

Integrity of the Heart

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding reality and living a life of love, forgiveness, and honesty.

Duration: 42:01

Scripture: Revelation 3:15

Topics: "Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking reality in one's spiritual journey. He encourages listeners to enroll for life in God's course on discipleship and to join God's army of spiritual revolution. The speaker defines reality as Christ and urges listeners to pursue Him wholeheartedly. He also highlights the need for honesty and repentance in one's motives and emphasizes the importance of understanding God's forgiveness and provision for sinners.

Transcript

A lot of people at our age go on a religious binge. We try religion. Now, as you sit there, you don't think you're trying it.

You feel, this is it for me, I'm living for Christ all my life. But somehow, time proved that you were just trying it. You didn't really mean it.

Because so many who live for Christ at 15, at 16, at 17, sometimes a little older, even at our age, some of us are older than that, overthrow Christ in the 20s. Many of you, I hope, have got by that stage, but most teenagers certainly haven't. And so, this is our burden, that you may have such an encounter with reality and find God so real and get to know some of the principles of living for Christ that make this thing tick, because it does, that you'll never turn away from Jesus Christ, that you'll live for Him, whether it's in a factory or an office or on the mission field.

And I don't particularly care, really, ultimately, I'll push missions because God's given me that burden. But if you tell me specifically, I know the Lord has called me into business for Jesus Christ, I'll be the first one to say hello. The idea that the person who's not in full-time work is in an inferior position is one of the subtlest, slipperiest lies that Satan's ever given.

The idea that those of us in full-time work, we're sort of some special, special group. There's no biblical basis. We're all pilgrims, we're all ambassadors of Christ.

So this is our real burden, reality. You may go home. I don't believe this thing of reality is a black or white situation.

This is a deadly pattern in our thinking. And I hope some of you will write some of these things down and think about it. One of our deadly patterns as young people is black and white thinking.

I've either got reality or I don't have reality. Well, I want to tell you, if it's that way, then sure, I have. There's so many areas, experience or alternate. In one way, I think you know what I mean.

But people who come on OM for a summer and are convinced that when they come at the end of this summer, they're going to have it. They're going to have it. And they're going to go back, go into their church, and all of a sudden this reality, you know, it's just going to, it doesn't work that way.

Because the average person, when they go back from OM, is still very young, and he's only had one or two months. He should have had, of course, a lot of exposure to it before, but it may be he's only had a couple of months of really beginning to move with Jesus. And I want to tell you, watchman knee hits it on the head.

He says it's not one year, not five years, not 15 years. It takes 20 years and more to make a spiritual man. There's no shortcut.

OM is not a shortcut to reality. For some of you, it may make a lot of the road longer, because you may even be out of the Lord's will to some degree. That's another area where we're black and white.

I'm either 100. I don't think I've ever been 100 percent. You don't understand that, perhaps, that I believe no matter how much I'm in the will of God, I could have been more in the will of God.

Why? Because the main thing that I see for the will of God for my life is that I live a life of love, and no matter how much love I've had at a particular moment, I could have had more love. I might have shown an act of love to someone. That was the will of God.

But I could have been more loving. That would have been more the will of God. And in so much of our spiritual thinking, we've got this black and white.

And because we don't reach this ultimate, think of it as the white, we get discouraged, we get depressed, we wonder what's going on, we sense failures, we drop out. Or we say, oh, what a grievance this is to God. It doesn't work.

Like the lady, you've all heard the story. She came across this verse in the scripture, that if you have faith as the grain of mustard seed, you say unto this mountain, move! And so she prayed to the mountain behind her house, prayed in faith, boldly, she thought, and she said, mountain feed me, move! She turned around and said, well, I knew it wouldn't go. And some of you already, I know, this is OM, this is discipleship, it will work.

I'll try it. You've got to come to that place where you believe it will work, because it's not OM that's going to work, we can't do anything, it's God. It's God.

In any movement, one of the greatest dangers is to get your eyes on the movement. That's why every year I pray about getting out of this crazy thing. The truth, because I'm so frightened of movement and organization and bureaucracy, and if Wesley came back today, would he be? Don't be offended at my Methodist friends, but it would be an interesting sight, and I just have such a burden along that line.

But reality is peace. Reality is not necessarily a black and white thing. Reality is love.

Anything in the area of religion or Christian truth without love is nothing, nothing. If you don't have love, that doesn't mean ultimate, because God's got to continue to work in you. And if there isn't some love, you don't have reality.

I don't care what kind of doctrine you have, how many people you've led to Christ. You say, can you lead people to Christ without love? Of course you can, especially the way we lead them to Christ in these days. But I think we'll be taking up that theme in another evening.

Reality is love. I think this is one of the greatest advantages of all in life, opportunity to learn to love. This is tremendous.

