

How Disunity Comes in the Body of Christ

by George Verwer

The speaker emphasizes the importance of unity in the body of Christ and warns against the dangers of pride and idealism.

Duration: 1:11:49

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1

Topics: "Disunity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of disunity within the body of Christ. He emphasizes that disunity can arise from various factors such as overreaction, crooked thinking, and unrealistic expectations. The speaker also highlights the importance of seeking wisdom from God and learning from the experiences of others. He encourages the congregation to break down barriers and come together in prayer for unity. The sermon references the book of Peter and mentions the need for believers to combine the wisdom from God's Word with practical situations.

Transcript

One of the first things I ever wrote, I think I was about 20, maybe 21, I guess. I was five years old spiritually, and I wrote this, a brief history of the origin and early work of Send the Light, later renamed Operation Mobilization. This is just a reprint.

It's not well written, but it'll give some of you a little bit of the early days, written, believe it or not, in May of 1960, just before coming over to Europe. So you can pick that up on the free literature table and lots of other valuable items, okay? Okay, let's turn in our Bibles, turn to the book of Peter, 1 Peter. There are many scriptures I'd like to give.

The title for tonight is a message that's very, very much on my heart. And I hope that it will be one of those messages that you will take seriously, is how disunity comes to the body of Christ. How disunity comes to the body of Christ.

Let's look at chapter 5. I think we've looked at this passage before. Let me get it in my other translation. Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the suffering of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God, not for sordid gain, but with eagerness. Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appear, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you.

Isn't that a tremendous verse? Be sober, be of a sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

And after you have suffered for a while, the God of grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, establish you. To him be dominion forever and ever. Young people, we're not here in these evening meetings just to get a blessing, or just to get a message that perhaps the Lord can use to encourage us tonight.

Now, that's good, but there's something better. We're here to get wisdom, understanding, biblical knowledge that we can use by God's grace the rest of our life. I realize many of you who are here are new to Operation Mobilization, but this message is in some ways geared to those of you who have been around a year or two.

Let's just try to bring it into balance, and then everyone will get, hopefully, something. Some of you, a year from now, you're not going to be on OM. You'll be on your way home, maybe some of you two years from now.

You'll be depressed. You'll be disappointed. You may be even disillusioned.

Now, let's just make that very clear, that OM is not scoring 100%, not even 90%, brothers and sisters. On reaching, and ministering, and discipling, and loving, and encouraging all the people who come into this evangelistic training program. That's our goal.

Most of us in OM love our work. If you give me a holiday where I can do exactly what I want to do, I'll probably dictate letters to my friends, and to pastors, and to churches, and encourage people, because that's what I want to do. People always ask me, when are you going to take a holiday? I say, brother, I've been on a holiday from hell for 31 years.

There's nothing better than that. Not that I'm against traditional holidays. I think holidays should be according to your temperament.

You take my kind of temperament and just stick them on a beach, with no books, no dictaphone, nothing to do but look at the water. That is not a holiday. That's a painful experience.

Now, I went to the beach this time last year, and I had part of what some people would call a real holiday, because I do have that type of thing as well. Recreation, we call it. I got into a wetsuit for the first time in my life.

Amazing I ever got in this thing. Didn't just get lost in the leg. But I got into this wetsuit, and I went windsurfing.

How many of you have been windsurfing? Oh, my land, where have you been? Probably giving out tracks or something. But, you know, just a few hours out there was freezing cold. This was outside of the freshwater east in Pembrokehire.

Freezing water. That, you know, that to me is recreation. Last year in August, I was operated on.

And I wanted to do it the cheap way. You know, I had vocal cord little surgery. So I did it all on the same day.

Went in the hospital. I was dictating letters there in the little day room waiting for the doctor. I went in, and it was a great experience, really.

Came out a few hours later, and then we jumped in the motorhome and headed down the road. In fact, we took a tour that night of Niagara Falls. And the next day, I had a true verver holiday.

I went swimming in the morning. I went parasailing the first time in my life. How many have been parasailing? I mean, that is tremendous.

One person. Two. Three.

Three have been parasailing. I better explain what it is. This is the advantage of not having this interpreter.

I get more time. It really turns me on. Parasailing, you get out on a little barge in the middle of Lake George.

This is the lake named after me in New York State. And you get on a little barge, and a speedboat is in front of you with a rope and a parachute. You get on the barge, and they tie you into this parachute.

And then the speedboat takes full speed ahead away from the barge. Guess what happens? You go straight up. And I was up about 300 feet.

Crazy. I couldn't speak. I wasn't allowed to speak for 10 days because I'd just been in the hospital.

I have a picture of this in case you think it's a story. My wife was watching from shore. And here I was over Lake George where I went.

I used to go as a child for my vacation. Praising God without saying anything. And then he let go.

So you parachute down. First time I've ever done any parachuting. Until your feet hit the water.

And then they speed the boat up. Straight up in the air. After that I went jet skiing.

How many have been jet skiing? See, you've got all these things to look forward to in life. This is going to completely destroy this rumor that George Ferber doesn't have a holiday. Jet skiing is a funny little set of skis on water with an engine.

