

Keeping Spiritually Fresh

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of maintaining spiritual freshness through personal responsibility, training, and community support.

Duration: 46:23

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-3, Hebrews 12:5-7, Hebrews 12:11, Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 12:28-29

Topics: "Spirituality"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of staying spiritually fresh and avoiding the traps of Satan. They acknowledge that many people have lost their freshness and fallen for lies, allowing bitterness and resentment to creep into their lives. However, the speaker encourages listeners that they can live in personal revival and stay spiritually fresh by following the principles found in the Word of God. They also discuss the importance of evangelism and spending time with unbelievers, as well as the financial aspect of ministry and the dignity of living off support from others. The speaker references various Bible passages to support their points throughout the sermon.

Transcript

Let's just pray. Father, we praise you for the beauty of this day. We praise you for the great reality of knowing you on a personal basis.

We thank you for faith that in the midst of struggles and trials and whatever may be facing us, we can rejoice in your grace and your salvation and your love for us. And we just thank you for your Son, the Lord Jesus, through whom we pray. Help us to be diligent now to receive from your word, to receive from your word that which you have for us.

Strengthen those that are not able to be with us, that may hear this by tape but may not hear it at all, down in the engine room, up on the bridge, working in the galley. Those that are not feeling well, just enable them to somehow persevere. We look to you to make this day count for eternity, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, it's great to finally be back sailing with one of the OM ships. If I look back over the past years, perhaps one of my mistakes, many mistakes, is not spending more time sailing on God's ships.

It's a privilege to have this extra time to share, and I know that so many who come onto, into OM, they have this desire, of course, to grow in the Lord, to become more mature spiritually. I think most discover

it's not as easy as perhaps they thought. Maybe for some it's easier.

I'd like to get some letters from the easier crowd. Growing in Christ is easier than I thought. I brought to the ship some cassette tape albums that I'm going to present to the librarian.

Is the librarian here this morning? Alec Brackett was on the ship briefly. He's the man that's been duplicating these tapes for 28 years. Lives near Manchester.

He came on the ship. I gave him a little Verwer tour, even though I'm only learning to find my way around. And we got two albums here.

This is an anniversary album of ministry tapes, just a few select tapes of all the tapes he did before 1970. We're going to put this in the library. There's Growing in Grace by Keith Beckwith, the man that was killed in Poland in 1965.

There's A Day Jesus Came to My House by William MacDonald, a message he gave at an OM conference, I think, in 1964. There's George Miley, who led this ministry of the ship for so many years. Power of His Resurrection.

Jonathan McCrosty, Counting It All Joy. Dale Roton, Confidence in God and Inspiration of Scriptures. Greg Livingston, Four Spiritual Laws.

Ralph Shallis, What Does God Mean to Us? And then the other side are mainly messages that I shared before 1970. I already felt the glory may be departing from OM way back in the 60s. So here's a message, is the glory departing? And there's a message I gave at Cambridge University, A Christian Manifesto.

I would not even... I need to listen to these myself, because I haven't a clue what I'm saying on these tapes. This is 20, 30 years ago. So that's going to go into the library.

We hope when you borrow those tapes, you could return them. If you want one of those tapes to keep, if you write to me, I will arrange for you to get that. This one is after the 80s.

And it even has my Toward the Year 2000 message, which was only given last year. A message that somehow, in God's mercy, very distinct from other things I've spoken, this particular message, somehow in God's mercy, he's choosing to use in an unusual way. I talk about survival of the family.

This seems to be a sex album. I talk about living under pressure. I talk about what the Bible says about sex.

Then over here we have Rotan on principles that are alive, Miley on why does God allow a crisis, Nigel Lee on battle for the Bible, Howard Norrish on suffering, Martin Goldsmith on prepare for leadership, Peter Maiden on overview of the OM work, Peter Conlon, what on earth is God doing? So that's going to go in the library. Another message here you may want to get to is being big-hearted. And if any of you are in OM, not just for work, now I know on this ship, most of you, praise God, have come to work your knuckles off, and that's wonderful for Jesus.