People of different backgrounds, different temperaments, people who rub you like a locomotive going down the same track in opposite direction, and people with different smells and different looks. I just shook a rigid at Milwaukee to see some of the hair. And Milwaukee, imagine if she came over here.

And some of us just have all of our streets, you know, knocked apart. We need an on-fire and it's just a fantastic opportunity to learn, learn love. So many of our problems to give and to receive love.

That's reality. If you can go back and show more love to your parents and communicate love with your parents at home after this crusade, more than before, we'll consider that a greater success than if you can go back. What about your relationship with your parents? Is there reality? Is there communication? Is there love? That's reality.

God wants reality in the home. We know that OM is to some degree, it isn't the first unreal situation you've been in. If you've been in college, you'd hardly call that there are weaknesses in our operation and in the things we have to do.

That's why we so yearn to see people really making this. And we know that this summer, you can almost go through the summer on nervousness and a lot of other things. We're conscious of that.

And that's why we have this message of plea for reality. Plea for reality. I am absolutely convinced these principles, when truly understood, many OMers, when truly understood in a top business position anywhere, and I've seen men who've done it in my life.

This is not some little special super test tube Christianity that only works in this particular evangelical hothouse. It will work anywhere if you understand it, and if you are experiencing this reality in your own heart and life. Oh, I hope you'll see that.

Reality is love. Reality is forgiveness. This is a great burden on my heart that as you go out in these days, you will know that you are forgiven.

I meet many young people, their sins are hammering away at them. Their weaknesses hammering away. This reality that we have in Christ involves total forgiveness.

I meet people in counseling who seemingly have never forgiven themselves for sin. Now, many of you here have had a moment where you were saved maybe recently. And the way society is moving today, those who arrive at the statistic is getting very interested.

But some Christian young people, when they have a moral, and that's really, it really is a subtle form of self-pity. And I would ask you as you plead for God to forgive yourself. Forgive yourself.

Stop carrying a chip on your shoulder against yourself. God has forgiven you. It's gone.

It's gone as far as the East and from the West. Reality is that whole knowledge of forgiveness. And it's not the difference I've noticed in my own life with some people who don't seem to be doing so well in their Christianity.

It's not that I'm that great a Christian. It's just that I know the secret of daily forgiveness. I've failed the Lord today already quite a real way, quite a real way.

But I've experienced His forgiveness. I'm free as a bird. Sometimes I feel I almost can fly.

I'm almost that light, actually. You're free. Wonderful way to live.

That's reality. I fail the Lord. I sin.

I think things that are wrong. But I go to Him, and I have a realistic relationship with Him, so He forgives me. Reality is not perfection.

Perfection will kill you. In one way, it is our goal. But if it becomes, instead of a goal, an obsession, it'll kill you.

And I've seen false holiness ideas slay more Christians than almost anything else. It is a giant killer, because though we may maintain a super level for a while, like this summer, you'll live, and some of you, on a super level for the summer. One reason you won't have any time for some of your favorite sins.

That's right. A lot of Christians around you will watch you go back to Britain. I want to tell you, if your Christianity hasn't gone deeper, and you don't know something of forgiveness, you go down.

I've had many tell me how. One of the reasons is this. Get the super standard.

We're witnessing every day. We're winning souls. We're praying every day.

We're repenting. We're pressing on. We're in fellowship.

All right, we go back to Britain. Very few can maintain that. Very few.

There's bound to be, don't be discouraged by it, some post-crusade drop-off. You're not going to continue at this same level. I'm not sure it's even God's will.

It might be God's will when you get back to Britain to take a good week holiday. There's nothing wrong with that, especially for people who don't relax easily in a normal environment. I have to turn my work into a holiday or I'd crack up.

I'd just laugh it off. If you don't learn how to laugh in this movement, you'll cry. And so we set up these fantastic standards.

Maybe our team leader, we saw him getting up at four in the morning. We fail. When we fail, instead of, we think, well, what happened? And then we think, well, I failed the Lord again.

Maybe you'll stand up during one of the invitations and you'll come into the room and it'll last for the summer because of all these other things. The moment you get back home, this pressure, that pressure, suddenly you stripped all your nails off in worry. What's happened to the rest? And then you wonder, well, can you go back over Jordan? How did this happen? Pretty soon you're getting out your 258-page book on sanctification, which gives you a migraine.

You're confused. And so you get discouraged. And so you then, what's the use? And you drop out.

Again and again and again, I've seen people set these fantastic standards, fail to understand, will just undermine any reality you ever get. I've seen it all over the world. I've seen some people who at one time were living at such a level.

I've seen them down in the very bottom of the things you'd think I were making up. It's just incredible reality. It means forgiveness, and I believe means daily forgiveness.