And you sort of get dragged behind it. It looks four times easier than it is. You sort of get dragged behind this thing in a very awkward position.

Until you can gain speed and then you can get up. And to get up you really need to be going 25, 20, 25 miles an hour over the water. You don't stay up for long.

But that was a great experience. We did a number of other things that day. But you see we're all different, aren't we? We're all different.

And I think it's so important to, in Operation Mobilization, accept the wide range of temperaments that we have. And to ask God to bring us unity. Unity in the midst of diversity.

Now in this passage of scripture we read that Satan has a roaring line, seeks whom he may devour. And we know that when Satan sees a team of people getting united together, as some are getting united together here, this is a very upsetting experience for the devil. French, Germans, English, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Argentinians.

But do not think that when you leave here and you're united together in that team that it is going to be easy. It is not going to be easy. Some things are going to go wrong.

They're going to go wrong. You are going to get hurt in the process of this training program. We have a great controversy going on in OM.

We have about 50 controversies. But one of them is, what is training? You're going to hear this throughout the year. What is training? Am I being trained? Now different OM fields have different training programs.

But let me tell you who the master trainer is. That's the Holy Spirit. And when the OM training program goes wrong, it may be the study program, it may be the evangelism, it may be something else.

When the OM program goes wrong, that's when God's graduate school often begins. And though we don't like to plan it this way, sometimes you can learn more on a team where things are going wrong than on a team where things are going right. And if you've had a hard experience on OM this year, I'm not excusing anything that we have done wrong.

Please forgive us. But I think it's so helpful if you ask yourself, God, what are you saying to me through this mess, through this leader, through this problem, through this disappointment, through this hurt? Do you think it's possible to have a social policy like Operation Mobilization has? And in this area, there's no easy road. We have debated and discussed this every year for 28 years.

And we make some modifications. But there's no easy road. And there's no way, please understand, that you can join a fellowship like this and even break such a simple thing as a social policy, which we now have people who laugh at it.

I laugh at it sometimes as well. But do not think you can come into something like OM, break that policy as simple as it is, as easy as it is for us to forgive people. We don't hold that against them if they break a social policy.

But don't think you can do it without things going wrong. And when it goes wrong, it may be the leaders of OM who have made the mistake. Because our leaders are not professionally trained people who know exactly what to do every time a human relationship goes wrong.

You think we have some group of professional experts who have, you know, a master's degree in psychology and another advanced course in handling social confusion? And I will tell you, we'd avoid a lot

of hurts if we just simply agreed to pass on to the Lord, even though we may not fully agree, just to keep this simple policy. Even here, if you're a first-year person. Because it just so easily gets out of control.

Easily people take sides. Some side with the leader who may have to discipline the couple. Others side with the person who's being disciplined.

And I've seen whole teams come completely apart. In fact, last year or two years ago, through one social policy mix-up on one of the ships, I will tell you, we had hurt and agony that it took them months to pull out of. When I got there six months later, some people were still not out of that.

Why? Because we, in our naiveness and in our own disposition, many of us are crusaders for justice, right? I mean, this is the justice generation. And we want equal rights for everybody. And it's amazing what people are crusading for.

And believe me, I'm in agreement with quite a bit of it. But brothers and sisters, we live in an unjust society. And if you think OM is totally just and totally consistent, you know, you're just in for some big surprises.

That's our goal. And we're rebuking and exhorting one another. And we're probably doing better than perhaps some who don't aim at this with all their hearts.

But there's no way you can come in OM without seeing some inconsistency, some weakness, some unfairness. Somebody's birthday gets remembered with a big cake, and somebody else's birthday is completely unnoticed. Do you think it's possible to be completely consistent on a ship with 300 people of 25 nationalities, trying to accomplish what they are trying to accomplish? Do you think everybody here now has the same amount of money in their pocket? Do you think every OM leader lives in the same size house, drives the same age car, and treats his wife the same way? Surely you realize that life includes variety, which has to include some degree of inconsistency.

We preach the message of the revolution of love. But we also teach in our messages on balance and the human factor that this is a goal and we are not yet there. That includes your leader.

That includes your roommate. That includes anyone you may be meeting in or out of Operation Mobilization. So the enemy is going to try to bring disunity.

And some of the things that disappoint people the most when they see disunity in the church, in an OM team, between leaders, do you think all of these leaders are in complete unity with one another? Some of them barely speak to one another. If we as leaders spend all of our time building our own fellowship as leaders, we won't have time to talk to any of you. And personally, I prefer sometimes to just talk to brand new people that I've never seen before, rather than this same brother that I've been fellowshiping with every September for 25 years or 20 years, who's probably fed up with having fellowship with me anyway.

But I can tell you, with this strong-minded group of a couple of hundred men and women who are leading this work, there is not like-mindedness on every issue. And you're going to see leaders that don't get on so well with each other. And you may find a leader who says something negative about another leader, even though that really isn't the right way to go about it, because these leaders are human, they are under pressure, and they are prime targets of Satan, and because we're dealing with a lot of areas all at once in OM.

You ever notice that? In which you don't find quick, simple solutions. Let me give a few specifics how we've seen disunity come in the past. Number one, Proverbs 13.10. What does it talk about? Pride.

