

Let's face it, we can talk about our victories, we can write fancy prayer letters, but this movement has dropped the ball from Bangkok to Mexico City every day the last 365 days, and oftentimes through lack of discipline, lack of diligence. Little things do count. The track the man left in the toilet that led the next man who went into the toilet to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Little discipline, half of us in OM tonight, if we search your pockets, we wouldn't find any tracks. Do you dare ask me to ask you to stand, those of you who have no tracks in your pockets tonight? Oh no, don't do that, don't do that tonight. Give me another week, another week, some of you have had a year.

Little things, little things. We think it doesn't matter. What if the person that led you to Christ, what if he hadn't come or hadn't given or hadn't preached? Would you call it a little thing? What if you were in that Turkish village, in that Indian village, in that French village, and you knew that at this conference they had the gospel, the medicine, that you needed to be saved? What would you say? What would you write? Dear O Emmers, now if you have enough time next year, after you get all your other things done, and minister to your own many needs, if you perhaps could drift this way to this tiny village of Turkey, and if you could possibly spare the time to share with me a little bit of this secret of the gospel, I would very much appreciate it.

Of course, don't go out of your way, and whatever you do, don't miss any sleep or any meals, or tax yourself too much. But if you're free, do come and tell us about Jesus. Do you think that's the letter he'd write, if he knew his situation, and that you had the medicine? No, he wouldn't.

He would send a telegram, and he would say, come to my village at any cost, whatever the discipline, whatever the price, come to my village at once. I'm lost. I'm on the road to hell, and you are my only hope.

Beloved, little things make a big difference. And until you and I become disciplined in little things, we're not going to see that fruit. And I believe in the sovereignty of God.

Lastly, I would just say we don't see enough fruit, because Christ doesn't have enough of us. When Christ has more of us, he's going to do more with us. When Christ has more of us, he's going to be able to move more freely through us.

When Christ has more of us, he's going to be able to touch more lives through us. You know that you can sit through many weeks of such a conference as this, and never really surrender all to him. May God, in these days, take us into the kind of life that will bring forth much fruit.

Perhaps the only thing I could add to that is that we don't persevere enough. You know, I speak to you after I give a message like this as someone completely condemned. I've failed on every one of these points.

I wanted to give up a thousand times, but I believe that we shall reap if we faint not. Maybe you feel weak and undone at this conference. Maybe you feel like a failure.

Maybe you only see your own problems. Maybe you feel you'll never be a soul winner. You can barely carry on a conversation with a brother in Christ.

And I would just say, let's persevere. Let's persevere with our weaknesses. Let's persevere with our problems.

Let's persevere in these countries we're going to. Let's persevere in our language study. Let's persevere in our prayer life.

Let's persevere in learning how to witness more. But whatever we do, let's not give up. If God has to humble us a thousand times, praise his name for each time we go down, because every time you go down at the cross, he brings you back up.

Don't be afraid for the Lord's heavy hammer of his word upon your heart in these days, because he never takes a man down that he does not want to bring up. He never humbles you through his word and through the reality of the cross and the death of Christ without wanting to bring you up into resurrection and newness of life and fullness of joy. And he accepts you not as a soul winner, but as a failure.

Not as a great preacher, but as a weak sinner. And I believe as we humble ourselves and pray and seek his face and hunger after this life and repent of each thing he touches us about, that he will make us fruitful this coming year. But it's up to you.

This is not man centered theology. This is God centered theology, part of which is his command to man to go into all the world and preach the gospel and to bring forth fruit and fruit that does remain. You can't do it, but his Holy Spirit can.

He wants to. But he wants you to cooperate. Let us pray.

Oh, father, we thank you for your Holy Spirit that does want to work, that does want to give us fruit even in these weekends. And Lord, we pray that we may know more of this boldness of the book of Acts. Pray that we may know more of the power of the Holy Spirit.

We may know more of compassion. That we may know more of discipline. That we may know more of prayer and more of faith.

For we ask in Jesus name. Amen. Now unto him who is able to give us this power to be his witnesses, to him be all the praise.

In Jesus name. Amen. Just a moment of prayer before you get up.

In trying to do everything, we come very close to missing all of it. There are a number of movements that are being much more effective in evangelism because they concentrate on evangelism. We don't want to just concentrate on evangelism, so perhaps we're not being so effective in evangelism.

Which wouldn't be so bad unless we miss the rest of it as well. And I think one of the reasons that we are having neither the experiences that God wants us to have in discipleship and in evangelism is because we're missing this thing of friendship. And now everyone knows, at least I think they do, that we've got to

have real deep fellowship if we're going to make it a very interesting year.

Without this you become like one of the many who keeps a calendar close to his bed and checks off each day, counting the days until he'll be back home. Because the romanticism wears off in a few weeks and you just kind of wonder what God probably wants to do through you back home. I wonder if the majority of the O.M.ers don't live in the future.