If you're really living close to Jesus, every day there's going to be something you're going to have to repent about. If you really have the standard of the New Testament, I have to repent constantly of the coldness of my heart. Don't you think it's a sin to have a cold heart? When the Bible says be hot or cold, cold of course is being sinful.

Bible says, of course, if it's sinful to have a cold heart, the Bible says also it's sinful to have a lukewarm heart. You may say, I don't have to repent of a cold heart. The Bible says you have to repent even of a lukewarm heart.

If your heart isn't anything but perfect for Jesus, thrilled with Jesus, and for people, then you've got to repent. Well, I don't know about you, but that means an awful lot of repentance for me. Now that doesn't mean I sort of bow down 25 times a day.

He reads the heart. He knows whether that he can see right in. And I believe that's one of the secrets of reality, forgiveness.

That's what's kept me going over these years. As a young Christian, I tell you a number of times, 17, 18 years of age, got up, but it works on God's principles, not yours. We'd all like to get sanctified and go out of here with a big bang, but it doesn't work that way.

It doesn't work that way. And you're, well, I forget who it was. One man of God said, there's no gain without pain.

No gain without pain. And it's so, so true. Forgiveness.

Forgiveness. Reality is forgiveness. Reality is purity of motives.

Pure motives. It was Tozer who said, I wrote in my Bible, let me read it so I don't misquote it. I'm speaking about motives and the importance of motives.

He gave these words, and I suggest perhaps you write them in your Bible. The test by which all conduct must finally be judged is motive. As water cannot rise higher than its source.

You always get the lights on, a quotation. It's interesting. As water cannot rise higher than its source, so the moral quality in an act can never be higher than the motive that it's--reality involves motives.

Absolutely. A guy may have done something completely wrong, completely wrong, but because his motive was right, there's reality. There's a degree to reality.

Another man may do something absolutely right, zero defects, all wrong with God. The motive wasn't right. We have to search our motives this week.

Really? Why are you here? Basic question for discussion tomorrow. It would be interesting if you'd be open enough to do it in your discussion session. Why am I here? What really motivated you? Love for people? Desire just to glorify God at any cost? Say your motives.

Our motives should never go any lower. Now this is a danger area because we can really become introspective here, like Peter Song, not introspection. Reality is not all getting our evangelical--what do they call those things?--stethoscopes.

The doctors have. You probably don't call it that in England. And listening and looking inside, but I believe with all my heart we've got to be willing to face our motives.

Because I just look, and if I see something that's not pleasing, I just immediately repent. Forget it. Plow on.

Don't, as we often said, throw away the baby with the dirty bathwater. It's a great mistake. I don't think any-- When you find the motive, here's a fellow giving out trash and says, well, I'm not doing this because I love God or because--well, let me tell you, that's not--but just cast that motive out of your heart.

Ask God to cleanse you and to give you that, and He will. And sometimes with me, it's just a matter of sheer intellectual combat. Because I just don't feel it.

I just don't feel some kind of sensation toward all these people in the streets, and I'm hungry, and--I advise you to give out your words. Reality is firstly a matter of emotion, not the emotion. That will come.

That's the last car on the train. The engine is the will. The next car is the mind.

And I have saved myself many a tragedy in my own life because I just repeated something like that in my mind. Now, God can always give us greater motivation, but that is definitely accepted motivation. Obedience to God's Word is accepted motivation.

As many times in my Christian life, I said, I don't understand. You've said it. I believe it.

That's reality. Don't get the idea that reality is some kind of fine tingling sensation that you carry around with you. You think you've lost the blessing.

I'm scared when I see people getting a great blessing, great revival. I'm scared of this thing in America. I'm not against it.

Praise the Lord for it, but I'm scared of it. It's so easy. We trust emotion.

It's so easy. We trust a particular experience or a particular feeling that we may even have for several weeks. We may have it all summer, and then it goes.

Because we trust that, we go as well. Deadly. Deadly.

Reality. Motivation. Let us search our motives.

Let us repent of false motives. Let us be honest about our motives. Reality and a plea for reality must include a plea for honesty.

Be real with someone at this conference. There are plenty around who are just free. I know Peter, who just sang.

He'd be happy to talk with you. He's a good talker. Goes on into the night.

Can't get him up in the morning, but he loves to talk with you. There are others around. Bob Cook, who's standing back there next to him.

Great talker. And find someone with a listening ear. My wife is a ... and hopes to talk to me once in a while, too.

But to find someone and have an honest conversation. The Bible says confess. You're confessing some of my faults.

It was a great help. And I think Paul Tournier in his book *Strong and Weak*, and I believe that this plea for reality must be a plea for honesty. You've got a lot of false motivation.

Go to someone. I had a young man come to me last year. American.

He came in. He said, my motivation is completely false. And it was.

He had the most strange reasons why he was over here. And he told me, I don't really feel now I can go on a team. I said, fine.

