

# Making Our Years Count

by George Verwer

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*The goal of OM is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

**Duration:** 36:10

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Philippians 3:7-9

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Heart Purity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of dealing with attitudes of hate and resentment in our hearts. He highlights how petty things like jealousy, resentment, and pride can hinder our spiritual growth and relationships with others. The preacher encourages self-reflection and the pursuit of integrity, honesty, and purity in our lives, aligning ourselves with the example of Jesus Christ. The ultimate goal is to seek God and receive something from Him during our time on OM, with the hope that we can be a part of His work and impact others for His kingdom.

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## Transcript

The title of this little talk this morning, and I'm taking advantage of this morning because you're off again into a resod, never been on the ship during a period in which the people working on the ship were never on the ship. This is a new strategy. Of course, it generally changes in Southeast Asia.

My burden is to get two complete crews for the ship next year, 260 people, and we'll just keep alternating between the shore and the ship. And then we'll save a lot of this difficulty of some of you having to do both ministries. Actually, that's not possible.

But we really praise God for the way the word of God has gone inland. And to me, these past months have been a tremendous proof of how the ship can be a launching base and a coordinating base. A lot more organization is needed behind some of these thrusts than people know about.

I don't say it because I'm involved in it, because I'm not. But praise God for the way it has worked out. And I'm very encouraged by what's happened.

I was reminded this morning, as we sang happy birthday to Ipa's daughter, now three, that it's three years ago, we were in Nigeria. The first really overwhelming book exhibition. We had been in other ports, we had sold books, but that was the first time we saw what would happen as in four or five days, we had 10,000

visitors and sold an enormous amount of books.

In fact, we still are, part of that money is stuck in Nigeria. We've been trying to arrange to print tracts with it. Nigeria is one of the most difficult countries in the world to try to print tracts.

Anyway, the subject this morning is getting the most out of your OM year. And since, as I was saying, quite a few of you are going off and I won't be seeing you much, I'd like to give in these thoughts. I've had a lot of time to think and pray lately.

And one of the greatest burdens of my heart is that people get the most out of their time with OM. You know, in some groups, people get doubts and questions and they feel, well, maybe the group is just trying to use me, just trying to promote their organization and become a big thing and just use me in the process. Now that's a legitimate doubt, a legitimate doubt.

And in some groups, I can see how people can think that way. And I think maybe in OM, people get that feeling. But one thing that may help you is to realize that there's very little we try to do to promote OM, other than try to get a few prayer partners here and there on a very low scale basis.

We have actually gone to the extreme, the other direction. In staying away from all kinds of publicity, this thing, OM worldwide and this ship could be promoted in an incredible way. Now, sometimes we do, the government officials try to promote the work, but we don't need you or a lot of people or a certain number of people in order to promote ourselves to government officials.

Of course, we try to do that for sake of getting into that country or something along that line. But as far as to Christians, we try to avoid that completely. We don't take pictures of our nationals and try to raise money for them.

I know many groups that do. In fact, I don't know how familiar you are with the money raising tactics and the promoting tactics of evangelical groups. Most of you would probably be switched off about 90% of all evangelical groups.

If you knew fully their money making, money promoting, tactics and I understand how people in those groups at times feel they're used. I am actually not switched off those groups because I understand their situation. I believe God is sovereign.

I believe that there is a place for sensible money raising and I wish Christians would go about it in a more sensible way. But I don't think on O.M. we have reason to think that we're being used. If anything, we are battling to try to play down O.M. We've turned down about six or seven publishing houses from wanting to write up the story of this work and a number of communities that could be one of the best-selling evangelical books of all times.

Two of the top rewrite evangelicals in the world are ready to rewrite the story. Any number of people from Wormbrock on up and down are willing to write the preface and all kinds of promotional packages have been presented to us. Feature articles in Decision Magazine and these are things you only keep within the group.