Pride. Pride cometh before a fall. Pride bringeth contention.

Again and again, I've seen this in my own heart. When you find yourself reacting against somebody, criticizing somebody, hurt by somebody, just check, could it be pride in your own heart? I'm not talking about expressing yourselves. And in Operation Mobilization, we want to leave, you know, quite a bit of scope for expressing yourself.

I tell you, no one's going to stop me from expressing myself. That's a key to sanity. You start bottling it up, you know, you can't say that, people will think you're unspiritual.

And, oh, you know, we get uptight. There are ways, and biblical ways, of expressing ourselves. I told you last week, you have a suggestion about the conference, send it to Nigel Lee in an envelope.

Mark Nigel Lee. How easy it is just to murmur to somebody, oh, about this or that, rather than a constructive criticism. Every week, every single week, I am reading letters that are critical of Operation Mobilization or something we do.

That's part of my job. And I am subject to a board of directors, that's why I wasn't here yesterday. We had a board meeting, so that these people can find out what we're doing.

We're in subject to these people. They're not in OM. They're from different churches, businessmen, you know, lawyers, accountants, farmers.

We are accountable to those men. When they hear criticism about OM, they talk to us about it. It's tremendous.

I thank God for constructive criticism. We can't ever make all the changes everybody wants, but we can make some of them. And now we have a policy that when you're a longer-term OMer, you are part of a general council, which is the sort of final place within OM where we come into unity about what we're going to do.

It's not a matter of Peter Maiden in Georgeville or sitting on, you know, in the hills of Cumbria, telling 1,600 people what they're going to do. A lot of our time is just listening, just reading, just listening, praying. And from the criticism and the suggestions, we work for improvement before God.

But you know, as leaders, we've discovered that pride does not die easy. If pride is dying easy in your life, perhaps you could write me some of your secrets. Secrets of victory over pride.

You could, you know, put your picture there. Number two, the second reason often disunity comes in an OM team, in a headquarters, in the church, is idealism. Idealism.

Now, I think we should have ideals. I think you should have biblical ideals. And believe me, we don't distribute books like A.W. Tozer because we're trying to destroy your ideals.

I mean, he is an idealist. That's probably why he had some difficulties with his wife and his children. He was a prophet.

Maybe prophets shouldn't get married, but the Bible doesn't teach that. But he was very idealistic. Later in his life, he said a lot of things that brought other things into balance.

He openly confessed that his greatest problem was lack, excuse me, lack of moderation. You know what moderation is? Self-control. And he pointed out how as preachers, we can easily say things that are a little bit, you know, immoderate.

And he pointed out in that same article, A.W. Tozer, it's difficult to pin a preacher down. I was introduced in a meeting this past Sunday. I'm sure the pastor didn't realize what he was saying.

As mobilizing millions of young people in 1963 across Europe. Millions. It was actually a little less than 2,000.

And it wasn't me, it was many people and hopefully the Holy Spirit. Isn't it sad that sometimes we, as Christians, lean a bit toward exaggeration. It was a tremendous meeting.

Oh, it was one of the greatest meetings I've ever been to. It was packed. How many were there? Hundreds.

You find out later there was 101. It's not hundreds. It's 101.

Or to be safe, about 100. Even that's not safe because the next man says, a little over 100. Because that's about 100, isn't it? A little over 100.

So the next man is saying, well, you know, a lot more than 100. The next man says, well, it was between 100 and 200. And the next turkey says, over 200 people were gathered in the meeting.

Forgive me for using the word turkey in vain. We don't like to do that in OM. Idealism.

David Siemens, in his powerful book, Healing for Damaged Emotions, tries to deal with this. And it's a plague in Operation Mobilization. It's a plague.

It ruins teams. It ruins relationships. We get people that we really think are tremendous.

Do you ever get somebody, wow, he's a really great person. I want to get to know that person. And somehow in God's providence you manipulate things a little bit, organize or pray, and you get that person on your team.

You discover a few months later, selfish, proud, insensitive, and worse of all, doesn't like you. We can laugh now, but for many people in Operation Mobilization, it's a shattering experience to have someone they think is a man or a woman of God, and that they want to learn something from them, and later to discover is a piece of clay. Piece of clay.

And I think many, many a pastor has had a nervous breakdown because it was impossible, impossible to perform to the degree that his congregation expected him to perform. And believe me, there's many a pastor that becomes a performer. Because if you don't please some of these saints, they're going to give you, not the right hand of fellowship, they're going to give you the left boot to the door.

And I will tell you, I have faced hundreds of broken and discouraged pastors in my ministry. And it's often linked with the idealism. This is a New Testament church.

You get even people who boast about it. Ours is a New Testament church. Ours is the real fellowship of this, you know, this day.

We're not, you know, we're not a dead church like that one down the road. Ours is alive, look at it. We've got a band, we've got this, we've got that.

People are being saved every week. And then you join it. Maybe for a month, sometimes even years.

And they go relatively well. Read James chapter 5. What about the book of Galatians? Galatians chapter 5 and verse 15. We can't look at all these references and race against the clock.

Galatians 5, 15. But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest ye be consumed of one another. That can happen on an OM team.