He said, I better go back to the States. I said, wait a minute. You feel at this point you can't go on a team.

And he had various reasons about personal work in that area. I said, what about working in the book department in the summer, packing books for them, sending all over the world? Somehow in his mind he felt he could do this. He felt that he wasn't ready for personal contact.

And I can understand that. And he had a fantastic time on O.M. So I've been writing to him ever since. Packing books.

And he came out of this terrific fog that he was in. And you may have come to this at the end of this week. Look, Mike, Jonathan, whoever you're talking to, I have to be honest.

I am not at all ready for this, this front line banging on doors and giving out tracks. Is there any other place? Or you may want to even tell me. And deceive myself, deceive the leaders and go out.

But you see, if you're honest about your problems, it'll probably be like many other people. We'll see that it isn't that serious. Probably most of us as leaders have the same problem.

And we'll say, look, get on with the job. The Lord will help you as you move. I'm amazed at the things that young people allow to, and they think this is going to keep me from being fruitful.

Some other thing. And oftentimes it's not the case at all. A little discussion and prayer and counseling, the thing can be solved.

Yes, reality must include honesty. Let's be honest with one another. Let's have honest conversations.

Does anyone hold any lines on your questionnaire form? Every year we have some. Are there any questions about health that you sort of worked your way around? Any question about emotional problems that you sort of worked your way around? You should put that right. You should put it right.

It's like when you cheat on an exam. It isn't right. You know, God is looking, and this is the next aspect I want to mention of reality, for men of integrity.

Do you know that word? It's one of the greatest words in the English language. Integrity. It speaks of so many things.

Honesty, clarity, purity, openness, frankness, straightness. The tremendous word, integrity. God is looking for men of integrity.

That means He could trust them with a million pounds. That means He can entrust them with the lives of others. That means He can put them into leadership.

That means He can do all kinds of things. God is looking for men of integrity. Absolutely honest.

Absolutely straight. Absolutely clear in their dealings, in their business, in their relationship. Oh, I think that's tremendous.

You can deceive us to think that, or to allow in any way a mentality to come in which you're trying to get away with as much as you can on OS. That's beyond me. I can't understand it.

I want to see, somebody might say, you know, just how much I can get away with in the area of these social rules. Boy, these things. Imagine that.

Look at that. Just see how much you can get away with, or the area of money. If He is going to do something like this, He'll just share.

He'll say, well, quite frankly, I can keep this particular aspect of it. Boy, that takes a man of integrity. For a man to come up, be straight.

Oh, I tell you, that's something. And a lot of these things, it isn't what you're doing or not doing. That's not the problem at all, young people.

It's your attitude. It's your attitude. It's your motive.

We can become spiritually deceitful. Deceit is a very subtle thing. It covers many areas.

You could have deceived with your questionnaire. You can deceive when we interview you by just giving a false impression. It's easy, isn't it? Not a lie, not a big bad lie like that he said I never could give, but just.

God eats it. It's not real. It's not real.

I love real people. I have a lot of friends outside of them who are real sinners. Some of them are really.

A plea for reality, a plea to break free from all this kind of. And I want to tell you, it won't get over in a week, nor in a summer, nor even on a year program. The man who wants reality, the man who is hungry for this kind of life, he must prepare for a lifetime of.

That's the challenge. Enroll for life in God's course on discipleship. Enroll for life in God's army of spiritual revolution.

Enroll for life in that band of those who are. You want reality at any cost. Meanwhile, I want to get as much of it, as much of him as I possibly can.

A plea for reality. If you've missed this, you've missed all hell. I don't care if you've been to India and back.

If you've missed this, you've missed the real message, the heartbeat, the message of Jesus Christ. For if you want the final definition of reality, it's simply this. Reality is Christ.

Hunger for him. Go after him. Stay close to him.

You will grow in reality, day by day. Let us pray. Oh God and Father, we know it's not a human leader that's pleading for reality tonight.

It's you. It's your Holy Spirit that is tugging away at our heartstrings tonight, calling us into the Holy of Holies, where we may walk with you and know this reality, this peace, this forgiveness, this honesty, this openness, this love. Oh Lord, we're hungry for this.

We know that it's only found in your Son, the Lord Jesus, the only one who lived the absolutely realistic life upon the earth. Now our hearts are panting after him, oh God, as the deers, the heart pants after the water brook. Meet us in these days, oh God, even tomorrow morning as we rise early and search your word and pray and seek your faith.

Father, we know it will not happen in a night in a week, in a year, in a decade. But Lord, we know it will happen. We ask God that this revolution of reality that you have begun might continue, oh Lord, that it might continue at any cost, nor that there's someone this evening that's discouraged, sensing failure, sensing some bitterness or some problem await, oh Lord, touch that reality from above.

Please, oh God, by your Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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