

Good Communications

by George Verwer

Good communication is essential for unity in the church, and we must be aware of the enemies of good communication, such as rigid thinking, super spirituality, and lack of communication.

Duration: 46:25

Scripture: Acts 15:36, Romans 12:16, 1 Corinthians 2:11, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Ephesians 4:3, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses four enemies that can hinder our communication and relationships. The first enemy is faulty communication, where what we say can have different meanings to different people. The second enemy is pride, which can lead to arrogance and a lack of humility in our interactions. The third enemy is impatience and irritability, particularly towards new recruits or those who may not have the same level of understanding as us. The fourth enemy is a lack of understanding and empathy, where we may not consider that others may not have had the same experiences or knowledge as us. The speaker emphasizes the importance of working on these enemies and highlights a biblical example from Acts chapter 15.

Transcript

Can you turn to Acts chapter 15? In Acts chapter 15, we find a very interesting incident. Sometimes the church seems to forget, or maybe it doesn't. Verse 36, some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city, where we have preached the word of the Lord.

Let's see how they do. That's a normal thing. We send people out to visit O.M. teams in the summer.

See how they're doing. Visit the O.M. bases and teams during the year. That's one of Viv Thomas' ministries.

See how they're doing. Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought it not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

I'm sure your translation sounds a little smoother than this old English. Basically, Mark was somewhat of a deserter, having left Paul's previous team. So when Barnabas, great son of compassion, really Paul's senior, wanted to bring Mark, they had a communication problem.

Isn't that amazing? Two great men of God, great heroes, were all patterning our life after these people, and they had a communication problem. Verse 39, and the contention was so sharp between them, oh, if we had only had a movie, that they departed asunder, one from the other. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed on to Cyprus.

They were in the ships back then, as you probably are aware. Can we have that in a modern translation? Verse 39, and there arose such a sharp disagreement, that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away. Any other words for contention and disagreement? What does your Bible say? Matilda, is that English? Sharp disagreement? Bob? It's in Greek, it's from the Greek Scholar Department.

Anybody else have some light on that word, contention? Well, I think we've got enough. Paul chose Silas, plan B. Paul chose Silas and departed being commended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria, Cilicia, confirming the churches.

And of course, we know the result of that particular trip. Now, you can go right back into Genesis, right through the Book of Revelation, and you can make an amazing study on the whole area of communication. A high percentage of our difficulties in our own ministry, on our own teams, are in the area of communication.

And this is something that I think we need to talk about far more often, and study, and read about. And I am still a learner, I can assure you. I had the privilege of going through David Cummings' tapes a couple of years ago.

That was basically on communications to our prayer partners, to our churches. That actually is not my greatest burden, and that's not particularly what's on my heart tonight. It's an important area, unlimited scope for improvement.

But, you know, if a group of people over here are not interested in getting involved with OM, you know, fine. That's not my biggest concern. But if they're fighting among themselves and dividing, that is what really puts an ache in my heart.

God has given OM, it's frightening, a very important ministry in building unity in the body of Christ. I don't know if you can imagine the impact of the ship in this area. As they go from port to port in these cities, where the church is so divided, even in Canada, there are people that said, if this group is on the committee, we are not coming onto the committee.

And let me just say something that's very important, especially for so many of you who are new. Don't be naive about disunity. Don't go praying some flippant little prayer that all the Christians are going to all be united together, until you study a little bit of what's involved.

Because you are talking about something far more difficult than sending the Dallas Cowboys to play cricket on the moon. Christians are of a tremendously difficult and different viewpoint on many, many issues, and they are not small issues. Some of the things I touch on in this little talk may be small issues that can be overcome.

But many of the issues that are dividing people and dividing churches are not small issues. Just like oftentimes we are very naive about some of the struggles people have in marriage. I've been listening to John Stott today on marriage.

I've been going through his lectures on the contemporary school of Christianity. Think of all the money and time they pay to go to that school. I've got all the tapes for nothing.

I have it right in my office while I'm trying to shuffle around my papers. And his lecture on homosexuality is brilliant. Just brilliant.