Let me just insert this in the way of an announcement. If you know anybody that has been hurt and has had a negative experience on OM. That you feel any of us as leaders could minister to.

By, you know, just a general letter. We don't have to, you know, go into detail. But just a general letter that we just happen to write.

Saying, look, you know, how was your year on OM? You know, is there anything we can be praying for? If you know anybody like that, please don't hesitate to write to us. And we know, no matter what kind of experience someone has on OM when they go home, they will be tested in new ways. Any training program, no matter how good it is, is no guarantee that you're not going to fall flat on your face three or four years later.

May we understand that. But going back to this sins of a tongue, I guess OM still continues to be idealistic in this area. You know, we still, we still somehow feel it's good to aim for a hundred percent.

I think last night there was that emphasis on holiness. And we believe that. And I continue, and I thank God for His grace.

I thank God for His patience to work on the sins of the tongue in my own life. What are a few things you may want to just watch for in this area that perhaps you don't have in your list yet? Watch out for negativism. In fact, if you're basically negative by disposition, that is, you more easily see the negative than the positive, let me just share a little prophetic thing that isn't a prophecy.

You're in for a very hard time. You know, I don't want to make you feel depressed, but since you're negative, you probably already are depressed. But when a movement gets this size, and it's trying to do so much with so few and so little money, and I might be just open with you, that the Bible school today had a discussion with Case, or within the last couple of days, and they are desperate for us to pay our bills here.

And we are behind. I don't know if they've given us the invoice yet, but if they did, we don't have the money. We want to pray, even tomorrow, that we can bring our bills.

I think we're only paid through July. And you may ask, well, what happened to the money I prayed in in July or in August? Let's just understand this. The campaign and the ministry that we're engaged in in the summer is this big, with this much expense.

And the amount we pray in is this big. Because the overheads of getting the whole thing going, just in recruiting people, the overheads in our offices, phone, telex, letters, postage, you know what it costs now to post one letter. Would you like to know how much it costs to post our prayer letters, without which some of you would not be here.

So unlike the early days of OM with this hyper-low overhead, the overheads in OM are much bigger. I don't think it's out of control. There are areas where we need to sharpen up.

But you have to have more trained, experienced personnel to do some of that sharpening up. That's why often we are running a month behind or two in paying the bills. We're trying to change that.

We're thinking, we're praying, we're making changes. Mind you, it certainly keeps us very humble. But would you unite with us, that we may pay our bills soon.

The BBI, who in turn needs the money to keep this going. They've had to increase the costs here. And it's still very fair for the facilities that we have.

I think you realize when you're in a place like this, it's not just the dormitory room that costs. The dormitory. The whole fairness.

But all these conference rooms. Can you imagine holding this in a hotel? As many Christian groups do. Somehow, I believe God's going to bring that breakthrough.

But watch out for negativism, especially when there are so many nationalities and so many denominations and things somehow do go wrong. Beware of ingratitude. Beware of cynicism.

Tozer gave one of the most devastating blows to cynicism. When he said, the cynic is often right. He's often right.

But in fact, he's frightfully wrong because he has the wrong attitude. How's your attitude? You know, this is one of my basic goals in life. To keep a right attitude toward people.

And you know, it's good. But I've got so many areas of failure that this is an area where somehow the Lord has given more grace than victory. I find it very difficult to maintain a wrong attitude toward anybody.

It's just, to me, it's just so basic that we've got to have that right attitude. And if I get a wrong attitude, I immediately repent. If I see somebody doing something really I feel is wrong, I feel is unchristian, I pray for them, I might speak to them, but I don't harbor a grudge.

I don't want to hold anything against anybody. Don't let the sun go down upon your anger. Surely that must also include not letting the sun go down upon bitterness.

Not maintaining a grudge. Is that worth it? That brilliant book, *None of These Diseases*, said we can even bring many illnesses upon our bodies by holding a grudge. So beware of cynicism.

Beware of the wrong attitude. Now, you may have struggles like me, and in certain cases, your attitude about a person may lapse back several times in one day. The Bible doesn't teach you can only repent once a day.

Praise God, you can repent all day long. If somebody around the office is really driving you bananas, he's a real spiritual cockroach, and you'd really wish that somehow the earth would open up and he would go to the other side. None of you, of course, get that kind of hostile thoughts.

I do. But you repent of that. You know that's wrong.

It's not from God. You know, I get a wrong attitude sometimes toward my wife. I never thought this before I got married.

How can you have a wrong attitude toward your wife? I mean, you know, you're one flesh, the Bible says. You're having a wrong attitude toward yourself. And just this weekend, home with my wife, you know, you go home for the weekend and it's going to be great, and your wife, your family, this is tremendous, free from the OM conference, and this little thing goes wrong, and this little thing goes wrong.

Boy, I tell you, we had an interesting weekend. I've come back here for a break to prepare for next weekend. The only way my wife and I have kept going these 25 or more years is continual repentance, continual bending, continual cleansing, continual forgiving.

I tell you, you can never know how affirmative my wife has been in my life in ministry. Now, not every woman has the same degree of ability to be affirmative. If you're married and your wife's not what you feel the most affirmative person, you need to love her and accept her as she is.