But any of you who are into the training thing, you're not writing anything down at this point. It's a denial that you have any real interest in training. So if you can take out a pen and paper, or if you can't find one, you can just repent.

You've got about as much initiative as a backslidden grasshopper. That's an overstatement, and maybe bring it tomorrow. But really, a lot of the talk in OM about training among the troops is just eyewash, because they're not willing to pay the price to be trained.

Training hurts. Training is hard work. And I believe that the fact that we are a work-oriented ship with all the complexity of that can make this a better training program if people are serious.

But if people are not that serious, or somehow they've lost their zeal, I'm going to talk about that this morning, how to maintain spiritual freshness, then they will not get what they should be getting. And it's just so, so important to understand that. I would like you to try to listen to this message, being big-hearted.

I gave it in Peshawar, March 6, 1987. And I felt so strongly about this message that the message on extremism has been taken out of the book *Revolution of Love and Balance*, now called *Only Revolution of Love*. Ship's one of the few places you can find that book.

And it's been replaced with this message. A plea to be big-hearted, and how we need that in all of the OM ministry. Then there's this famous message on financial crisis.

It's interesting that hundreds of major Christian leaders have all over the world listened to this tape, but OMs haven't listened to it. You will never understand where OM is financially today, why we are taking offerings in these meetings, which is an offense to some people, not many. If you've not heard that tape.

Then I talk about apathy. Then I talk about the laborer is worthy of his hire. Shortly after the new financial policy five years ago, the Lord gave the anointing to share this message.

I was speaking about this with my team yesterday morning in London. From passages in Corinthians, don't muzzle out the ox. And pointing out the dignity of living off money given to us by other people.

We are not beggars. To go out in churches and preach and pray for funds to come in is something we can do with dignity, because the laborer is worthy of his hire. And there's another bunch of verses tied in with that.

Some of that I touch on that tape. The laborer is worthy of his hire. And then there's emotional and spiritual survival.

Discouragement. I talk a lot about dealing with that. So that's going to the library.

An extra two, three or four of these will be in the library. So that is more than one copy of some of these tapes. Let me ask a question.

How many of you knew that in the whole original vision to get a ship, one of the main guiding principles was that we would be able to study, we would be able to have sessions like this as we moved toward the target field in that first year it was India. How many actually knew that little principle? Well, Dave Thomas did, praise God, and a few others. That was a guiding foundation principle.

How did that come? Because some of us had spent hundreds and hundreds of hours in the backs of dusty trucks bouncing over washboard roads in Turkey and Iran where to read a book could mean the end, seemingly, of your eyesight or schizophrenia. And it is very much linked with what many people would classify as Verwer's extremist view on redeeming the time. To me, time is as valuable as money.

There are people in this world who receive a salary of one million dollars per day. And they are unsaved jungle bunnies as far as I'm concerned. We are kings and priests.

We are sons of God. What do you think God would pay to do His work? A measly one million dollars? Forget it. How much do you think that's worth in heaven? God has a different pay system.

He talks about rewards in heaven. He talks about treasure in heaven. And so I believe, as God's people, time is more valuable than money.

And one of our first scriptures this morning, we're going to have a number of scriptures, is that word in Ephesians, redeem the time. I used to be so strong that everybody in the back of the truck traveling with me should be redeeming the time. Around that time, we had no Walkmans.

We had old recorders and you could plug a little earphone in, stuck in your ear, where you could listen carefully in the corner bouncing along. Of course, you never had enough battery power. We rigged up some of the strangest things in those trucks to run different recorders in the back of the truck.

As I was insisting, everybody as they travel must be in the Word of God. All the time must be redeemed on the trip. And it did get a bit bizarre.

Some people rebelled against it. There were people who slept a high percentage of the journey just for pure survival. And so when this original idea, the idea came of a ship in that converted pub in Bolton, Lancashire, not far from where we were there in Liverpool.