And you know, he can speak on the subject because he's a single man. And the people who are crusading for, you know, homosexuals to be able to do anything they want and get married and all that, and the strong push that says, look, how can you deny a man or a woman the privilege of sex just because, you know, they are homosexual? And of course this is based on the fact that they don't think anybody can live on the planet without sex. And of course he, as a single man who's lived in purity and reality, points out that it is possible to have a fulfilling life without sex.

Or without sexual intercourse because sex is a bigger thing than sexual intercourse. I don't want to get into talking about those tapes because it's so great and so vast and it's not specifically what I'm sharing about. I wanted to read something from this book by Swinlow.

It said, John Wesley and George Whitfield were good friends in their earlier years. Wesley, having begun his outdoor preaching ministry at Whitfield's Encouragement, as time went on, agreed with Whitfield's leaning more heavily toward Calvinism, his younger friend's Arminianism. When Whitfield died, Wesley was asked if he expected to see Whitfield in heaven.

In exaggerated but honest respect, he said no. He will be so near the throne of God that men like me will never even get a glimpse at him. Though differing, they did not lose their sense of oneness in Christ.

It has been my observation that well-meaning but narrow-minded evangelicals in this generation have spent far too much time camping on a few differences and thereby opening our ranks to disunity and petty infighting and not enough time accentuating the vast number of things that link us together. And the result has been weakness rather than strength. A divided, splintered, fractured body of Christian cripples instead of that mighty army of cracked troops he had just quoted from Onward Christian Soldiers marching as to war.

What a powerful state. Well, I don't think we need to go into, because we're limited in time, great proofs about the divisions in the body. I'd rather share some of the areas where probably Satan is trying to hinder us in our own unity or things in our lives which will bring disunity.

One of the great problems as we've emphasized a number of times this year is when you leave OM and you try to go back to a so-called normal secular situation and to try to communicate what you've learned on OM. The problem is not the lack of sincerity generally. The problem is a lack of communication skills or other things which I'm going to touch on right now.

I think you know by now one of my favorite verses, it's not a favorite in some ways, is where it says in Corinthians let's not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Let's not be naive. And let us understand some of the strategies, some of the methods that Satan has used to try to bring disunity as he brought disunity between Paul and Barnabas, as he brought disunity between Whitefield and Wesley, though it was broken down somewhere later on.

You know the greatest tragedy in Methodism is that when the pressure came after Wesley's death, though he predicted it before he died, greater disunity came. And of course Methodism is a growing segment of

Evangelical Methodists, but the Methodist church in some places, if Wesley has to look at it from up there, it must be something. I don't know how he handles Heaven.

I guess he can. Maybe he can't see it. That sounds a little more sensible.

What are some of the enemies of reality in this thing of communication? Just a few that I would say, if you work on some of these things in your own life and avoid either one extreme or the other, it will help you on your team right now, the next couple of weeks. We don't want the next couple of weeks to be miserable for anybody here. I know you feel we emphasize brokenness, but we are not trying to arrange your situation so that you can get all broken up.

We haven't purposely put somebody on your team or living in your flat who's a pain in the neck so that you could learn the crucified life. God handles that. We're actually wanting to arrange things so things can go smoothly.

What are some of the things that often bring disunity in the body, on our own teams, in the church? I've listed number one, not because of its importance, but just to get started. Rigid thinking. That's very much linked with pride and prejudice.

Pride and prejudice. Last year, we had to make a statement to our leaders, especially to some other people from different countries, to take it a little easy on the Americans. The Americans being the sort of big nation with big TV coverage and their mistakes are greatly publicized.

With Ronald Reagan not being the most popular person in Europe and a lot of other things, there were quite a few things being stated last summer that really hurt some of the Americans who were on the teams. And that's sad because the history of OM is a history of Americans generally trying to esteem other nationalities and to, in fact, step back and let the Europeans or Asians take the lead. This is almost policy within OM.

It doesn't always work. But I've noticed it's especially been hard lately for any dear soul from South Africa. Everybody now suddenly thinks they're great advisors on South African politics.

Most people don't know what they're talking about. And I can tell you God is working in South Africa. One of the things God is doing in South Africa is sending out workers.