Maybe you're not so stimulating yourself. I tried to watch a little bit of Superman III when I was home. My daughter makes recordings for the doulos, and I'm part of the censorship committee.

And so I tried to watch a little bit of Superman III, and I didn't get very far. It was very intimidating. But, uh, somehow we in OM had the idea that there are some spiritual supermen around.

And some of you little Suzy Q's, little Sally, little Betty, little Lucy, or whatever your name is, you think you're going to marry some great spiritual macho superman who's going to take care of you the rest of your life. Let me tell you, you're in for some big surprises. Because with the way things are today, a lot of our feeble, feeble spineless men are looking for some dynamic apostolic woman who's going to take care of him, at least through her prayer life.

Number four, the fourth thing that so easily brings disunity into the body and into the fellowship is crooked thinking. Crooked thinking. Wrong thinking, if you want a simple term.

You know, two plus two equals six. Objective mathematical mind. Two plus two equals six.

Joe smiled at Sally. Therefore, Joe is madly in love with Sally. Two plus two equals eight.

It could be that this brother actually has the kind of face which, you know, smiles. Somebody wrote me some time ago and they said they were very, very happy they actually saw me smile during a message. I think it's somebody who'd been mainly listening to tapes.

But, you know, one of the beautiful things about meeting together as a general council and all these leaders' meetings they do take a lot of time. But I think it's worth it. You know why? We listen to each other.

And some of our faulty thinking, I've had some faulty thinking for a long time about the area of money and where money and prayer, you know, fits together and all that kind of thing. It's been one of my blind spots. And it was through listening to other people, especially of other countries and other denominations and other cultures that finally God got a hold of my heart.

And you're welcome to listen to my financial crisis tape in which I share some of my struggles with faulty thinking as far as I can see today. Don't listen to rumors and think that OM is throwing off its basic policy because it is not. And we're not going into big fundraising and we're not going to go around, you know, we're still, when we make these few changes, we'll be almost the most conservative people in the Christian world when it comes to money.

But we feel there are a few areas of faulty thinking where dishonesty gets in, spiritual pride gets in, and other difficulties have gotten into OM. And we want to try to nail that. And our board members yesterday in the meeting accepted 100% the decision of the General Counsel in regard to a few small changes in this area.

And all the people who have written to me, I've sent this tape out to church leaders, every single feedback, people in OM and outside of OM, basically has been positive. I will tell you, encouraging letters, quite a few of them with very nice-sized checks enclosed in the letter to encourage us forward in a few of these just simple changes about communication. Such things as we don't want to just go around claiming that we never make our needs known.

I have stopped saying that for seven years, I think, at least. What we have tried to say, even before these few changes, and I must avoid getting on about this tonight, is that we have not overtly made our financial needs known. Now, in the future, we may not say that because it got us into a lot of dead-end streets.

And it made other people and other mission groups think that we were better. And super-spirituality sometimes came in. And a lot of other difficulties.

Anyway, we won't get into that. But I think God is constantly wanting to put on corrective lenses in our thinking. It is possible to listen to a report about a person.

Here's Brother Joe over here behind this map, okay? And you hear Sally says something about Joe. And John says something about Joe. And then you get a third witness.

Maybe an older, mature person. They say something about Joe. Even in that case, there's a possibility that it's not, the evaluation is not correct.

It's possible. Now, with three witnesses, there's a good chance that maybe there's an element of truth. But a lot of people are trying to prove things these days by case histories.

Do you know what I mean by case histories? Testimonies. This person did this and they were healed. This person did this and they were healed.

This person did it and they were healed. Therefore, all people who do this will be healed. You get it? Brilliant logic, right? Crooked thinking.

Generalizations. Pendulum thinking. Overreaction.

I have a message. I don't think I'm going to get to it this year. How to make decisions.

How do we make a logical decision in our lives as we face so many different possibilities and so many different ideas? I don't think I'll get into that tonight. The time is going. I am still myself learning how to think through issues.

How to relate the Word of God with the actual situation. How to be a better listener. And how to ask God as it says in James for wisdom that comes from above.

If I didn't believe God could give us wisdom that comes from above to combine with all we get with all we get from His Word and from what we read and from what we listen to. Think of the wisdom just in this book. Surely we can learn from people like this.

We may not agree with everything that Charles Colson says. But here's a man who's gone through real life experiences. Prison.

Failure. He's also been through divorce. And he opens his heart.

He just opens his heart. Somebody says, well that's not Bible exposition. I don't want to read that.

That's not expounding the Scriptures. Is that the only way that Christians get truth? Some people give that idea. I believe in expounding the Scriptures.

I've been listening to Stephen Olford over the weekend expounding the Scriptures. But I tell you, I thank God there are many ways to communicate to God's people. Testimony.

Exhortation. Different types of preaching. Just reading the Word.

And Christian books. And I tell you, I learned something from this book. And I believe one of the greatest marks of spiritual health on OM, and I pray it'll never go, is that we read widely, we listen widely, and we're always learning and always growing and not afraid because of pride to change when we see that something isn't best.

