

Gv4342 Gv Discouragement in Leadership

by George Verwer

George Verwer shares his personal testimony of dealing with discouragement in Christian leadership and emphasizes the importance of perseverance and faith in overcoming challenges.

Duration: 56:02

Scripture: Lamentations 3:23, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Discouragement"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the high percentage of people who responded to the challenge of lifetime missions. He urges the audience to offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God and not conform to the pattern of the world. The speaker acknowledges that Satan will counterattack those who have made a commitment to serve God, but encourages them to remain faithful. He emphasizes the importance of positive thinking and renewing one's mind with thoughts that are true, pure, and lovely. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the Christian journey is a battle and calls for unity and perseverance in the face of hardships and trivialities.

Transcript

Dealing with discouragement in Christian leadership. Now, I'm sure some of you have heard me speak on discouragement. I usually read Habakkuk chapter 3, which I'm not going to do now, and speak on some very basic things about discouragement, the message I've been preaching the most in the last two years, I think, anyway.

The response is amazing. So many of God's people are discouraged. It's just unbelievable.

And I was in a Christian union, and I gave this message, and I don't always give an invitation, but at the end of the meeting, I just said, I sense some of you are really discouraged, and you need to respond to this, you need to believe God, to take you into encouragement, and to stand against this in your life. And I asked them to stand, it was only a small meeting. Many of the meetings I speak at are just small meetings, not big, huge meetings.

And so many stood, I don't remember the number. And it does seem that this is one of the most subtle, almost overused, methods of the enemy, to get us discouraged. And I found in ministering to Christian leaders, that often they're discouraged in their ministry.

Pastors, so often I found, discouraged. Missionaries. I'm sure many of you have a wrong idea about a missionary.

You've got him written up as some spiritual giant, up at five in the morning, having his two and a half hour quiet time, launching out to plant a church, tearing down the strongholds of the enemy, so by the end of the first month, the first church is born, and he can move on, and plant another one. But you know, many of the missionaries I've met, over the years, are discouraged people. They've tried hard, they've dreamed dreams that didn't come to pass, they've prayed prayers that didn't get answered, they couldn't get on with their fellow missionaries, that's always a real encouragement, isn't it? And they got somehow discouraged.

I've met them on the field that said, I said, well why don't you go home? And they said, there's nothing I can do home. This is my career, I'm a professional missionary. I can't do anything home.

That discourages me, I'll tell you. You know, this evening is a special evening for many of us, because it is the first evening of the conference, which now has become a series of conferences, and my mind goes back to September 1961. That's a long way, some of you weren't born.

How many of you weren't born yet, September of 1961? Well, some of you are older than you look. You say, what was going on in September of 1961? Well, I had just come back from the Soviet Union. You all know my good friend God Smuggler, Brother Andrew, he sometimes comes to these meetings, speaks to us.

And you know, of course, that tonight you've got Brother George, God Smuggler. The summer of 61 I went into the Soviet Union, no need to tell the story, you probably heard it. Due to my own stupidity, Roger Malsted was with me.

Due to my own stupidity, we got arrested by the Soviet secret police. It wasn't due to my stupidity that Roger was with me. The English language is a tricky language.

And we had come back, and just the idea of OM was born on that trip. You know, you've heard the top of the tree experience. We got back in Spain where a group of Spaniards had left good secular jobs to throw their life commitment in with this unknown skinny American who had arrived from Mexico.

And we went with these Spaniards out to the mountains of Madrid and we prayed as to whether this Operation Mobilization vision that we had just received in the day of prayer after we got arrested and thrown out of the Soviet Union, whether this was really from God. And these Spaniards, it was a day of prayer and fasting, they felt it was and they were willing to be the leaders even though this kind of work could not be done in Spain at that time. In Spain we were working incognito.

We were distributing literature at night, we were sending literature out through the post, we were working through all the telephone books, working in secret meetings, addressing envelopes, driving around the country, using the cheap benzine of the American Air Force personnel to get literature all over the country. But a little group had arrived from North America and Mexico. In this group there were such unique characters as Dale Roton and Paul Troper and others.

Most in that first group are all on the mission field today, most of them in Europe or Asia. And so we had our first September conference. 1961, every September, every year, this is where I've been.

