

# Make Your Life Count 5

by George Verwer

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*To make your life count, you need to be committed to serving Christ and living a life of reality and balance.*

**Duration:** 23:43

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:1

**Topics:** "Counting The Cost"

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## Description

In this sermon, A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of spreading the gospel and evangelizing to the regions beyond. He quotes Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:9, highlighting the sacrifices and challenges faced by the apostles in their mission. Tozer urges people to pray for the Lord to send forth laborers for the harvest. He also mentions the vast number of people in the world who have never heard the gospel and encourages young people to be examples of believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. Tozer emphasizes the power of prayer and its role in the work of God, stating that prayer has been the backbone of their work and has led to the growth of their ministry and the spread of revival in many nations.

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## Transcript

The Apostle Paul. My text, however, is not taken from the Apostle Paul. It's taken from Timothy.

Just to bring you a little up-to-date, those of you who haven't been here before, we've been talking about how to make your life count. We've been talking about spiritual reality. We've been talking about taking off the evangelical mask, being real, being honest.

We've been talking about the revolution of love based on the truth. We've been talking about the need for spiritual balance. And we've been showing how various things, various truths, that seem extreme can be put together.

We've also mentioned again and again that we welcome, I personally welcome, feedback. Every day I forgot my little calendars. I'm a rather forgetful person.

I have these little calendars with my name and address because I live in London. I need to be honest in saying that I was born in New Jersey. My father was born in the Netherlands.

I was born in New Jersey. But I've been living overseas for about 18 years. So if some of you have been unable to get any feedback to me or to the book tent to give on to me, because I have to leave for a meeting in Detroit tonight.

So I have to leave right after my afternoon meeting. Please come and collect one of these calendars from me. It is a 1978 calendar.

I have been known for giving away calendars one-year-old because I don't like to waste them. But these are 1978. Because I'm hoping we're going to be able to have some follow-up.

And some of you have asked me personally, are there opportunities for ordinary people, nobodies, untalented types, as well as talented ones, to serve Christ in India, in the Middle East, and in Europe, short-term, long-term. Yes, hundreds are needed. We are already recruiting for next Christmas in Mexico, next summer in seven European countries.

We need more staff, single people especially, for our ship. Family quota is just about full. So that's something to pray about.

All right, 1st Timothy chapter 4. 1st Timothy chapter 4. Let no man despise thy youth. Boy, that's good, isn't it? But be an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. In the Old Testament, it says, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

I believe God wants to use young people. I know God wants to use older people. There's no argument against that.

There's no argument against that. Captain of our ship, our first ship in the past few years, is Captain George Padgett. I asked you to pray for him because he may be dying right now of a heart condition.

He's had to leave the ship. But he must be 66, 67 years of age. I can't tell you how God has used that dear elderly gentleman, that saint of God, in the midst of so many of us on the ship who were much younger.

We know God uses older people. But there are some people that say that as a young person you have to wait. You can't go running off to serve Christ.

You have to wait and become more spiritual. Now, I believe you must become more spiritual, but I don't believe that waiting, sitting, just listening to more messages is going to necessarily make you more spiritual. I believe we have so much in the head and so little in the feet.

C.S. Lewis said this, and if you forget all my other quotes, make me remember this one. Because he's another man whose books you're going to want to read. He said we have the tendency to think but not to act.

He said we have the tendency to feel, especially some of us more emotional types, but not to act. And if we go on thinking and feeling without acting, someday we will not be able to act. I call this in my book, which most of you have got free by now, at the book table, I call this spiritual schizophrenia.

Where we have our Sunday Christianity or our special conference festival Christianity, and we love the Lord and we praise the Lord, but then there's what we do the rest of the week. What we do with our money, our time, our talent, what we do when no one's looking. What we do with our spare time, what we do on our vacation.

Many people have written me as a result of my feeble book about spiritual schizophrenia and the dichotomy. I never wanted to write a book, but when I spoke at the Urbana convention about ten years ago, to about 9,000 students, and about three or four thousand of them responded to the invitation to

confess that the dichotomy had become a reality in their life. They were living a double life.