When I wrote that original memo, How to Use the Ship in World Evangelism, that was one of the concepts. Of course, there was some opposition, like people getting seasick. I get seasick occasionally.

I was traveling on another ship before we had this ship, and that helped in some of my original concepts. I think it was called the MV Vietnam. We were sailing from Marseilles to Bombay.

Long journey. After some days, somehow in the rough sea, I did get seasick. Now, in my particular case, and it's not always possible when you're working, if I lay down, it more or less goes away.

We're all different. Some people have it so bad, laying down does not resolve it. But I lay down and listened to tapes.

I can remember, this is a long time ago, we're talking 25 years ago, I can tell you the tapes I listened to, at least five of them, were Dr. Schaeffer's message, The Problems of the Man That Does Not Believe the Bible. Probably one of the most significant training tapes series I ever listened to in my life. I was flat out in my bed, seasick.

So even when you're not feeling well, and one of the greatest things when you're seasick is to somehow try to keep pressing on. Don't let the first little feeling knock you for a loop. It is a battle.

And people that don't get regularly seasick cannot relate to those easily who do. But I remember long-term people in the ship ministry who were seasick every voyage and somehow they pressed on. That was a very big challenge to me.

So today and tomorrow can be a great day of study. We know there's also lots of work. I did not envisage when this ministry was born how much work it would take to keep a ship going.

And even in the first year with my family living on Lagos, I was stunned at the amount of work to keep a ship going. That has been something we have constantly battled. And the fact that this ministry has been going for 20 years, two ships for 13 years, is an amazing answer to prayer.

I don't easily say things are an answer to prayer. You're looking at a skeptic. You're looking at a potential cynic.

I get really upset when people say something's an answer to prayer when it's just a natural course of events but God can still be involved. I'm not heavy on throwing around the word miracle. Everything's a miracle.

Somebody's constipated and finally they go. Hallelujah, it's a miracle. You can hear them in the toilet praising God.

You know, I think this word miracle does get overused. It gets overused. But I believe this ship is a combination of miracles.

That's God intervening. God doing something unusual. God, of course, in one sense answering prayer is always a miracle.

I guess the problem is the definition of the word. But it's wonderful that now we don't have to over-emphasize prayer. Woo! Prayer is going off the wall.

Over-emphasize prayer. How can you over-emphasize prayer? C.T. Studd felt that prayer was sometimes a cop-out for obedience. And I believe that's sometimes true.

But this ship and your ministry is going on because of the combination of the different gifts that God gives to us. And the grace to work hard. I thank God under our new policy there's no contradiction between working hard and praying hard.

There's no contradiction between me praying for a prayer partner to give finance to the work, which is one of my jobs, and talking to them about it. And I hope that you can see that there's not a contradiction between working diligently and hard on the bridge or the engine room or the galley and praying hard. I appreciate so much the extra time I've been given this morning.

This definitely should be rewarded. It's not near as much as Dulas gave me, but Dulas was stuck at port somewhere and they had been building up for my visit for a long time. And I am just so grateful for this extra time.

I think I'm going to be with you in your prayer time after lunch. And then is there a meeting tonight? Here tonight? And then tomorrow morning again? Boy, thank you for praying for my voice. It's still there.

I want you to turn to Hebrews 12, wherefore seeing we also are compassed about what so great cloud of witness is, let us lay aside every weight in the sin which does so easily beset us. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was sent before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the

exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.

For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is He whom the Father chasteneth not? I want to just talk to you about running the marathon race.

But I want to use a different message. Some of you heard my marathon running race message. So I want to really talk to you about... And these are the words the Lord gave me this morning.

How to stay fresh. One of the most beautiful things about being on the ship, and I've spent a lot of the time since we sailed out, I've spent a lot of time out on the deck, is the fresh air. Coming out and breathing in the sea air.

When I went out early to jog around the deck, I don't know if that's allowed, but forgive me if it isn't. I always watch out for people. I'm very careful.