And it's so overwhelming for me that God has been so gracious these 22, 23 years. I can remember prayer meetings in that first conference as if they happened last year. I remember Big Dick Dreyer.

I remember out in front of this building in Spain just praying and crying out to God for world evangelism. And we have literally seen hundreds of those prayers prayed in Spain in 1961, hundreds of those prayers literally answered these past two decades. And as we come into this conference, we come with a spirit of thanksgiving for all that God has done these past decades.

Our big thing in OM, I can assure you, is not looking back. We are looking forward. But if you look into the Word of God, especially in the Psalms, you will see biblical challenge that we should give thanks for the great things that God has done.

And when I think of how feeble we were, in some ways how extreme we were, how naive we were, as we met there in Madrid, only a few dozen of us, a few dozen, and then how God worked as Paul Troper and his little group headed for Austria, as Maynard Tom and his little group headed for France. I was just with Maynard a few months ago. As a little group headed for Turkey, I believe, first group to Turkey.

And a few of us remained in Spain. The vision for England was only just a seed. I was still working in Spain.

Some English brothers came down from Spain. I had met these English Methodist young people in Vienna when I was giving out literature there, before going into Russia. And in my mind, it was just a vague island and off somewhere my grandfather had come from there, and more and more it was beginning to come.

There's a lot of people up there sitting around. And, you know, why bring Americans thousands of miles from New Jersey when we can get these British people, we had heard of people swimming the channel, we can get them just over into Europe so easily. So within a few months, I was on my way to England.

Actually, it was more than a few months. I went to the States first, Mexico, where I bumped into Steve Hart, Ray Lynch, who's just standing in the back there. And then I came back and my wife and I turned the work in Spain over to nationals and one or two others.

And we went off to England. God's faithfulness. And I tell you this because God wants to be faithful to you these next 3, 4, 5, 10 years.

Young people, you can trust Him with your life. You can trust Him that what He has begun in you, Philippians 1, 6, He will continue. Almost all those people who met in Madrid at that time are going on for God today.

By the next summer, OM was born and moving. And a small band of 200 gathered together in Paris. Summer of 1962.

I can remember that crusade better than I can remember 3 years ago or 8 years ago or 12 years ago. It's the beginning. It's new.

It's burned fresh in your mind. Heidi Van Damme, who's here, reminded me of some of the things. She must have been the first Austrian to come.

After that summer, I moved to Gopen in southern Holland. And this was a strategic part called Limburg down between Belgium and Germany. And a fellow sold me on going there during the summer crusade.

He said, look at this strip of Holland. And I thought, like fathers from Holland, this is where I ought to go. I still hadn't got the total, you know, vision for Britain.

We were there and I thought, well, Jonathan, he can go to Britain. Jonathan had just joined. Let him take Britain.

We had an old military camp in Britain. No one used it in the winter. Wycliffe used it in the summer.

Only, you know, only a reindeer would use this place in the winter. And whenever I visited it, Jonathan was always there wrapped in clothing near one of these old kerosene stoves. That was the birthplace, really, almost, of STL.

We had the year before when I moved or some months before, February of 62. First I lived in 8 Tasso Road, Fulham. Then I lived in 30 Middleton Road, Dalston.

And in a sense, STL, that unique literature ministry, was born at that time. Hosey Burks, a black American who was with me in England in those early days, who's now got a ministry in New York City. He was the first book packer.

I don't think this was his gift. To pack one box, it took him a long time. A long time.

Mind you, there wasn't much business. This is where the first million tracts was printed. We used to go from printer to printer looking for people who would undercut the man down the road.

And we even, back then, we even believed that Britain was un-evangelized. We were uninitiated. Of course it still is in some ways.

And so we distributed hundreds of thousands of tracts in the streets of Great Britain. And what a challenge it was. But after 62, I moved, after my second son was born, first one born in Madrid, and the second one born in England.

I didn't believe any of this birth control stuff. That's from the devil. Birth control.

I believed in self-control. And I, you know, prayer and fasting. Self-control.

We were going to wait a couple of years through discipline and spiritual warfare. Nine months after the wedding, my son Benjamin was born in Spain. He was premature.

That was interesting. And it seemed pretty soon after that, Daniel was born. He'll be walking around here in a couple of days, so I'd better get this part over with before he comes.