I felt compelled after other people, other people urged me to write this book about the dichotomy. And I've had about 11,000 letters as a result of that book. And many of these people have written to me, they've said, they've said, I'm living a double life.

The young man wrote me from California. He said, look, I'm a, I'm a leader of my young people. Everybody thinks I have everything all together, but I'm a practicing homosexual.

Is there any hope for me? I've never told anybody about it. No wonder he's being eaten up, eaten up on the inside. All kinds of people have written, people being eaten up on the inside, because they've never learned the way of fellowship.

They've never learned to walk in the right, in the, in the light. First John, chapter 1. If we confess our sin, He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of sin. If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with Him.

We have fellowship with one another. First John, chapter 2, verse 1. The two goals of the Christian. First goal, sin not.

Amen. Holiness. Purity.

Sin not. Second goal, without which I wouldn't be here. If you sin, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

A lawyer. Praise God. Let no man despise thy youth.

How old was George Whitfield when he was preaching in the streets of London? I think the mistake is made when young people bypass training. That is wrong. And immediately think they have arrived.

That's the swinging of a pendulum. That's what causes other people to react and say, look, as a young person, you can't do anything. You better sit here.

You better wait another five or ten years. I believe it does take five, ten, fifteen years to bring a man into spiritual maturity. The question is how? Is it just by sitting and listening or is it by doing? Is it learning by experience? What was the teaching method of Jesus Christ? Look at Matthew, chapter 9. Matthew, chapter 9. The same thing is repeated, similar verses in Luke 10.

But look at Matthew 9. And when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them. Because they were faint and were scattered abroad, his sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labors are few.

Praying therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labors into his harvest. I never try to sort of twist people's arm to go to the mission field. But I ask people to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth labors.

That's our first response of going. Now I put up here a little map of the world. Can you all see that? From way back there, I'm sure you can't see it very well.

But at least you know there's something up on this screen. It's a map of the world. There's almost four billion people in the world.

We say in England, four thousand million people. One half of those people have never once heard the gospel. They've never seen a gospel tract.

They've never heard the gospel. They've never heard a radio broadcast as far as we can understand, even with a lot of imagination. A man pushed through one of our open air meetings.

We have about two hundred people in India. We'd like another hundred. He pushed through the open air meeting and he said, I've heard Jesus Christ.

I heard that name. I want some. He thought that Jesus Christ was a bar of soap and he wanted some.

He always liked to try these new soap products. Another man in Rajasthan, the other part of India, where there's only a few dozen churches among a population equivalent to Canada. Equivalent to the whole of Canada.

A couple of dozen churches in the whole state. Less than five missionaries in the state of Rajasthan. Then some people give the idea the job's all finished.

There are a lot of Christians in India, but most of them are in the south or the northeast. That doesn't affect Rajasthan any more than Christians in Canada necessarily affect Alaska. No, it's your neighbor.

And we went up to this man and we asked him about Jesus Christ. He said, oh no. No, he doesn't live in this village.

Maybe the next village. Go try there. Didn't know what we were talking about.

Now this is God's Word, or is it? And Jesus is speaking. It's not me. You can forget about me.

This is Jesus and he said, the harvest is plenteous, the labors are few. And he said, pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, and he will send forth labors into the harvest. We've been giving out this leaflet in the literature tent.

What happened to the prayer meeting? A reprint of a Christian magazine article. You can get one free. Read it.

Write to me about it. You may not agree. All right.

I'd love to hear from you. I'm a learner, but I believe one of the greatest areas of deception of the Church in America, whether they're charismatic or non-charismatic or in the middle or upside down. I include everybody.

House fellowships, cathedrals. One of the great deceptions of the Church in America is the disappearance of the prayer meeting. The missionary prayer meeting, the midweek prayer meeting.

And a lot of younger people think prayer is for older people. The main lessons I learned in prayer was when I was 17 and 18 years of age. I started half nights of prayer when I was 17 in my high school, shortly after my conversion.

These have spread all over the world. It's been the backbone of our work. It's the reason we have those two ships.