I just go very slow. I'm in the 50's club. I didn't meet many people by the way.

One secret about survival on the ship is when you get a chance, go outside. The big complaint about this ship, some people, oh the cabins are so small. On a ship, you don't stay in your cabin all the time.

Now some people of course may have to. You're working on a word processor, I know. But you go out, go out on the deck, and there's a lot of deck space on this ship.

And just pray, and meditate, and think upon the Lord who created all this. And I hope that you will develop the ability to stay spiritually fresh on this ship. When we are not spiritually fresh, I do not believe we can blame other people.

I have been in many difficult environments, including in jail, and arrested by the Soviets, and living with backslidden people, and all kinds of interesting environments. I don't ever remember blaming my spiritual condition on other people. Certainly not on O.M. or on my wife.

I tried blaming my wife. I had a wonderful talk with my wife this morning from the bridge on my little phone. And I am so grateful to God for the provision of such a life partner.

But don't blame other people, institutions, organizations, for your own spiritual health. Sure, there are negative factors in every environment. Where are you going to go on the planet where there will be no negative factors? I know this may sound like a broken record, but most ship people, and we have been involved with ship people for 20 years, will tell you it is tougher when you leave.

It is tougher when you leave. And re-entry for ship people back into church life, hometown life, secular jobs, is rough and tough. There is a sense where Satan tries to use everything.

Isn't he? He is clever. And he can even use the blessing. Try to use the blessing.

Many people find the ship very invigorating. They do stay fresh. They are used greatly of God on the ship.

Eventually when they have to leave, it is a very hard experience for them. There is lots of tears. They return home and the people home cannot relate to them.

This is a major problem in Latin America, my friends. Latin American churches do not understand OM. They are only beginning when it comes to world missions.

There is a lot of false stories now going around. We have a brother that was with us from one of the countries there, and this is not anything to do with Latin America. It happened in England.

It happened in America. When he got back to his country, the devil put on the pressure. He started to drift away from Jesus.

A lovely little girl came along. He was seduced. He was thrown completely his Christian faith altogether.

We are in a spiritual warfare. Satan has much less capacity to attack us when we are together like this, a mighty force for God. There are powerful people of prayer on this ship.

There are powerful people of prayer praying for us. Satan is very limited in what he can get away with when a community are standing together and we have so much prayer covering us. Who knows? I don't understand these things.

How many angels are assigned to this ship? God cannot, the devil cannot touch you or this ship without some form of permission. Look at the book of Job. Now these things are a mystery.

Was there a discussion in heaven before Lagos hit the rock? In which Satan was challenging, maybe through an angel, saying, Yes, these OM people, these ship people, they love you. They worship you. Nothing has happened much in terms of real catastrophe to that ship ministry in 18 years.

You let me touch them. You let me take their ship. You will see.

They will spit in your face, living God. You can just imagine Satan challenging one of the angels. And the angel is going back and having a discussion with God.

And God reluctantly, of course that's not a good word to use about God, says, Okay, we'll let them hit that rock. These few little circumstances and they'll end up on the rock. And the devil has been really upset about that strategy ever since.

That bounced back in his face like someone throwing a ton of garbage into the back end of a jet and standing behind it. Satan has got it in the face because out of that came Lagos II. Out of that came more interest in the ship than ever in history.

Out of that, some of you decided to follow the Lord Jesus and join this ministry. Don't blame your spiritual dullness, myopia, lukewarmness on your environment. There is provision in Jesus Christ to run the race in a fresh and in a vigorous and diligent way.

Now I don't want to just tell you to do that. You've already had that, right? Some way or other. I want to share just some practical things and fresh for the Lord every day since my conversion.

Now that's not a boast. Forgive me, I can only boast in Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ lives in me.

Now I've had many moments when I was not fresh. Many moments. I've had hours.

And I'm ashamed of that. But whole days. A whole day of not being with it for Jesus, it's inconceivable.

I'm not going to give the devil a whole day. I'm battling for minutes. And he does get those minutes.