But as soon as he was born in London, it was one of the worst fogs in the history of the city. People were actually dropping dead from smog. We moved to southern Holland because we had this vision for Germany.

And we took meetings in Germany. You could just drive 20 minutes from where we lived in Germany. 20 minutes the other way, we were in Belgium.

And through that came the birth of Zabunsen. Because I was always driving to the Brussels airport. And eventually I thought, what am I living over here in Limburg when we got an airport over here in Zabunsen? I'll never forget driving to the airport, saying to our Dutch director, Dick Swart, at that time, hey, I think we

ought to base here.

Let's move here. And God in his providence brought us, first, only a team to Zabunsen. Because after the summer of 63, that was a really big push, the central office of OM Europe was in Switzerland.

That's right. The vehicles were in muddy fields. We launched a big year program and we were in such a financial strait, I don't think we've had it that bad until maybe last year.

So we couldn't go. And the tradition which we believe God has given us of waiting on God before we leave was born because it was a sensible thing. If you don't have any money, you shouldn't borrow a lot of money to launch a major offensive against Satan.

And so we waited upon God in Switzerland. It was a hard experience because the mumps broke out. And if you want a mumps testimony, you talk to Ray Lynch.

Ray, didn't you have the mumps? No. But you were there, no? Yeah, you were there. I don't know if he was among those that thought those were the mumps had departed from the true and living way.

But anyway, the Swiss government moved in and quarantined these people. And they had done a lot of interesting things to get the blessing. You know, there isn't anything in OM we haven't tried to get the blessing.

They even tried foot washing. They felt there was a lack of humility. And so somebody found a verse.

I don't know where I was. I was not in Switzerland. Anybody who would attempt to wash my feet, they would need a mask, oxygen mask.

Anyway, they washed feet. And there were so many problems. And in the mercy of God, in answer to prayer, a gift of 70,000 British pounds, which today would be equivalent to a quarter of a million pounds, came in one gift.

And I tell you, this little band of renegades who weren't exactly overappreciated in Europe at that time by the traditional missionary community. In fact, there weren't too many that appreciated us at that time. It was probably our fault.

We had just distributed across Europe in one summer 25 million pieces of literature. And of course, sometimes things happened in the process of that. But God, in answer to prayer, people didn't know what was happening.

We didn't have that many prayer partners. God brought in about 70,000 pounds. If Steve Hart is here, he could direct me and tell me it was dollars.

It is hard to keep that straight in your mind, pounds or dollars, either way. Then it was absolutely explosive. And eventually those teams got out.

Some of the brothers hitchhiked. Some of them quit OM on the spot. They said, Ichabod, Ichabod is finished.

This thing is not from God. God doesn't work this way. Look at this.

These vehicles stuck in the mud. Look at this. People with mugs.

Look at this. Look at these leaders. They left.

You know, some of them I've never heard from. I'm sure the Lord blessed them. He's got lots of mercy.

Others said, look, we've got to move to India. We're going to hitchhike. Greg Livingston was in charge of the India team.

He didn't have any call to India. I just told him to go. He didn't get caught up much in this call business.

We were sort of going between the Salvation Army and the Plymouth Brethren. The Pentecostal thing wasn't too big then. It was just beginning to come in.

I just told Greg India was the place. I think I told Gordon Magney. He's here now, too.

India was the place. They got going. They were both Wheaton graduates.

They finally got to India. People were converted to Christ before they even got there. I was swimming the other day in Crystal Palace Pool.

I like to swim once in a while. And lo and behold, who do I bump into in the pool? Ray Mayhew. He's the main pastor together with Roger Foster of the Ichthys Fellowship in London.

I'm sure you all heard of that. How did Ray Mayhew get safe? He was on his way to India. God's providence, he got picked up by one of our trucks.

And he was converted to Jesus through that. And his brother Bill, who's a missionary, I think in France, I think he had a team with him maybe this summer. And so through failure and struggle and discouragement and problems and mumps and no money and arguments and disunity, the first team launched off to India.

And they were by then the second or third year into Turkey. And another team that year, or it may have been just before that year, launched across North Africa. I remember that because they took the truck, the lorry that I had been driving in Italy.