Workers are more important than political solutions, though we actually believe in law. We know what our calling is. And we have been having South Africans coming on OM for 20 some years, some very outstanding people.

Somebody once really hit me heavy that we didn't have any black South Africans. It is a very complicated situation. They are not easily granted visas.

But how many Polish people do we get? How many Saudis do we get? How many Soviets do we get? There are dozens and dozens of countries whose injustice is just as great as the injustice of South Africa. All nations have injustice. If they're leading the pack right now, let God or somebody else decide it, not me.

It's interesting that there's an exhibition now in London that people think is the greatest thing going right now, just finished. The Saudi Arabian exhibition. Would you like me to give a lecture on injustice in Saudi Arabia? Did you receive one of the leaflets that some of the dissidents of Saudi Arabia were giving out at

the entrance? One of my co-workers put one on my desk.

It's very interesting. I think personally, as Christians, we should have had a Jericho march around that arena. If I didn't have so many other things going on, I would have organized it.

Because they want all this freedom in Britain and we cannot even have one believer, not one Bible, not one church in that country. And nobody says anything about it, including Amnesty International. The whole world, brothers and sisters, is filled with injustice.

It's not just this country or that country. The media is what affects our thinking. We think the way we're told to think to some degree, and it's highly complex.

It gets very emotional, especially when we see some of the pictures. And, of course, they show us the pictures we want to have, and it's all very short. And it really takes a lot of prayer for a movement like OM, and especially with the ship Dulles headed in that direction.

I tell you, it needs a lot of prayer. But I have this burden that somehow on all sides, we battle prejudice in our own hearts, in our own minds. We do have prejudice about nationalities.

Why don't we just be honest? German people have prejudice about Swiss, Swiss about Germans, Norwegians about Swedes. A Norwegian told me once the only advantage the Swedes have are good neighbors. Every nation, every group has its prejudice.

You know, I can honestly say that I just so love the Russian people. I may not be a hundred percent delivered, I don't know what that is, but my trips to the Soviet Union, my studies of the Soviet people, I just love those people. I see right beyond their political viewpoint.

And I love the Polish people. And I love the people of all these different nationalities. And I could, in some cases, care less what nationality it is.

And certainly when he tells me his nationality, I'm not going to immediately list in my mind five things I don't like about that nationality. That is unchristian. I heard such a great challenge, I was listening to the tape twice, by John Starr, who brought out that nationality and he said nationalism in its more extreme form, he said nationalism in general, but I think he was referring to it in an extreme form, maybe in a different definition than I do, is sinful and wrong.

And I will tell you, I think he's right. Our loyalty is to the body of Christ, our call is a revolution of love, and we must slowly be set free from pride and prejudice, and this means we are going to have to learn how to love and handle people who are filled with prejudice. When you meet someone who is a real racist, you have to learn to love him as well.

And I found this a problem, after I got a long time ago more free from racism, which I never thought I had, but I had it in its more subtle forms, I became really uptight when I met a racist, or someone I thought was a racist. But you see, with God, love has no barriers. And when you meet someone who I have a real struggle still to this day with the Orthodox Jews.

It's a psychological reaction. I see them in the airports, little curls, the hats, the black, I don't know what it is or how I pick this up, but I get a negative feeling about these Orthodox Jews. Reform Jews, Jews I love, I love their noses, great, but the curls, the black hats, you know, and I've walked around Jerusalem where

I've heard of these people coming out of their houses stoning, you know, Christians, and burning their cars, and they are probably the strongest enemies in the world to the Gospel.

I mean, these people are very, very, very anti-Christian. They have written books that say things about Jesus Christ that you wouldn't want to even look at. But I saw the privilege of seeing that little film, *The Chosen*.

It's based on a great novel. I'm not a great novel reader. I have to read so much that if I want a novel, I'm going to go see it in the cinema.

But I tell you, I saw that film, *The Chosen*, and my heart just broke for the Orthodox Jews. In many ways, they are very beautiful people. When you get beyond the first impressions, beyond our prejudices, of course, we legitimately disagree.

I mean, I've met one on the train in Belgium who believes that the modern Israel is a greater enemy to Judaism than Hitler. You know, I think he was really extreme. He was a prophet, and he literally tried to disciple me right on the spot.