Number five is impatience. You know how much the Word of God talks about this? Talks more about impatience than it does evangelism. Talks more about impatience than a lot of things we talk about in OM.

Would it be an awesome thought for you to think that maybe God has mainly brought you on OM this year to teach you patience? You thought you were coming to serve the Lord. We get a certain group that come in and say, serve the Lord. God's called me to serve Him.

Nothing wrong with that. The Lord's servants? But you know, if you're gonna serve the Lord, it needs to be in the energy that the Lord alone can give. And that means self is gonna be crucified.

Christ is gonna be reigning and ruling in your heart. And that means God wants patience in your life. That's one of the schools where my victories and my problems have been far greater than some of the other things I've mentioned.

God is so merciful. And I praise the Lord so many ways He teaches patience. I won't go into the list.

There's not time. Number six, just plain old lack of love. Ooh, that sounds too too, too, too.

That's just too... It doesn't have a punch to it. Lack of love. What's your problem, brother? Demons! A lot of people believe that now.

Everything that's wrong, you know, a little twitch. I just heard of a guy. He went up and down the country.

He said in his message he had so many people laying hands on him to get him free he thought he was going bald. I hope he was exaggerating. I know that sometimes there are serious cases.

I like to use this terminology in which the enemy seemingly has got, you know, a foothold in our lives. He certainly did in my life in the area of lust. And I tell you, I'm not afraid to pray.

I'm not afraid to fast. I'm not afraid to ask someone else to pray. But more often our problems are more basic.

And the lack of love is certainly one of the big basics. Most of the problems on our teams, not all of them, most of them could be solved with a little more love at the right time. And of course the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5, 22, the fruit of the Spirit, it's like the spectrum of love.

We've all heard messages on it. You had an orientation tape on it. But we still don't have enough of it.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance against such. There is no law. And let me just say this.

And this has been the motto of OM since its inception 28 years ago. Whatever you get in OM, if you don't get love, you haven't got it. Please don't go around too much talking about, you know, OM principles.

Why don't we talk about biblical principles? Why don't we talk about what the Word of God says? I believe in the OM principles. I'm not against that if it's kept in balance. But if you want to talk about OM principle, I know it doesn't sound so exciting as far as I'm concerned.

And I've been watching it all these years. Love. Love.

I have a little message about people that are difficult to love. All kinds of people I've met along life's road. What a challenge.

Number seven, darkness. Just spiritual darkness. Lack of walking in the light.

1 John 1, verse 7. I don't think walking in the light works very well if love is not mingled with it. I know leaders who have been totally devastated when some team member finally decided he was going to tell that leader a thing or two. And into the person's office he went.

This thing and that thing. And maybe that leader had just been giving his all. He'd been going the extra mile.

He'd been staying up late, working, trying to hold the team together. And this brother comes in and just blasts away. I want to tell you something worse.

It's when a leader gets upset and starts blasting away at some new recruit. And I pray if that happens to you, you'll somehow let love grab your heart at that moment. I know most of these leaders.

They don't want to do that. They don't mean to do that. But they are all different temperaments.

They get under pressure. They've got a lot of goals, a lot of programs. They're actually one of their greatest goals is to make you happy.

I can tell you every leader basically wants to see happy, fulfilled people by this time next year. But the very thing we're wanting to do creates pressure that sometimes keeps us from doing it. Certainly in my life.

My very desire at times to do the right thing and say the right thing to my wife, my secretary, my team, my children. The very pressure in wanting to do that has made me vulnerable so I didn't do it. And then when they misunderstood it and thought that I had something deep against them when that wasn't the case.

It was a passing thunderstorm. And the whole thing goes out of control. Walking in the light is good.

But it needs to be with dignity. Do you like that word? We need a little more dignity in operation mobilization. It needs to be with love.

It needs to be with a deep sense of respect for that person. He may have failed. He may have said the wrong thing.

But if he is in a place of leadership and to me even not in a place of leadership, he deserves. You're believing the best. You're respect.

By the way, let me just throw another practical thing in that could save a lot of situations. You try to share something with a leader and you feel he didn't hear. We have people they try to share something when the leader is on the run.

He's busy and they try to get to him. And they get brushed off or, you know, they get a negative. And so they go back and sulk.

And they hold that again in their heart. In working with leaders, here's a little motto. If at first you don't succeed, try again.

Maybe with a letter. Maybe he has said, no, you feel you want to appeal. Write a letter and say, look, just give this one more consideration and what you decide, I'll live with it.

That's a good way to go. My wife has got a lot through that method. But don't say, please, don't say, the leader was too busy.

He wouldn't listen to me. Especially if it's only been a passing, you know, quick little comment. And sometimes it's necessary to communicate to your leader that you really want to meet with him and talk about something serious.

I tell you, when I get communication like that on my desk, that goes right to the top of my list. If somebody says, you know, I have something serious, I really need to see you. That's very different than people who just make a passing remark, oh, you know, I'd like to get together with you.

Have you got any time? I may get to that person. But I tell you, the man who writes the letter or, you know, gets to my secretary or sees me and says, I really need to see you. This is important.

It's on my heart. I've got to get it off. That kind of stuff, my antenna goes, and sometimes you lose sleep because you end up talking late into the night.