It's the reason we have two and a half thousand people with us ever. It's the reason we're seeing thousands come to Christ and churches planted in many different countries and Christians returning to the way of life and the way of revival in perhaps 50 to 100 nations, despite many failures on our part. Prayer.

It says in Corinthians, we can't take time to look at all these verses. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty unto God to the pulling down of strongholds. Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Now if this is the only session of mine that you've been in on, you're going to get off balance. Because you know up to now I've not been talking about missions. I've not even been talking about total commitment that much and the Lordship of Christ.

I've not been exposing the spiritual myopia of our day very much in these sessions. I've been talking in a very low profile way about spiritual problems, about reality, about some of my own struggles. And with what I say this morning, you need to keep that in mind.

Otherwise at least read my book, Revolution of Love and Balance, or come live, die. I wanted to take some time, but we don't have it, to look a little bit at the Apostle Paul. Let's just look at a few verses.

For example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, we see a little picture of this reality of the life of Paul. This man who said in Philippians 1.29, It is given unto you not only to believe, oh if we could only understand this, not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake. We are soldiers of Jesus Christ.

This is not some kind of religious game. It's not basically a festival, though it's wonderful to have festivals. And that's needed, because otherwise we become religiously lopsided.

We're always in the warfare, but our finger isn't always on the trigger, because we'll burn up the finger and the gun. There is a place for relaxation. There's a place for refueling.

But if we keep taking in and taking in, and we don't give out, we become religious parasites. We become spiritual gluttons. I believe we are becoming a nation of spiritual gluttons.

A.W. Tozer said, If any secular company needed so much raw material to get so little finished product, it would go bankrupt in six months. So many messages, so many challenges, so many films, so many sessions together, for so little finished product, people transformed by the power of God, missionaries sent out to the regions beyond, nations evangelized that Christ has commanded us to evangelize. Look at what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4, verse 9, For I think that God has set us forth, the apostles, last as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ. We are weak, but ye are strong. Ye are honorable, but we are despised.

Even under this present hour, we both hunger and thirst and are naked and buffeted, have no certain dwelling place. And labor, working with our own hands, being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we endure it. Being defamed, we entreat, we are made as a filth of the world and the offscouring of all things unto this day.

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you, for though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, ye have yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. And notice, we could say this is extremism, this is just for Paul, he was a special apostle, this is not for us, we're just ordinary Christians.

No, you can't do that. Because you've got verse 16, Wherefore, and he was speaking to carnal Corinthian Christians, what would Paul say if he came to speak to a group of people who knew something of victory and reality in their lives? He says in verse 16, Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me, be ye followers of me, as he was of Christ. That's why Paul could write in Thessalonians, turn to 1 Thessalonians, quickly, chapter 1, chapter 1 verse 5, Paul is speaking, he said, For our gospel came, not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

And here are the key words, As ye know what manner of men we were among you, for your sake. It's the life that counts. You say, well that depresses me, because I know my life is so weak, but I've been sharing with you the matter of spiritual balance in this regard, that God knows all about us and loves us still.

God's acceptance, God's mercy. And that as we allow God's forgiveness and mercy to pour through us on a day by day basis, denying self, taking up the cross and following Him, our life will ring of reality. You know the people in the world don't expect you, in most cases, to be perfect.

But they want you to be real. They want you to be honest. They don't want evangelical pretenders.

I am convinced, and I am convinced, that you can live a victorious life. I'm convinced that you can walk daily in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. I believe that.

Tozer said, you are as hungry, or you are as holy, you are as holy as you really want to be, with all your heart. You will become what you want to be. If you want to make your life count, then decide in these days, by God's grace, on the basis of His promises, it will count.

Paul wrote to the Philippians, I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. And again and again, I have had to fall back on these words from Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. This dynamic man, this man who had midnight in prison, was filled with praise and thanksgiving.

This man who wanted to go to the uttermost parts of the earth, this man who said, for the space of three years, he ceased not, night and day, to warn the wicked. That's Paul. And yet this same man was described in the epistle of the Thessalonians as a nursing mother among the babies.