And this guy just went for me. And while Leon was with me, I saw I was safe. Amazing.

Divisions, actually, between these people. So rigid thinking. It's not easy because as Christians, we are Orthodox and biblical Christians.

We have definite doctrines. And again, forgive me for mentioning his name too much, but it seems to me that John Stott is a terrific example of someone absolutely Orthodox. And of course, some people in the world would accuse him of having rigid thinking.

But he's Orthodox, he's evangelical, he's biblical, he's very strong-minded. And yet, as you listen to him, and I have for many years, you read his books, there's that love, there's that compassion, there's that balance, there's that willingness to listen to other people. And I believe that he, and men like him, are people that we can learn from.

So let's beware that number one enemy of communication, rigid thinking coupled together with pride and prejudice, realizing of course often on a nitty-gritty, you know, on a team level, the area of pride, it touches far more basic things. But we don't have time to get into that right now. The second enemy of reality in our relationship building especially as we try to build a relationship with different churches, is super spirituality.

Now you may think, well, oh, I'm just so balanced now, we don't have that anymore, our problem's the opposite, no spirituality. Well, probably it's somewhere in the middle. But let me just tell you that when you go back to your home church, some people, even emotionally without realizing it, they'll be waiting for you.

And they'll be waiting for you to say something that gives the idea that you feel you're better than they are. And to break this down is not easy. One way is to take a legitimate interest in what they are doing and in their ministry and to never communicate that the missionary is, you know, God's highest calling, especially the likes of us, shouldn't have too much problem in this area.

Super spirituality has caused terrific grief on our teams. Places like India. Places like, well, the ships.

Different places. It just comes in a most surprising way. I think of the terrific emphasis in scripture on humbling ourselves, on humility.

As you know, Eugenia Price has been an influence in my life. She says if you're sitting with someone over a meal and they say something that really just puts you off and you want to, you know, really put them immediately right, she says maybe one thing you could do is just humbly realize, well, maybe they have never had any light on that side. This is a great problem that some of us grow older.

How many of you are over 35? Over 35. That's it. Quite a few of us.

Some of us are over 40. Over 45. Moving on.

And as we get older, there is a danger that we are impatient with the new recruits. We think that they are going to learn in the summer conference what has taken us 10 years. Or just, not necessarily on OM, just 10, 15 years in life.

This is why often there is friction between younger and older people. I sometimes just presume anybody knows how to go down the post office and send a telex or make a long distance call to Mongolia. I mean the things I've presumed on with some of the people that have worked for me.

Very intelligent people, all of them of course. Brought some very interesting side lights in the OM program. Beware of super spirituality in all of its subtle forms.

And as you go back to your church, try to be a good listener. What's going on there? Before you open your big combustion chamber or whatever, try to find out what's going on there. Number three.

The third enemy is just the lack of communication. Faulty communication. It's played havoc in my marriage, I tell you.

It's a miracle that I survived 27 years of marriage because what I would never do on a team, I wouldn't be so dumb to do on a team or in the office. I do, you know. And I read a book about this.

It seems to be quite a common phenomenon. A businessman is holding his whole business together. He's a manager.

He comes home and he's a complete twit. How can it be? And this is me. I'm still working on it.

And there's a fair amount of failure. And one of the reasons is because I have never developed a great enough gift in the area of listening. Listening.

Listen to people. Perhaps this is a part of the danger of life in the fast lane. I thank God for this book by Gordon McDonald, *Ordering Your Private World*.

Every time we put it on the table and we offer it, all the copies go. It's obviously there are quite a few people around that would like to order their private world. And if that's the only book you get exposed to in your time on OM, it is worth coming to Europe for.

Because that is a brilliant book. Go over to the book shop if you have it in stock. Use your private money or make a deal with Christine and somehow get a hold of *Ordering Your Private World*.

I've only seen a few Canadian films. One was brilliant. It was a little risqué.

I saw it one night when I won a great victory over pornography and thought this was a great victory. It was a clean film, sort of. How many of you have ever seen a real Canadian film? Raise your hand.