I sort of coordinated the summer crusade then, rapidly turned that over to Jonathan, and then went off to Italy, my favorite European country, together with Spain at that time. Spain was not open to this kind of work. And oh my, what we saw God do in Italy.

Now I don't normally speak about these things, maybe twice a year. And forgive me if I'm reminiscing, this is a sign of old age. But the truth is, from those days, those early beginnings, perhaps the greatest battle that some of us have faced again and again is the battle of discouragement.

Because we soon learned that it wasn't as easy as we envisioned. We soon learned that Turkey was not about to collapse in two years, through our prayer meetings, which were pretty intensive, and pretty fierce. And we used to pray for every city in Turkey.

We soon learned that some would begin to run the race, and within one or two years they would not be running. And if you want to understand those of us who are your leaders today, and we're rapidly trying to train up younger leaders, you have to realize we are wounded people. There's no sense pretending.

There's no sense in me getting up here with a big goo-goo on my face, isn't everything wonderful? We're wounded people. Our hearts have been broken a thousand times. I was on the phone last week with a man who lined up my first meetings in England.

A Bible College graduate filled with the Holy Ghost. I lived in his basement at 30 Middleton Road. He never joined OM in a real way because his wife didn't like it.

She thought it was a little bit too rough, a little bit too fanatic. She wanted to join a more mellow mission society. When she joined the mission society, she discovered later they were more crazy than we were.

It lasted six months, and everything after that went downhill. The marriage broke. His second marriage broke.

He overthrew the faith. She remarried a communist, and I talked to him on the phone yesterday. That's 22 years later.

A lost, unbelieving, defeated, depressed, working on his second divorced man. You know, that doesn't happen without pain. He was a leader of the work of God in England, not necessarily with OM.

I know, he used to, every Monday, sit under the great ministry of Martin Lloyd-Jones, first Monday of the month. He was the man who first told me about the doctrine. And I think of another man who met me in England, went to one of Britain's great Bible schools where they emphasize a little bit a more passive type of Christian faith.

And when I came to England, and he discovered that I wanted to evangelize, he said, hey, you know, I don't believe in that. I'm going to Bible college. And he went to one of the best Bible colleges in Britain.

And within two years, he was a committed, dedicated Mormon. And I will tell you, if you don't think that can break a man's heart, I was only young. I was naive.

You know, I believed. You know, we pray. God worries.

I mean, that's what we're taught. I had prayed for these people. I had fasted for these people.

And I could list many, many more. I don't want to depress you. Who we thought they were running well.

We thought these are going to be God's men. We can build upon them. God's going to do a work through them.

And we gave of our lives. We gave of our clothes. We loved them.

We spent time with them. We had read all the books. How to disciple people.

How to be a leader. How to be a disciple maker. Dawson Trotman.

You know, we were into that up to our necks. Then we saw them shot down or go into extremism. Like that very Dutch director who was with me that day when God led us to Zobington who came to me a couple years later and said, I'm leaving.

I don't believe you people are filled with the Holy Spirit. He thought I was filled with the Holy Spirit because I was noisy. Yeah.

You know, I mean, in the early days in OM, I mean, you think I'm an emotional case now. You should have been around then. I tell you, when God hit me in a prayer meeting, I always went to the top of the table.

You're closer to heaven than the top of the table. Here I was on the top of the table praising Jesus, believing that another 50 grand was going to come down. And my wife said, you know, I don't think you ought to do some of this.

You know, a wife is a very valuable asset. I could talk to you about that. She said, I don't think you ought to do this because as you're doing this, dancing around and praising and jumping, people are not praying.

They're watching you. And God had to humble me. And God had to give me discernment what was from the Holy Spirit and what was from George Berwer.

And I discovered a lot of it was from George Berwer. And I needed to be a little more self-controlled. Anyway, he thought I was filled with the Holy Spirit.

But he didn't think some of my other co-leaders were filled with the Holy Spirit. Especially the quiet ones. Where do we get this cockeyed idea that if you're quiet, you're not filled with the Holy Spirit? I tell you, right now, OM is looking for some quiet people.

With me around, we need some quiet ones to bring the whole thing into balance. And God's Holy Spirit works in different people in different ways. And I tell you, when that dear brother left this work and then in Holland they spread rumors, very ugly rumors about this work, it hurt.