Listen, I'm not, I'm not, how can I say, I can't overstress this enough. There's got to be vital, loving communication between the new recruit and the leader if this thing is going to work in 1985 and 1986.

There's got to be that communication.

Neither party can withdraw. And I think with the size of OM today, the complexity of OM today, more followers, new people, whatever you want to call yourself, disciples, learners, you have to take the initiative. I know people that have waited all year or six months for the leader to call them in for fellowship.

And I tell you, especially many male leaders don't easily take the initiative in calling all the girls in for fellowship. There's nothing wrong with that. But some just find it difficult.

But they would not be refused any woman who wrote to any of our leaders and said, look, you know, I'd like to get some time with you and just talk about something. There's nothing wrong with that. We need more of it.

And women certainly need to be heard more around Operation Mobilization. Number eight, the lack of vision. If we lose the vision, we don't know, you know, what we're really going after, why we're doing this, then our motivation goes down and sometimes division comes in.

Number nine, division often comes because of rigid thinking. I'm convinced we have a five to ten percent people in OM who are way too rigid in their thinking. And you know why God has brought you into OM? If you're in that camp, God wants to make you a little more broad-minded.

Some of you are very brethren. How we love the brethren. But you've been reared in the brethren.

You mainly know the brethren. Maybe it's time to get to know the cistern. But you mainly... And you're a little bit rigid.

And let me just tell you, if you're rigid PB, and I was baptized in that little fellowship twenty-seven years ago, believe it or not, by Dale Roton, you're going to find OM very hard. And as a new recruit, you may prefer to leave at the end of the week and go back and just work with your own denomination. Because OM is committed to an interdenominational position.

Not in word, but in deed. Then you get some people from the Pentecostal side. That's the fastest growing church in the world today, the Pentecostals.

And I tell you, Pentecostal pride can come as fast as brethren pride in the 1800s. The brethren, you know, they're going a bit downhill. One thing about the brethren I fellowship with these days, they seem a lot more humble than they used to be.

Praise the Lord. But the Pentecostals, they're riding high. They got churches with 500,000 men.

I always thought God was a diamond miner rather than a coal manufacturer, but no doubt, they're all Spirit-filled, dedicated, realistic people. Let's believe the best. But I find people, I listen to a lot of tapes, fellowship with a lot of people, I find people and I know I must have been in this camp, maybe I still am, because I don't believe in sacrificing basic doctrines and so in that sense we're all a bit rigid, aren't we? We're all a bit rigid.

But oh, wouldn't it be beautiful for some of you who are a little bit narrow, a little bit rigid, a little bit broader mind. Maybe if you're Brethren you can fellowship with a little more Pentecostals. Maybe if you're Pentecostal you could reach out, fellowship with some of the Brethren.

Maybe if you're Lutheran you could get to understand these Baptists. Maybe if you're German-Lutheran you could have fellowship with an American Southern Baptist. Or maybe if you're Anglican, if you're Anglican you could have some fellowship with what would be good.

What about the Methodists? You don't get so many of those. But this is a Methodist book I offered you free. Rigid thinking has divided many O.M. teams, it's destroyed headquarters, it's destroyed homes, and I feel one of the greatest things that God has been doing in my own heart is just make me a little more broad-minded about it.

A lot of things that I once thought were so important, so important, doesn't matter now. Doesn't matter. It's not worth.

Let's not hunt mice. You ever heard that expression? Let's not hunt mice. Little things.

You've got your big gun and you go down the road. Baloom! A little mouse. Let's hunt elephants.

You know, let's hunt elephants. And the Lord Jesus taught that. He said you strain in a gnat and you swallow a camel.

And we do that in O.M. We do that in our teams. We get tidiness neurotics linked up with Mr. Mess Pot on the same team. And one is perpetually cleaning and he changes, you know, everything every day and he washes everything every day and he's got heavy-duty deodorant and he's got super deodorizer soles in the inside of his shoes.

And, you know, we can use some of those people. Let me tell you. But that person needs to become patient with the other person who has not yet learned some of these basic disciplines.

Keep communicating. Don't get upset. Don't throw in the towel.

Don't let that thing grow up. Become bigger and bigger. He hasn't washed the teacups.

We're going to bed with dirty teacups. My mother taught that all the dishes must be washed and put away every night. And if my mother taught me that, then that's gospel truth.

And this is heresy. Dirty teacups. In our home, we have had civil war on this issue.

We not only have dirty teacups in the kitchen, which is quite painful for my wife at times, we have dirty teacups everywhere in the house and dirty coffee tubs and other dirty cups. And I don't know how it's happened, but in our family now, even though we teach forsaking all, we have over 50 cups. All different sizes and varieties.

And no one really wants to wash them. Mind you, we're pressing on and we've seen some real victories lately. Little things, we may laugh at here, but on our teams, our blood pressure goes up.

Have you ever seen the team member when his blood pressure is going up? You know, it's like an elephant is sitting on one of his corns. And then he tries to say something. Alan Redpath once said, when you're upset, when you're upset, you know when you're upset, do whatever you want, just don't open your mouth.