I get really down. People of my temperament go way up and they go way down. Now some of you can't relate to that.

You're even-STEVEN-steady-eddy. You're the laid-back, even-keel-phlegmatic. And I admire such people.

I mean, really. One of the secrets of my ministry is being able to surround myself with laid-back phlegmatics. Initially they can't stand me.

I get on their nerves. I upset them. They feel I have to repent when they're around me.

But eventually we get a relationship and it's amazing. I've watched Mr. Laid-Back Peter Maiden now for, what, 15 years. I mean, it's awesome.

Just try to get him upset. Just try. And you are going to run out of steam.

You're going to end up pounding the wall. Now I've heard occasionally when OM pressure gets at a very high level, that Maiden has raised his voice and really dug it, I tell you. If I could only get a video of it, could sell it around OM.

Doesn't mean he's not firm. Doesn't mean he's not firm. People who know Dale Roton and George Verwer say Verwer is the bark and Roton is the bite.

He can be tough. He can be strong. And we need that kind of leadership in the work of God.

It's always a struggle to find the balance. How can we stay fresh? Let me share some of the principles God gave me as a young Christian. Some of them are very much in the way of remembrance.

There may be some things that are new. First of all, we get in the Word of God whether we feel like it or not. And we memorize Scripture.

In my life, memorizing Scripture has been a key to spiritual freshness. Sometimes Bible study for me is very boring. I easily get bored.

I've got this new book. I think I may have brought it with me. 101 Things to Do During a Boring Sermon.

It's brilliant. 101 things to do during a boring sermon. But I have discovered that the Word of God is sharp.

And if I get in the Word and I memorize and I meditate, it is one of the keys to freshness. Now, I have variety in Bible study. I don't just plod through one system.

We're all different when it comes to Bible study. I don't judge other people. But I always have a little time each day in the Psalms, a little time in Proverbs, then a little in the Old Testament, then something in the New, and then some memory work.

And then I often read books. Reading books during my devotional time. I've dropped the habit now, actually.

But in my first 10 or 15 years, it was absolutely key to my spiritual foundation. One chapter of Tozer. One chapter of Lloyd-Jones.

One chapter in a daily reading book by Andrew Murray. And I found that so stimulating to get on with that day. Number two, neglecting prayer! Did you get the point? I think it was Winston Churchill went to speak at some great school.

It's probably not far from here. These are the Welsh mountains you're looking at. I've climbed a number of them.

It's thrilling. I wish we could dash over there. I remember one of the first ship intensive training programs.

I took them to one of those hills you're looking at. I didn't go with them. I don't know.

I had to preach at Bangor University. That's just over there as well. And I dropped them off the van in the rain, cold, and I pointed to the place on the map on the other side of the mountain.

I say, I'll meet you there tonight. Go! I tell you, what a scared lot of turkeys we had climbing over the Welsh hills trying to find this little pinpoint place that I had pointed to on the map. When they got there, they were so wet.

They were sick. They were angry. They were ready to... No, I don't think they were going to kill me.

But they did have doubts about that particular program. I almost got killed over there in the rock climbing part of the intensive training. It's good that was eventually dropped unless we lost some good people in the rocks.

The Word of God, memorizing, meditating, prayer. Winston Churchill was speaking to this group at this, I think, graduation, some kind of big, big meeting, the end of term. And he said as he stood up facing this very, very big audience, this was the great Winston Churchill, he said, never give up.

Then he said, never give up. Then he said, as he threw out a great nugget, never give up. Never give up.

And the great Winston Churchill sat down. End of message. And I think that's one of the keys of staying fresh is the commitment to never give up.

And if you know that you're never going to give up, you save a lot of argumentation with yourself. You've already settled that. As it says in the cover of the book, no turning back.

You're not going to give up. So keep praying. Keep worshiping.

Now there's a whole group of things I could talk about in this category, like worship, praise, praise tapes, listening to the Word of God, praying with other people, small group prayer, any kind of prayer you can imagine. If I had come into this project at 19 years of age, I would have never missed any prayer meeting on the ship unless I had to work at that time. That's the commitment I made at 18.