It hurt very deep. They started a counter-movement. They spread the rumor that we didn't have the Holy Spirit.

Because we didn't manifest it in their way. And so they started a movement called Operation. We got Case Roses.

He's our Dutchman. He's here. He knows this is true.

He wasn't. Where were you, Case? You were still in Bible school, though. Case went to Bible school.

Then he joined the Belden Gospel Mission. I felt Case was one of the most unbroken new recruits we had ever found. He was also there with us in 1962.

And it is one of the most beautiful testimonies that Case and I are still together. That's Case, back by the pole. He is in charge of this whole conference.

Raise your hand. Amen! Thank you. But, anyway, he wasn't around at least near at range at this time with his other dear Dutch brother who we do still love.

And so Operation Pentecostal Fire was born in Holland. This is one of the few divisions I know of in the whole history of OM. I want to tell you about a division that I had to go back a long way.

It wasn't really a division, but there were a few who had worked with OM and this brother and others who had never been with OM. They thought, this OM thing doesn't have the Holy Spirit. We've got the real thing.

Operation Pentecostal Fire. You write the history of that. You'll be able to write it up in two pages.

Because it didn't go. It didn't go. It had a tremendous name.

I like that name. Maybe I should have got that name in the top of the tree. I was in the wrong tree.

No, it was Germany. It was a non-charismatic tree. But, you know, God is so gracious God is so gracious.

And God raises up different movements at different times. Simultaneous with these events, God was touching the heart of a dynamic young man in California named Lauren Cunningham. And around this time, I think it may have been even that time I went back after I lived in Spain.

Or it was, yes, after the summer 62 crusade. That's when I may have met Ray. I always sometimes get things mixed up by one or two years.

Ray, when did I meet you? Was it after 62 or after 63? After 62. Okay, I think I met Lauren Cunningham in the same time. God's providence.

A very humble brother, I think, his ministry had started with the assemblies of God and he said somehow through correspondence can I come on Operation Mobilization? I want to learn how you do this work. And I said, sure. And Lauren Cunningham today founder, director of Operation Mobilization a bigger movement than we are certainly in numbers now with certainly a much bigger ship that brother walked humbly among us was in charge of the literature warehouse in Paris in 1963.

I mention that because someone started to spread the rumor that that was a division that was never a division. Lauren and the work of YWAM was already born. But I tell you we could be here all night and we can't risk that.

The beautiful way that God has raised up in the last 25 years powerful, beautiful ministries YWAM navigators youth for Christ older than us by quite a bit Billy Graham with them in the early days and many others the inner varsity I was just reviewing the history one of their founders was a man named Stacy Woods he was a radical he was outspoken and God used him as one of the founders of inner varsity especially in North America and it's interesting Stacy just died that when OM was was highly criticized and just being born Stacy Woods gave us the word of encouragement and Eric Fyfe one of the main leaders in inner varsity as far back as 1968 and pushed and pushed and got George Merwer into the Urbana Convention I saw a magazine about that in my big junk pile just last week and there was

quite an interesting article that will be a very historic relic Eric had a nervous breakdown through that intensive conference I don't know if I was to blame for that I don't think so never never recovered totally physically but I was with him a little while ago some time ago and he's pressing on for Jesus what am I trying to say in this conglomeration of history and sharing tonight I'm trying to say that God is faithful I'm trying to say that when you launch out into ministry whether it's within OM or one of these other groups if you stand on God's word and if you hold high the shield of faith against discouragement you will also be able to reminisce a little bit 20 years from now and our burden even in this leadership training conference brothers and sisters is not a year program it's

not to get you prepared to be a leader with OM next summer our burden is not firstly to get you in OM our burden is to see you have a life of fruitful service for God our burden is that you may run the race to the end our burden is that you'll not be as that young man who became a Mormon or that other young man who went into adultery but our burden is that you'll be as Kate or as Ray or hundreds of others that I know who began the race 25 years ago 20 years ago 15 years ago and are still running today I want you to be

encouraged to know there is enormous hope for the weakest person you come to a leaders conference what's the first thing you think of what am I doing here I'm not a leader I can't even get my dog to obey me we know that you're not an apostle this is not an apostles