But it was about a Jewish fellow reared in the back streets of Ontario. His mother was a prostitute. She did a strip tease in front of all the local Jews.

Incredible. That was the only bad scene in the film. Of course, I closed my eyes.

He, of course, broke from his Orthodox Judaism. He fell in love with this daughter of a top diplomat, Canadian government leader. It was just a brilliant film about communication problems.

I learned a lot through that. That's when my wife was broken down in a motorhome. I had to fly on to Ontario.

I had this Monday night free. I thought I was doing great. I went to buy my son a magazine in this newsstand.

There was one of these pornoholics. An old guy. I walked behind him and just saw over his shoulder.

I tell you, God gave me great grace to get out of there and get into the movie. It wasn't a total escape. Faulty communication.

We're all so different. Often, often, what we say has different meaning to different people. That happens all the time right in this room.

Right in this room. And we need to work on it. Number four, the fourth enemy, of course, is absolutely basic.

Another one of my greatest problems, impatience and irritability. Do you ever find that you get a major victory over a really heavy problem? You know, doctors told you you've got terminal cancer, you go out of there, praise the Lord, I'm going to heaven, terminal cancer, and you lose the keys to your car. The whole day is destroyed because you can't find the key to the car and you remember that you put one, you know, you buy these little cases, little magnetic cases, you knew you put one under there.

You went under there to look for the key to the car and you remember that you put one under there under there and you under there that you under there and you remember that you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you remember put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you that you and you remember that you put one under there and you remember that you put one under there and you put one under there and you that you put one under there put one under there and you that you does that. The world does that. Christian secular rock artists had songs about that.

The Christian, because of Christ, is able to forgive at the moment of impact. Whether apology ever takes place. I had a very moving experience a few days ago.

The first director of STL, Paul Ingram. A man who didn't last very long. Well, he'd been backslidden for 15 years.

His marriage broke. He got remarried, came back to the Lord. Second wife came to the Lord and then died of cancer.

And on Sunday, I met his third wife. He now has children from three families. And he came to me at the church meeting Sunday morning up in Sunderland and he said, you know, I want to apologize.

This is 24 years later. I want to apologize for the way I left STL. And I thought and thought and thought and thought.

As far as I know, I've never had anything against Paul Ingram. He did let me down. He left in a hurry and a huff.

I knew he was under pressure from his wife. But, you know, it would have been really daft for me to hold that against him for 24 years until he came to me and apologized last Sunday morning. Now that apology helps him.

He gets that off his heart. Fine. But I had nothing to forgive.

Nothing to forgive. We had a beautiful time of fellowship. The apology is water above the glass.

Jesus fills the glass through his blood, through the miracle work in your heart. And if the person apologizes, it puts it right and he or she should. And there are cases when you have to even talk to them about it.

I'm not excluding that. That's water above the glass. Your glass is already filled by the love of God.

I tell you, it's a beautiful way to live. You never go to bed with anything against anybody. You may have memories.

We can't liquidate memories where people have hurt us. And we have to learn to deal with memories. We have to cast them on the Lord.

They may come back five minutes later. Cast them again. It's like fishing, fly fishing.

You just keep throwing it out. Eventually you might even catch something. So forgiveness is so absolutely basic.

And you know another key emotion that brings a lot of chaos and a lot of division is this whole thing of rejection. You know, you can pray for me. I've got a lot of struggles, a list of all.

But I really find it hard when I may have 15 positive experiences with a person through personal fellowship, through letters, through serving them, through loving them, through being at their wedding, through writing, all 15 or 20 things that have all been positive. The person has been encouraged, they believe I'm their friend, and all that kind of thing. And then one negative thing and the whole thing's finished.

I will tell you this has almost driven me to despair in the past few years. But God has given grace because I know Satan is such a specialist at using negative things. We all want to build relationships.

We all want friends. He who wants friends must show himself friendly. And if you're going to develop relationships, you've got to dwell on the positive.

And when there is a legitimate negative, maybe your best friend fails to show up at your wedding. Maybe somebody fails to show up and give you flowers at your funeral, of course. That's usually the wife.