There, I'm sure, were some exceptions. And so at Moody Bible Institute, as a young student, they had prayer meetings after every meal. All the students were encouraged.

Can you imagine this? No wonder I almost flipped out in the place. All the students were encouraged to go at least once a week to a prayer meeting. If there's a prayer meeting after every meal, it was only 45 minutes, it was nothing.

Just go every night. I mean, it's normal. You've got 24 hours in a day.

I was looking for prayer meetings. I was doing research. Praying.

If you go on Doulas, you do some research, find out where some of these prayer meetings are, you'll find some interesting meetings. You never find them if you don't do your research. Prayer meetings have been a key for my remaining fresh and on the cutting edge each day of what God is doing.

Now, when you go into those prayer meetings, often you don't feel like praying. Big deal. How many of us human beings run around all day feeling like praying? We are, no matter how filled we are with the Spirit.

We're incredibly human. I don't understand myself yet all of these years. Part of me wants to pray, part of me doesn't want to pray.

Don't you ever have that struggle? The Bible says, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, the Spirit against the flesh. If we read that in the Bible and then we experience that, why are we surprised? Part of me wanted to sail with the ship. Part of me didn't want to sail with the ship.

Part of me enjoys the ship, enjoys being here. Part of me right now is in struggle about certain things in my life, in an OM, and that struggle is always there. It doesn't go away.

Great victory is not in the absence of struggle. Great victory is not in the absence of frustration, doubt, hurt. Great victory is as we focus on Jesus.

We sort ourselves out from the Word of God and press on. You've got to stop living by feelings. When you leave the ship, you may get far more hurt than when you're on it.

Rejection, misunderstandings. You're going to feel pretty miserable at times. You've got to learn to deal with those feelings.

One of the main reasons, I may run out of numbers, but I'll give you another reason why I've learned to stay fresh is just what I was just speaking about. Not living by feelings. Now, eventually, as you take steps of faith, as you deal with self, as you begin to worship, even if it's a ten-minute slot, your feelings will often get on board.

Not always, but often. Isn't that great? There's nothing wrong with feeling good. I often feel good.

Is there something wrong with that? Even in the midst of struggles and doubts and pressure. I feel good about God. I feel good about myself, even though there are things I don't like about myself.

I know God loves me. He accepts me more than I accept myself. If people reject me because I'm too loud or bombastic, Val Grieve jumped on me already last night, hinting I spoke too long at his church.

He lined up this meeting at his church, a very, very nice Anglican church, and I was really flying high by Sunday night. A lot of exciting things were happening on Sunday, and so I just let loose. And he told me to take 45 minutes.

I may have taken more. I could care less. I don't even care if I ever go back.

There's plenty of other Anglican churches. No, I do love those people. It's a great church.

So he jumps on me last night, Why did you tell the people that I told you you could speak 45 minutes? He told me that I could speak 45 minutes. So I told the people, Val Grieve, who's a big shot in the church, said

I could speak 45 minutes. Let him take the blame for the trouble.

Why should I always take the blame? But when things go wrong and misunderstandings come and we feel bad about ourselves, why did I do that again? We feel still good about ourselves because God loves us. God has created us. Do you know what it is to be in God's work for 25 years, as I have, and fall flat on your face through a pornographic magazine? Have you had that experience yet? You haven't because you haven't been in God's work 25 years.

You figure after 25 years of OM's trying to train you, that you're going to be totally, totally free. Well, I'll tell you, if I went back to my cabin at a certain time in this voyage, I don't know when it would be, my emotion has ups and downs, you see. If I was on a down, struggling, maybe missing my wife, maybe wondering, as I do a lot, how can we possibly evangelize the whole world? Maybe you could tell me about that.

Six billion people. Population growing so fast that we can't even hardly keep up without the computer. If I were at a low moment, and I walked into my cabin, and a pornographic magazine of the right type, not the heavy, hard stuff, but the kind of stuff I peddled a little bit in the 50s, which, of course, now people say is art, you see.