conference this is an epistles conference we're going to study the epistles and see how we can be apostolic in our witness for Jesus and in world evangelism we know you feel weak and inadequate some of you are saying I don't have my prayer life all together how can I be a leader others are saying I don't have my bible study life all together how can I be a leader others are saying I don't really know how to do personal evangelism I haven't led anybody to Christ myself how am I going to be a leader we understand that we don't overrate you as much as you may think we didn't get a letter from your pastor saying so and so Susie Wong or Sammy Chong is the most outstanding potential leader in our church we recommend him to your leadership conference that's not how it works around O.M. things

are going too fast there's too many people to you know to get it that systematic but you're here in God's province we don't want you to feel you're better than the group that comes on Monday some of those who come on Monday they should be here now some of you are here now perhaps you should have waited until Monday you know we're not going to make a big thing of that but God has put you here I pray you will get the most out of this week I pray that you go back to your room tonight and ask God if you don't already have it to give you a spirit of expectation a spirit of faith as to what you're going to get from these seminars as to what you're going to get as you fellowship around the meals as to what you're going to get when you fellowship around cleaning the toilet or scrubbing the floors

and I will tell you there's nothing I'm going to ask you to do in the way of mundane tasks that we haven't done a hundred times and some of us now have to spend extra long hours just and wrestling with problems and wrestling with the enemy you know sometimes we would be just rather in there doing the dishes I've done more dishes this summer than any summer in a long time it's been such a relaxation I've been under pressure at times I didn't want to look at another letter I didn't want to look at another person I felt you know it's getting too big there was a memo a day coming in with problems and just to get in with the dishes you know I usually break one and my wife is neurotic and nervous about my dishwashing but the word of God says that whatever you have to do do it with all your

heart as unto the Lord not just coming to the meeting with all your heart not just pray with all your heart if you see a piece of rubbish anywhere on this premises pick it up and say thank you Jesus now I've just been convicted I remember now it's vivid in my mind there was a cornflakes box laying over by the tennis court and I didn't pick it up I don't know how I missed that I must be tired whatsoever you do do it heartily as unto the Lord we want to emphasize this week that a leader is a servant a leader is a servant different leaders serve in different ways and it's an enormous struggle to get the balance between the different ways we can serve one another because you know what you're going to find in a couple of years if you haven't found already you've got so many opportunities you

don't know what to do and you start to get frustrated so many open doors so many opportunities you won't know what to do God is faithful God is faithful great is thy faithfulness we often sing that do you believe it? many of you made commitments to the Lord this summer look at Romans 12 many of you this summer and I haven't been able to get my letters off to many of you I've prayed through your requests and I've written some of you but my we are behind on correspondence and if any of you know how to type more than 35 words a minute would you consider before you go out to plant churches in the ends of the earth spending a year typing would you do that unto Jesus really because if we don't get some typists and some

secretaries we are not going to be able to continue the way that we want

to in recruiting and we are already recruiting for next summer but many of you made a tremendous commitment this summer was one of the highest percentages of people responding to the challenge of any summer I can remember both in Akron and here some of you are here from the Duluth who made a very strong commitment there about lifetime missions and you remember me speaking on this verse new international version therefore I urge you brothers in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual worship do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may be able to test and approve what God's will is his good pleasing and perfect will you made that commitment you're on

the move wonderful now Satan is gonna counter attack how many of you have since some pretty heavy counter attacks upon you since you've made that commitment raise your hand some pretty fiery darts you don't want to exaggerate some pretty heavy stuff has come your way since you made the commitment raise your hand just real quick about a third of you beloved you've heard us emphasize this would you write it in your notes again tonight this is total war and we have not gathered here for these four weeks for some kind of evangelical fiesta some kind of evangelical retreat some type of evangelical retirement program this is a battle camp this is a training ground we have seen the enemy already trying to harass us and this is why we must pull together as an army in an army camp and not be

thrown off balance by some little hardship by some little thing going wrong by somebody stepping on one of your little gospel corns by somebody not showing you enough appreciation somebody forgot your name or or some other trivial thing may God by his grace deliver us of triviality and bring us into reality because otherwise we behave just like the people of the world just like the pagans when they go have a beer party we are going to be hit by enemy fire our hearts are crying out right now for Beirut those of you Americans know that a couple of your marines were killed yesterday in Beirut and short of a miracle there will be another civil war in Beirut and our hearts ache we know the whole Middle East is on a semi-military footing they're using real weapons people are being killed