The wife gets upset then. Don't, please, don't write off a lifetime friendship, even a one-year friendship, on the basis of one bad experience. It may be a heavy experience.

You may have felt rejection. But to, you know, to take that which has been taking time, you know how long it takes to build relationships. You know how long it takes to build marriages, to build the kind of relationships that OM has right across the world.

Our prayer partners, our churches. And we have situations in which one negative thing, I remember this dear pastor, I was working with him, visited him, preached in his church, loved him, and his daughter went on OM. It was a Pentecostal church.

She was a Pentecostal girl. I don't know what happened. Went to Italy.

Somehow she started feeling inhibited about her tongue speaking. She went back, that got out to her father that OM was not, you know, so positive about tongues. And we got a letter, we are through with Operation Mobilization.

I will tell you, I didn't give up on that one. And I got him on the phone and I just, I shared, look, we have people coming on OM all the time that are getting the gift of tongues. We may have others who come on OM, they meet different kinds of people and maybe they lose, I don't know.

I said often these problems, these problems aren't because they're coming on OM, they're because they're people. People change. Most of the hyper Pentees, forgive the expression, were once brethren.

Yeah, the group that shoots the Pentees the most. And many of the people who are anti-Pentecostal, or at least perhaps have chosen a little more non-Pentecostal road, many of them came right out of the Pentecostal church. So I don't think we can blame OM because someone, you know, has this or that experience.

Well, when I talked to that man on the phone, you know, he backpedaled and he wrote me again. He said, we are praying for OM. And I recently went and saw him again and had a terrific time of prayer with him and his wife.

The church is linked with us. But you know, you don't always get that opportunity. They don't always write you a letter.

They don't always tell you what's on their mind. They just drop you. People are like that.

We must get used to it. And I don't think the average person, maybe even Arnold M, realizes what we are up against as leaders trying to maintain long-term relationships. We have relationships with prayer partners, relationships with those who are giving, relationships with the churches, relationships with new people, relationships with ex-OMers, 37,000 of them, relationships with new OMers.

And then we have relationships with each other. If OM is to continue, we are going to have to become a little more relaxed with each other. We're not going to have as much time with each other as the work continues to grow.

And when something goes wrong or we don't get a birthday card or we hear a bit of gossip, we somehow have to believe the best and say, you know, 15 years we've been linked, 15 years or five years or two years we labored together, we're not going to get one even nasty experience. We're not going to allow that

to hinder a long-standing relationship. And that should especially be true when people leave.

The time of transition when you leave in movement, if you've been in it for a number of years, is a very vulnerable position. I could write a book on it. There's a lot of different emotion involved.

And we've had people that during three or four years on OM had no really big problems, but in the transition to leave, a root of bitterness came in. Maybe we didn't give them enough money or maybe we had a case where they were insulted because we tried to give them too much. I mean, there are so many rules in this transition period.

And I just pray that as some of you leave OM, they're only short-term, that you'll realize that the great unity is not whether you're in OM or not. The great unity is that we are in Christ. Don't sit back developing a root of bitterness, pouting, moaning, or thinking, why don't they write me a letter? I heard George Brower phones people, he has never phoned me.

Don't do it. Believe the best. Probably if an OM leader knew that you had a particular need, he might be on your doorstep, you know, within the day.

OM is a movement to some degree, I'll be very honest, that has run out of energy. Too many people, too many commitments, too many problems. It's all tied in with the church, it's all tied in with the environment we're living in, and we want to do so much more.

We don't have the energy. And I tell you, if I hadn't learned my own limitations in ministering to people, my marriage would have broke, I would have broke, and who knows what else could have happened. Beware of that subtle danger that comes in when we're going through a period of sensing that we're rejected, or forgotten, or not loved, because it's one of Satan's greatest booby traps.

And then lastly, I've just put here a very practical thing that brings disunity and confusion, it's just a lack of discipline and organization. I hope I can put some of my Herman posters up, but I'm sure that is not going to resolve the problem. Vera puts a new one up for me each week.

Each one of them hits me on the nose. We cannot separate the practical from the spiritual. And I will tell you, if you want to pray that OM can go forward in this next decade, pray that God gives us a few more spirit-filled administrators.