They say looking at women's bodies, that's just art, and if you're not free to do that, there's something wrong with you. You need a psychiatrist. Of course, you go to the psychiatrist, you discover he's completely off the wall himself.

He's into perversion. He's got women stacked in the icebox and all kinds of things. But somehow, if I went into that cabin at a particular time in my emotional and spiritual battle, there's a chance that I wouldn't get the victory.

So I just keep praying that that never happens. William MacDonald taught me that years ago. Pray that the mood and the circumstance don't collide.

And, of course, you can organize your life so some of these things don't collide. I just want to warn you, if anybody's planning to put any magazines in my cabin, it's locked. I've got the key.

Not far from here, in Edinburgh, I was going to a huge meeting to preach the great George Verwer. And I went into the toilet and there were about ten pounds sterling worth of magazines just laying there. I know some of you women cannot possibly relate to this.

You need to hear this, women. This is an awful struggle for men. Your bodies have tremendous power.

Why do we teach women to dress modestly? Because a woman's body has power. And the Bible teaches that. And we don't expect men to totally understand.

And we don't expect women to totally understand men and their struggles. But they can at least try. Now, we know, men, that your body also has power.

And many women have written to me over the years. And they said, hey, you're telling us how to dress. Why don't you tell these guys how to dress? They wear these, you know, really tight shorts, which, you know, it would be less tempting for a woman if you didn't have any shorts on at all.

They could see how weird and ugly it is and run down the other end of the deck. But these tight shorts, the curiosity, you know, what is really behind there? Of course, we're a little more free in this day and age,

which has, in some cases, helped some people. Because let me tell you, and I've studied a lot of history.

The story of sexual immorality in the church is the greatest cover-up in history. In every nation in the world. In every church.

I would debate any Christian leader in the world on that subject. It's the greatest cover-up. Because in some cultures, it is so forbidden.

It was covered up in the family of John Wesley. Did you know that? Did you know that Hetty, John Wesley's sister, got into big trouble? The father never forgave Hetty the rest of her life. He forced her to marry another man who turned out to be a drunk.

And it was the scandal of the Wesley family and it was completely covered up by the Methodists until research was done and a new book came out that I read. We got a load of them on Lagos 1 and I wept. There's always more to history than anybody who would put into a book.

You're going to have to learn. And that brings me to the next point. How to walk in the light.

I've been involved in counseling a woman on the phone the last couple of days. No big counseling. Her husband's away.

She's feeling very, very low spiritually. She told me in the second phone call, I talked to her again this morning from the bridge, the second phone call which was the other day, that just sharing her struggle with me on the phone has been such an enormous help. How have I stayed fresh? I almost always share my struggles.

Not overly so. Making everybody feel miserable. But I don't keep things in.

I talk it out. You don't have to go for counseling in a heavy way. The ship is not filled with people with training in psychology.

We probably have a few. But to go to someone and say, hey, I'd just like to share with you for ten minutes. Sometimes people use it as an excuse.

They say, well, they're too busy. Busy people are often the best counselors. If you want to get something done, you go to a busy person.

Don't use it as an excuse. He may not be able to do it at that time. But if you give him an advance notice, if you give him a note, he'll find time.

If anybody here had written me and said they'd like to have time with me before I came, not after this message, that would go immediate priority. And a couple of you have written me and I'd like to see you today. But we can't always come up with a time at the moment if we're doing something.

We're only human beings and many of us do a lot of counseling. Take the initiative. Don't sit back in your cabin waiting for God's man to knock on the door and offer to talk with you.

Some people stop knocking on other people's doors because they got rejection after the door opened. Life is complicated. And initiative... What is our finishing time? Isn't it nine o'clock? Ten to nine.

Okay, we'll finish. Continue tomorrow. So take the initiative.

Learn to share. Don't keep it in. There's different kinds of fellowship with different people.