beloved we are on a military footing the devil is using real weapons and his most subtle weapon I sense even at this stage is discouragement some of you your summer wasn't all that you thought and if you're honest you're a bit discouraged your prayer life hasn't grown the way you'd hoped and envisaged since your recommitment to the Lord and you're discouraged in your prayer life your Bible study hasn't got the impact and the grip that you wanted to have and if somebody gets up and preaches a Bible study you'll just get more discouraged some of you are wrestling with relationship problems and you thought somehow several months ago you were getting on top of this relationship thing you were getting a greater control over your tongue and your temper and the carnal side of you and yet somehow

you've displayed ugly carnality this summer maybe even this week and you're discouraged and you wonder can God use me can God ever get a hold of my tongue can God ever get a hold of my whole being many of you made a recommitment in the area of morality and you claimed greater purity from God you claimed victory you made the mistake of even claiming more victory than I told you you made a claim that's why some of you are discouraged that's right you went out of this tent so heffed up boy if that little skinny big nose gospel rabbit can get that much victory I can get more and you went out of here and you said a hundred percent victory I'm never gonna ever look at a girl again I'm never ever gonna do that again and you lasted about one week and you've been discouraged ever since why didn't

you do what I told you to do don't try to bite off so much at your age spiritually speaking I don't think you can yet even understand what total victory is much less claim it in one big gospel bonanza you're neither E.T. nor superman come down to earth my brothers and sisters and if you let some little failure in the area of lust discourage you you are playing into the hands of the enemy because the old devil he's not he's not marking it up on his scoreboard because you've gotten some little lust trip he's out to wipe you out completely he's out to destroy you as he destroyed those friends of mine that I told you about and so I would ask you I would beg of you if somehow you got out of the race and you're not running with full grace and power and you're slipping you know somehow into the

dressing room looking for a bandage or at least somewhere to let your bloody nose run that you'd come back right into the heart of the race discourage don't let the sun go down upon your discouragement and that means you gotta act pretty quick from what I see outside let me just share some of the areas where we've gotten very discouraged I've already shared some and I don't wanna share too many and I have wrestled so much with discouragement that it would fill certainly my first volume in an encyclopedia and one of the reasons I got discouraged often so quickly and often discouragement leads to a subtle form of irritability have you ever noticed that when you get discouraged you get irritable and you wanna know something else that I believe when you get discouraged and you get irritable

you start to get angry you ever any of you wrestling with that thing of anger and you know anger will drain you not only of spiritual energy anger can drain you of physical energy and I believe especially among Christians who easily repress their anger we get angry we don't know how to express it we repress it you know what it leads to often depression and I was amazed to read a book some time ago it said the same thing but I feel from counseling people and from watching people that it's a Daniel 5 discouragement irritability hostility anger depression is that the way you wanna go and often right at the top of the list negative thinking negative about yourself negative about others negative about the summer some of you are even negative about the future what does it say in the book of

Philippians I think I shared those verses with you let me look in my authorized Bible I find it quicker in the book of Philippians turn with me I think you'll find it in chapter 4 where it tells us to think on that which is pure and lovely and of good report chapter 4 verse 8 finally brethren whatever things are true whatever things are honest whatever things are just whatever things are pure whatever things are lovely whatever things are of good report if there be any virtue if there be any praise think on these things negative thinking will drain you of energy and leave you discouraged positive filled with faith thinking will renew you it will renew the energy factor in your life and I believe though we're all different that God wants to minister to us physically in these days you know

sometimes in OM we neglect the emphasis on the physical some of you even wonder well does OM ever pray for the sick any time you feel you need prayer we're not going to make a big bonanza of it and do it here in the tent that's not our conviction but any time you want prayer there are leaders around there are people around you say look I am feeling really ill I've been ill for days will you pray for me you know one of the things is we're not open enough with each other well are we afraid somebody's going to judge us as not being spiritual and all the time over these years I've had the joy of praying for the sick I don't claim any special great faith I I never forget in Indonesia they thought the Lagos was the miracle you know Indonesia the miracle and I was speaking this big meeting 2,000