He had the gentleness, he had the sweet spirit. Yes, he was outspoken and bold, but when you got to know him personally, there was the reality of the Holy Spirit. He was a voice for God, and Isaiah in the Old Testament says, we must cry out, we must cry out, we must warn God's people.

Oh, may He raise up in our day prophets that would warn the church in the direction we are going. David Wilkerson has been trying to warn the church, but you know what we do? We find one or two things we don't like about Davy, and then we put his message to one side. No prophet is perfect.

Prophets are human beings, flesh and blood. Read the prophets if you want to know that. But when God raises up a prophet, as He raised up A.W. Tozer, woe to us as a nation if we do not listen and do not obey.

A prophet will not be able to help you with every aspect of your Christian life. That's why I read other books. That's why I like to take up something like this book written by Maxine.

She's the one with other people who have a teaching ministry that can help us with our teenage children with all the problems around the home. We need those kind of people, but we also need prophets. We need Leonard Ravenhills.

We need Wilkersons. We need men like Tozer, who is now with the Lord, to stir us out of our lethargy. Otherwise, we just go further and further into lukewarmness.

In closing, I want you to look at this verse in Corinthians, which shows the strength of Paul and then just a couple of verses from Revelation. And he said unto me, verse 9, 2 Corinthians 12, My grace is sufficient for thee. There's the answer.

Do you feel inadequate? I do. Do you feel overwhelmed by some of the messages, some of the teaching, by the verses of God's Word that are clear like a hammer, like a sword? For the Bible says the Word of God is a two-edged sword. Then take this verse.

Claim it. Claim it. My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me. And then in Revelation chapter 3, before I close in prayer, these powerful words, verse 15, chapter 3, verse 1, I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest in our dead. We may be called charismatic.

We may be called live Baptist. We may be called Bible-believing, evangelical, whatever name you may be called. And it's supposed to mean life.

You're part of that group. That group's alive. We have people in our work that are called O-Emmers.

Oh, he's an O-Emmer. He's supposed to be alive. Again and again I've had to preach on this text to my people.

We have a name that we're alive, but we're dead. It's personal reality, not group reality. You may belong to a live church and be dead.

And then it says in verse 15, I know thy works. God knows all about us. That thou art neither cold nor hot.

I warned that you were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of thy mouth. I don't fully understand those words.

But I know one thing. God hates lukewarmness. And it's spreading like a gangrene across our churches.

It spreads into our conferences. It spreads everywhere. Our God, the Bible says, not me, is a consuming fire.

And if you know Christ, if you have been born again, if you are walking with Christ, you will be on fire. It won't be the same in you as in me. I hope it's not quite as noisy.

It may be a slow fire. It may be one of these hot coals. It may not be all flame, but the fire will be there, burning, moving.

Christianity is not taught, beloved, not firstly. It's taught. When you're on fire for God, others will catch it.

May God grant us, by His grace, a dose of apostolic Christian living in these days to come. It's yours, if you want it. It's the normal Christian life.

Be ye follower of me, said the Apostle Paul to those carnal Corinthians. Be ye hot or be ye cold. The decision will be yours.

Let's just pray. Let's bow our heads for a moment of silent prayer, asking God to search our hearts, to cleanse us. Isaiah said, Here am I, send me.

You've been sitting here for this half an hour looking at this map of the world. Are you willing to go to one of these countries? If God sent you or led you, long term, short term, I believe every spirit-filled person should be willing to go anywhere if God leaves them. But He won't force you.

It's not a matter of sitting back in your easy chair and saying, Lord, if you want me to go, lift up this chair and send it through the window. No. You've got a will to follow Christ.

You've got to obey. Jesus said, If you love me, keep my commandments. Let's pray.

We pray, O God, search our hearts. We're going to sing praises to you again. Lord, may these praises go through us and cause us at the same time to take your praises and your message to the millions who have never once heard.

Deliver us, God, from playing the game of words, even singing words that have meant little in our practical lives for many years. Humble us and cause us to know reality and we pray for our nations that you would raise up voices in the wilderness to cry out that we may return to your way, the narrow way of holiness, of reality, of love, of obedience. For we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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