That's another thing that has helped me to remain fresh is to have different kinds of fellowship with different people. You don't always have to talk about things that seem a bit in depth. You don't always have to talk about sex, some people think, because I occasionally touch on the subject of sex.

Well, any fellowship with Vera where you got to talk about sex. Most of the time in my fellowship I don't talk about sex. There's all kinds of fellowship.

And it's just so important. If another way that I learned to stay fresh was to always be involved in evangelism. Now there's all kinds of evangelism on the ship.

You can go back to the coffee bar and win someone to Christ. You can give out a tract and pray for him to be saved as he goes down the gangway. I'm working on trying to get another hundred thousand Gospels of John to you right now.

It looks fairly encouraging. The best possible Gospels I've ever seen. They're worth 15 pence each.

The first load will come to the ship tomorrow on my old bus, maybe half a ton. But as you go to Africa or Spain or the rest of your life, make a commitment to talking to the unsaved people about Jesus. If you are not spending at least some time with unconverted people, the devil will try to use that to get you to grow stale.

One of the persons, I had an evangelistic witness from the bridge last night talk to my unsaved, atheistic uncle. I don't have to give him the four spiritual laws on the phone. He knows where I stand.

He's totally opposed. My first task with my uncle is to melt his heart. And I tell you, that phone call last night, because he's a sailor and he's got a yacht.

Anything to do with the sea, he just, poof, couldn't believe it. He's calling us from the bridge of a ship. He's never seen these ships.

I'm not sure he even believes what he's heard. Maybe he thinks it's a lark. And there's all kinds of evangelism.

We know it's an enormous battle for people to get official time to join Jonathan and go out in evangelism. It's worth that battle to get an hour here, two hours there, and go off this ship, or on the ship and talk to people, give out tracts, bang on doors. We know it's not easy, but it will force you to stay fresh, because it's hard to witness when you're an old, stale, mildew cracker.

And we've got some old, stale, mildew crackers around Operation Mobilization, and it scares me. Brothers and sisters, you can stay fresh. No matter what else you have in your life, if you don't develop discipline, you're not going to make it.

Discipline is not mainly something that comes to you through getting a special experience with the Holy Spirit. I've had many experiences with the Holy Spirit. But whatever experience you have had, you have to follow it up with discipline, with old-fashioned obedience.

Repentance! Hear this. Repentance is the greatest key to staying fresh. You get cold, you get dull, you get wrong attitudes.

You repent. You deal with it. You put it under the blood.

You say, what do I do? It comes back five minutes later. You repent again. There is no excuse for the present state of operation mobilization worldwide.

There are too many people who have lost their freshness. There are too many people that have fallen for subtle lies from Satan. Too many people allowing bitterness and resentment to creep into their life.

They mainly harm themselves. And if a character like me with all my struggles and doubts and fears and battles and these things can stay fresh every day, many lost hours, many lost minutes, I admit that, then anybody can do it. The principles are in the Word of God.

I've shared some of them on these tapes. Others are on these books. Isn't it exciting? You can live in personal revival.

You can live spiritually fresh the rest of your life so that whatever garbage, whatever rubbish, whatever Satan throws your way, somehow, through struggle, sometimes even failure and sin, you can bounce back and keep on running as you're told to do in Hebrews 12. If you've missed what I've shared this morning, so basic to our whole movement, then you've missed OM. You've missed it.

Because what I've talked about this morning is as basic and as central to this movement as anything I could share from the Word of God. Let's pray. Our God and Father, we thank You for Your Word.

We thank You for this challenge of Hebrews 12 that we're to enter this race and we're to run with our eyes fixed upon You. And we know as we keep our eyes upon You rather than sin Satan herself, that that is one of the most important factors in maintaining this freshness. We are bought with a price.

We are Yours. And we're going full steam ahead. We're trusting You to enable us by Your grace and obedience and faith to walk in a fresh, vigorous, diligent way the rest of our Christian life.

In Jesus' name, Amen. God bless you.

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