people I was the main speaker so they figured man one touch from me and zap you'd be healed and uh you know I've always tried to play it cool on life road you know but boy I sure have failed a lot anyway they

came up to me we want you to come over here and pray for this sick man what am I going to say no you know I got a whole Bible full of the Lord Jesus healing the sick God of miracles the God who raised the dead man comes up to me I want you to pray for a sick man no that's not in this dispensation buddy so I went and prayed to the Lord they brought me the man a complete crippled man on a bicycle and already the best healers in Indonesia had had a shot at him you know the really miracle boys they had already tried brought him to me have you ever seen me nervous and I was trying to keep

cool I said I think some others should come and help me pray for this man and I got this Indonesian pastor and I got a couple of others and of course all the people are gathering around oh you know a big crowd boy this is the big show the preaching people accepted Christ some came back to Christ that's nothing this is the big show George Bauer the leader of the miracle ship and I said I think we ought to go in the corner of the tent for this one so we went all over in the corner and of course we I said we better lay hands on him this one Indonesian boy I tell you when he laid hands on a man you know it looked like a Turkish massage and I sort of I tell you I prayed with sincerity I cried to God I changed my theology in those few minutes and I asked God to raise up this guy and nothing

happened now you can laugh God understands but I want to tell you that was 1971 I have a picture of that man on his bicycle and I'm still praying I'm still praying I've been discouraged many times because I'm not seeing God answer my prayers but I'm still praying I'm still praying Amen Let's pray Let's just have a time of silent prayer God may minister to our hearts that we may make a decision that whatever happens whatever discouragement whatever pain whatever dream that never comes to pass whatever prayer that doesn't seem to be answered five years ten years twenty years down the line you'll still be praying still be hoping still be believing still be in God's grace that's leadership it's leadership not from a position of strength but leadership from a position of weakness not

leadership because you're a man and woman of great endless victory because you're a man and woman who knows how to deal with failure and keep on keeping on let's just have a time of silent prayer will you believe God that he can touch your life you're discouraged hurt somebody wounded you this summer any failure this summer feeling discouraged not really ready for leadership training hardly wondering if you can be a follower would you trust Jesus tonight in a new way would you trust him just to fill your heart with faith would you decide to lay hold more firmly of the promises of his word about faith about expectation about being positive about perseverance you pray your own prayer my Jesus I love thee I know back again to another conference of this type twenty-two twenty-three years

later a thousand wounds a thousand tears victories and defeats triumphs and failures heartache and joy unspeakable beautiful relationships and broken relationships souls won souls lost churches planted churches broken we sense again oh God the battle rages and by your grace we offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice not that we may have a nice feeling because we serve you not that we may have the praise of men because we are now leaders or even leaders in training but for your glory because you loved us and gave yourself for us upon the cross and went through a pain and a suffering that we will never know we would put our hands in yours oh God and say by your grace we're going on and we by your grace will hold up that shield of faith and stop those fiery darts and we know they can be

stopped and we've heard of what you've done in Turkey no not what we've dreamed not what we've fully prayed but according to your mysterious purposes you have done a work in Turkey that shall continue we believe your hand will be upon Glenn and his wife and others as they go back to that one of the most difficult lands in all the world we would like to oh God recommit our hearts to you tonight the first night of

this conference and say oh Lord Jesus take us use us we want to be more patient with those weak areas in our life where we seem to so quickly fall we believe that you are going to continue your ongoing work of grace in those areas we trust you we will not neurotically overemphasize that area of our life but we will lovingly emphasize you and worship you and we believe as we

worship you and as we feed on your word and as we give attention to our overall spiritual walk that those things will be put in perspective and there will be more and more growth and more and more victory and by your grace that we are weak you will be able to lead others through your word and into the inner sanctuary holy ghost power love grace oh Lord break down every barrier break down every barrier that separates any of us not that we expect some oozy little idealistic glowing relationship for we know we are called to be soldiers on the battle front and there will be the tensions and there will be the bullets and the shrapnel but that Lord our commitment to one another would increase and our love for one another would cover so we thank you and we praise you in Jesus name amen

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