Spirit-filled people who do not consider paperwork as second-rate, because paper is often the key to people. And by the way, you can't get married without a piece of paper. And I want to thank every one of you who is committed to administration, committed to organization, committed to oiling relationships.

Maybe a memo, maybe a book, maybe a phone call, maybe a telex. Do you think that sending somebody a check on their wedding is a secondary thing? Then you don't understand very much about people. And yet we have seen in OM many, many cases, things like weddings, funerals, different things that are very important in people's lives are just considered as a very secondary thing.

I tell you, if a friend of yours invites you to come to his wedding, and especially to the wedding and reception, you better consider that a pretty big thing. Maybe it's not true in your culture, maybe there's some culture I don't know much about. And I tell you, when a friend dies and the funeral takes place, though it may be a few hundred miles away, you better get on your bus or your bicycle and try to get there.

And just at least let that widow know. Things are incredibly important sometimes for people, you know, in the outside. Those of us as Christians, all that we're trying to do, we may not think that's so important.

Or maybe that's something we learn as we get older. We do change as we get older. Discipline, organization, keeping the phone numbers, being faithful to what you're asked to do, just so incredible.

They say in marriage, oftentimes, problems come because of disorganization, mismanagement in the area of money, keeping of the car, all kinds of pressures that come in. And then lastly, enemy of reality, I've written down extremism and activism. This is one of the dangers of OM, we become hyperactive.

I'm still wrestling for balance. If you don't think I've changed a little bit, you obviously haven't followed me very closely. And let me tell you, you'll not be able to become less active without being criticized.

Not in a movement like OM. It's not possible. You're not going to be able to pick up a set of golf clubs in the middle of the day when everybody else is working, walk off to the golf course without people talking.

Not if anybody knows you. And you've got to, if you're gonna survive, and if you're gonna put into practice what Gordon McDonald says in his book, because one thing is to say it, another thing is to go try to practice it, among God's hyperactive, tending towards judgmental people. I heard recently right here, somebody was telling an ex-OMer that he was going on a vacation, on a holiday, and this ex-OMer said, Oh, OM has really changed, hasn't it? Well, I wish I were there, because I can tell you, for at least 20 years, we've been trying to get people to go on holidays.

For a long time, I was a very poor example. There was a brand of schizophrenia going on, and a lot of people never felt free about it. But certainly in the last few years, it has actually be almost a written policy now.

And most OM people, when they go on holidays and vacations, apart from getting some rest, which they need, and some relaxation, a little fun, most of them actually do very profitable things. They may read, they may listen to tapes, they may actually show a little love to their wife, probably the greatest need in my life. And I'm going on a vacation starting tomorrow morning.

Well, extremism comes out in many different forms. Extremism from a phlegmatic is almost completely different from extremism in a choleric. And probably the fact that I'm choleric in temperament has caused much grief to OM over the years.

You better look at Dale Roton. Better follow Jerry Davey or Jonathan McCrosty. Peter Mayne, he once told me he wished he had a little more of my roar.

He does roar occasionally. But if you're not a choleric, don't pattern your life after a choleric temperament. You'll get ill.

What can set him free and make him happy will drive you right around the bend. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this great book, Dropping Our Guard, Dropping Your Guard.

And we want to increase in our love for one another. We want to increase in our communications. We want to understand one another better, different nationalities, different backgrounds, different denominations, different temperaments, different ages.

And yet, Father, you don't die when there's a shortage of personnel. You don't die when we make mistakes. You don't abandon us when we don't see the breakthrough the first time.

We think of our work in Turkey and Afghanistan. We think of the setbacks in the Muslim world, the setbacks in India. Father, we believe that any setback that we have to face in September or October, we can use as a stepping stone to learn better ways to do things, to learn more about ourselves, to improvise, to pull back and regroup.

But Father, we pray that whatever may happen, we will not allow disunity to get in. We will not allow judgmentalism and censoriousness and harshness to get in. That we will be quick to repent and yet at the same time forgive the offender before he even repents or apologizes.

Lead us if we're supposed to talk to somebody about their sin. Because we know that's another chapter in the Book of Unity, a chapter of openness and honesty.

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