Either in the past or in the future. Thinking about what we used to do back home and thinking about what we're going to do when we get back home. When we're home, of course, we think about what we're going to do when we get out to Iran or India or the ship and so forth.

Constantly living in the future instead of in the present. And this is just evangelical escapism. Might as well go on drugs for all the good that does.

Instead of really believing God to see the present really become all that he wants it to be. But the key to this, I believe, is friendship. We are quite involved and have been in the past with a church in Brussels before we went to Beirut.

And I remember after every service, we would all shake hands. Everyone in the church would shake hands. People would say, this is quite a friendly church, you know.

Everyone would shake hands and they would spend at least thirty minutes after the service with each other. And it went something like this, Sava, Sava. Everyone could have been ready to commit suicide for all we knew, but that's about all you heard.

Just this great echo of a room full of Sava. And we can become very close to this on OM. I was walking down the, coming out of the train station at Blackfriars and handing in my ticket to the ticket collector there.

And I said, well, how are you doing? And I kept right on walking. And I stopped suddenly and I realized he hadn't said fine. He hadn't said, he said, and I went back to him and I said, did you say struggling? And he said, that's right.

That's what I said, struggling. And so we went out and had a good talk together for a few minutes and we exchanged addresses and I've written him a letter. But very seldom do we even do this with each other.

How are you doing? Oh, fine. I have a good summary. Yeah, yeah.

How are you? It's good. It's fine. It's good.

So, and, and of course it's no more fellowship if you're just negative. Some of us rebel against saying fine, fine, good, good. So we say bad, bad.

How are you? Bad. But that's not fellowship either. That's just negative nonsense instead of positive nonsense.

I was reading a book which I recommend called Future Shock, which is talking about how our generation is becoming a throwaway society. Everything is becoming more and more temporary. For example, people used to live in one house all their life many years ago or in one town.

Now they live in many houses or apartments. They live in many towns. They live in many different places.

They have many different jobs. They do something and then they throw it away and they get something else. But the problem has become that we also get throwaway friends.

See, throwaway bottles, throwaway cups, throwaway jobs, throwaway places, and throwaway friends. And we begin to realize early in life that you probably won't stick with this person all your life, so don't get too committed to him, because it'll hurt too much when you have to part. And besides, he might not be faithful to you, so you don't want to be too faithful to him.

And we've actually become a generation of throwaway commitments to one another. And boy, I tell you, this was not a Christian book, but I was getting awfully convicted as I was reading this thing, and the author said, I want you to write down a list of your friends. I want you to write down a list of your friends.

And he described what he meant by friends. Those people to whom you have a lifetime commitment. Those people with whom you can share your struggles openly.

Those people who will stick with you no matter whether you decide Jesus Christ was a complete fraud, whether you go into adultery, whether you completely think they are something terrible. People who will stick with you whether you get on with their other friends or relatives or not. People you can be a failure with.

I like that. People who are ready to understand and who are willing not just to cry with you, but who are willing to wrestle with you to find real answers to the things you're struggling with. This is what we're talking about when we're talking about friends.

And I challenge you to write down, we talked about this in the leaders conference, to write down the list of the names of the friends that you have on this basis. It might be a great shock for you. That's one of them, but keep quiet during this meeting.

We'll talk about you later. Who do you have that you can think out loud with, without being afraid to say it, without having a feeling of being censored? You know, I don't like to always have to have the answer. I like to think out loud about the possibilities of the answers with someone.

Without them saying, oh no, that's not right. No, that's not biblical. No, no, I mean, oh, you can't say that.

But to be able to say, well, I wonder about this. A friend is maybe somebody you can say with, well, what if Jesus isn't really God? Well, what if, you know, I really can't understand how this could be really the word of God. Or whatever might happen to be your real doubts going on inside you, you know? I really wonder about this.

And he can absorb that with you, and he can, he can try and see with you why such thoughts have come up and, and what are the, the issues. Mickey Walker and I met in India and said, and since his visa was running out, he decided to come back with us to Beirut. And we went overland together.

Well, overland flying as well. From India to Beirut. And we were on an Indian train from Bombay to New Delhi, which is, takes as long as flying around the world twice.

And so we had hours and hours and hours to talk. And my, you know, I realized right away, well, we're gonna spend all these days together, and I'm gonna get awfully exhausted if I try and keep up the image of the big O.M. leader and so forth, so I'm gonna just tell him who I am right off the bat. And he told me

who he was.

And we had such a tremendous time together. Wow, just, just being real with one another. And instead of being depressive, it was exhilarating.

Because people know what you're like anyway, without you telling them, because they know you're probably like them. And the Bible tells everybody, lets out the secret for everybody, what we're really like. That everything we do is mixed with selfish motives.

And so why not be like everyone knows we are anyway? Some of you know Brother Frank Buss, who was just contributing. And some of you might think he's a rough old bear, if you don't know him very well. But I can, I can tell you that we just practically ran.