You can wiggle your ears, wiggle your toes, count to 10. I've been saved in many situations in the past years when I wanted to burst out and say something and I learned this lesson, count to 10. And it works.

You say, oh, that's using Carl methods to be spiritual. Let me just say this for you, dear spiritual brothers and sisters. When you're battling a war on many fronts, sometimes you have to use as many different methods as possible.

And I find some of the practical methods are an enormous help for me in standing against Satan. It's not always just prayer, just the Word, just quoting the blood of Christ, just standing in the name of the Lord with a shield of faith. Sometimes there are practical things.

You may want to get some more sleep. You may want to go get a decent meal. You may want to go have a walk.

You may want to just get some exercise or do something you like to do. Isn't it wonderful that as Christians we are allowed to do many things that we like to do? Isn't that great? Because years ago in O.M., there was a little group that believed that the Christian life was mainly doing all these things you don't want to do. We had people actually come on Operation Mobilization thinking it was about the best purgatory program going.

They didn't want to be a disciple. They didn't want to forsake all. They didn't want to be a missionary.

But then they felt so guilty about it they didn't know what to do with all that guilt, so they joined Operation Mobilization. And then we wonder why we've got ex-O.M.ers around the world who haven't quite made it through life. Don't think we have some miracle cure for deep emotional long-term struggles.

It's going to take time. But one thing we can do even as we go from here tonight is somehow by the grace of God at least be going in the right direction. And unfaithfulness in little things, it may be washing up, it may be the vehicle, it may be your manner of dress, it may be your breath, it may be some other little thing, in Christian work it can be tremendously important.

We're dealing with people. I remember taking a course under Billy Graham's senior counselor and they emphasized when you're witnessing for Christ you make sure you have sweet breath. You make sure you don't have any odors coming from your body.

Little things have caused teams tremendous confusion. And in O.M. we're not just wanting to teach you the big spiritual lessons of life, how to tear down enemy strongholds in the Soviet Union. We want to teach you basic principles of godliness.

My mother always used to say cleanliness is next to godliness. Well, my tenth point is simply failure to receive admonition and correction. How do you handle correction? Has anybody corrected you in the last day or two? How did you handle that? Maybe if nobody's correcting you, you could sign somebody up.

Sign somebody up. Maybe somebody living near you in the dormitory and say, look, why don't you be my exhorter corrector for the next ten days? Anything that I do you think is a bit offensive, let me know. When I have a man working for me as my helper, and I always do, one of his jobs, if he sees something I do or say that's offensive, he's supposed to tell me.

It's a blessing. Who do you have correcting you? Really walking in the light with you? Maybe you see enough yourself. Maybe you can correct yourself.

But I needed help. I needed help. Do you get offended if someone says something to you about maybe some little habit you have? Little idiosyncrasies we have.

I know, I have one or two, and one really bothers my wife. I'm battling away at this little, little pesky idiosyncrasies. Couldn't necessarily call it a sin.

Life isn't just sin and non-sin. Life is many things. Little idiosyncrasies that irritate people.

Maybe you could ask someone to give you a list. Ten things you do that I find rather detestable and offensive. You say you're not ready for that kind of advanced training.

Okay. May the Lord make you ready in His time. How does disunity come? These are just a few ways.

Let's learn from this. Let's learn from this. And let's believe.

Would you believe with me for greater unity within OM this year? We already are united in Jesus Christ. He paid it all. It's not all our efforts.

He has made this possible. So let us, even as we go from this chapel tonight, even as we think of our brothers and sisters who don't know English, who we need to be exercising greater sensitivity toward, let's just think of ways that we can build the unity. And I will tell you, OM will have a lot more mileage for Jesus Christ this year if we'll hold the shield of faith up against some of this stuff.

This is my greatest desire. I don't have any super-huge burden as far as strategy for this year. I got my Muslim thing there.

That is a major thing. I've got this Africa with a doulous. Don't worry.

I've got too much vision. It's hard for people to live with it all. But my goal this year is personal holiness in little things.

I want to be more gentle in 1985-86 with my wife, my family, my team members. I want to be more sensitive. I want to think through better before I open my mouth.

And yet at the same time I want to be less nervous about my mistakes, my sins, my poor manners that my wife lovingly reminds me of fairly regularly. Praise the Lord for committed wives. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for this time together. If we can win some victories in this tonight it will gain us mileage every week this year. In our dormitories, in our flats, on our teams, in our headquarters, on the ships, in the vehicles, in our families, in our leadership, in our discipleship, we want to deal with these areas, these subtle methods that Satan uses to bring division and disunity and confusion.

Lord, we are so different one from another. Even different words have different meanings to different people. It scares us sometimes in OM when we see the complexity of what we are attempting to do.

We realize we need each other more than we know. The new recruit, the longer term, the ten-talent man, the one-talent man, the Ph.D. university graduate for Bible school dropout, the creative, the plotter, the visionary, the consolidator, all different kinds of people, God draws together. Break down the barriers even

as we wait upon you in prayer tomorrow and we'll give you all the glory and all the praise in Jesus' name.
Amen. Let's stand and sing all over the world the Spirit is moving and let's believe that.

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