When I came up from Beirut, he came over from Belgium, we practically ran up to each other to get an opportunity to go out and talk and share and have friendship together. Now I've got some friends in this work, people I've worked with longer than I have worked with Frank, people who are other leaders, people who might even be more consistent Christians, who perhaps haven't, who have perhaps been a little more gracious, who perhaps aren't any threat to me at all. But most of these people are closed boxes.

Closed boxes. I heard an African speak at a conference one time, a young man from Kenya. And he said, you know, the missionaries always want us to be open boxes.

And they always want to know how we're doing, what our sins are, whether we're getting victory in our Bible study, everything. They're always asking us all these questions. They want us to be open boxes.

But they're closed boxes themselves. And I wonder how many OM leaders are guilty of this. And I wonder how many of us are guilty of this with one another.

We're closed boxes. And then we wonder why we don't have a more exhilarating year. Why don't we have real fellowship? Well, basically because we're afraid.

We're just plain afraid. I contend that everyone in this room, without exception, is emotionally wounded. And because of our experiences through life, we have become more and more careful what we let people know about ourselves, because we've been wounded when we've been real, when we've been honest.

And so we are very, very calculating on how much we let known about ourselves. For example, I can remember when I was twelve years old. And there was a certain group of fellows who, they were the real in fellows.

And I wanted like everything to break into this little clique. And I remember telling them some things that I really thought would really get me in. It wasn't very nice.

It wasn't very repeatable. But instead of them accepting me, they just laughed and mocked me. And it was a terrifically traumatic experience.

And I just shut right off from then on out. Oh, I didn't do like some of you have done, become a timid little person and hide in the corner. I went on to become the leader of the school, began to get everything I wanted, began to use people, exploit people.

But I could never be real again. And though I was, learned how to make enough jokes and enough noise to be popular as a thing in a party, you know, like a record could be popular, I had no friends, no real friends. And it hasn't become so easy to have those kinds of real friends.

Even since becoming a Christian, we score and other people for the evangelical mask. I hear many of you talking about the people back in the church for their evangelical mask. But how many of us are wearing masks here? We talk about others, but we don't change.

And yet it's so obvious that we're all in the same boat and sinking and so obvious that we're all hurt. It's so obvious that that we're not being the disciples that we want to be, that we're not succeeding in the fruits of the spirit and all these other things that we want to be. So why not just be real with one another? One of my friends here got a letter recently criticizing him rather devastatingly.

Various things he'd done while leading a certain OM area. And of course it hurt him quite a lot, but he decided he wasn't going to be defensive and he decided he was going to write them back and say, look, you don't know half the story. Let me tell you some other things I did wrong and let me tell you some other things I'm quite ashamed about and wish hadn't happened.

And I'd like to see their faces when they get that letter. I'll tell you a secret. I shouldn't be much of a secret if you have half a brain.

The coordinators are all discussing you. And because we're trying to get God's mind at who's going to work together best and how who's going to work together happily in various situations. So you may not think that spiritual, but we have, we feel we have to discuss you.

We do pray too. But it's very easy to know those who are trying to impress us. So easy.

And, uh, we read their reasons for coming on OM. Oh, they want to turn India upside down. They want to submit to the nationals.

They want to just be a blessing wherever they go. They're willing to do anything. Yeah.

And our eyebrows begin to go up and say, now this guy looks like trouble. And, uh, because, uh, it doesn't seem very real. And we, we look up the summer report on this guy, find out that when his leader asked him to stack some books for 10 minutes, he went into depression and self-pity and, uh, that he isn't exactly being honest with himself, uh, much less other people.

And so I plead with you. I plead with you. If you don't want to be on a team this year, that's going to be a disappointment.

It's going to be a great letdown. Learn to be real. Learn to share your real self, not going into hours of introspection and, uh, uh, self-criticism and so forth, but just as we've tried to say in other sessions, uh, having a desire to change, but being ready to keep open before the other brothers and sisters and getting their help, getting their help in letting God make you the kind of person that you really want to be and that he really wants you to be.

It doesn't have to be a disappointing year. It could be the most exhilarating year that you've ever known in your life, but it's going to depend on whether you can be a friend, a real friend, and whether you can share your life with, with others. This isn't normal for most of us.

It goes against the grain of many of our cultures. I think the British find this, uh, maybe more than anyone, but I think we've all got that same hunger in our heart to have a close relationship so that we can really have iron sharpening iron and seeing God use us to mold one another and become truly beautiful people in his sight. Let's pray together.

Father, we know these things are impossible with man, but all things are possible with God. We pray that you would so break through in our sealed up lives that we might be able to become a friend to sinners because we know what a sinner's like and that our name on our team might be Mr., Mrs., or Miss Encouragement this year. We might be the ones to whom people love to come to because they find help.

God, rescue us, deliver us from being any kind of evangelistic machine or island who can laugh and joke and make us a lot of noise but never let anybody really close us, close to us. We ask these things in the authority of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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