I'm only telling you this because I want you to understand that the last thing we want to do in O.M. is to use people or to use anything to sort of promote O.M. I openly, publicly attack this work and point out its weaknesses. That isn't generally the best promotion crusade. It's true, a few saints may get excited when

they hear that and realize, look, there may be some reality here.

And I realize that it's too late for Logos to hide and for us to pretend in the evangelical world it doesn't exist. Too late for me. Now 19 years in Christian work, known even just through personal contact with many thousands of people to pretend that I don't exist, put my head in a little bag or as I had dreams of a few days ago, grow a beard and disguise myself.

I had all kinds of ideas. But our burden in O.M., and we want to be called out. We want to be affronted personally.

We want those courageous types to walk right in, tell us personally where we're going astray because of course we go astray. We all in moments of weakness are inconsistent. And it's not an easy battle to maintain a high level of integrity, a high level of purity of thought, purity of motive, purity of action, purity, integrity, honesty, everything we do.

This is our goal. You think that's easy? I can tell you it isn't. That's why it's good to be laid aside for a few days as I've been to be able to think, see where you're going astray, see where there needs to be more integrity, more honesty, more purity, more of everything that speaks of Jesus Christ.

So this is our goal, which means that our goal is you. First, of course, our goal is God. We've heard about that much in our messages here.

Secondly, our goal is you. Our burden is that during your time on O.M., you can receive something from the Lord. It's true once in a while we make claims in a devotional time among O.M. people or even to our prayer partners that we're encouraged by the number of people who've gone through O.M. and caught the vision and are now working with other missions.

We do this within our own families. But we don't blow this trumpet all over the world through every kind of promotion that we can think of. We feel that God's people and the people the Lord has given us as a family should know what God is doing.

There's nothing wrong with that. The Word of God teaches us. Always a struggle to know the past.

Continual struggle. Tremendous struggle I had before I could release that Logos story. It's good that the final story actually was done before I ever saw it, because the first time I saw it, my mind listed over 40 errors and things I didn't want in it, because I felt a little bit boasting.

But it was already done, and of course we're trying to use it carefully, and the rest has to be in the Lord's hands. There's a fine line between praising God for what he has done and boasting. God has to look at our hearts.

God has to look at our hearts and how our boasting must grieve him. So our burden is to really, despite any failures, to see you get the most out of the O.M. Year. And I just listed some things that I think will help you get more out of the O.M. Year.

I might just say that it's so encouraging to get these letters from ex-O.M.ers, really. And it's a challenge to keep going. It's also an encouraging thing to get the news from the various ports we've been in.

I'm convinced that one of the biggest ministries of the ship is a catalyst program. We're in a port for a short period of time, and then we go, but we act as a tremendous catalyst. You see, in most of these ports, there

is a church.

There are people who love Jesus, but they haven't been exposed to the broadness of ideas and vision that we have. Now, we think this is all normal. I think that, you know, my vision for literature evangelism is nothing.

I mean, it's just a simple ABC. I mean, I got this when I was only 18. And yet I've been asked, because there's such a lack of vision, because the church is in such a state, they've gone down to the very bottom of the barrel, they've asked me to come to the World Congress on evangelism and speak on literature evangelism.

And I only mention this because it shows that oftentimes the smallest, most limited vision people don't have. It didn't hit many pastors in Salon that they could just walk out in the street and, you know, just open their mouth. You know, it's no great thing they do every day to buy potatoes.

To walk out in the street and open their mouth and speak of Jesus Christ. That's open-air meeting. Open-air evangelism sounds spectacular.

It means going in street, opening mouth, speaking words. Open-air evangelism. And we've got, poor Ray Lynch built up as almost something that, you know, come back from the first century.

This is so unusual, you know. I mean, every Christian should be going in street, opening mouth, speaking words. Open-air evangelism.

But people lack vision. They lack the spark. It only takes a spark to get a fire going.

But praise God, we haven't had sparks going around this ship. Because we don't want any fires. We've had a few.

Not from sparks. But I believe with all my heart that God wants to use the ship as a catalyst. Anyway, that's secondary point.

The first thing I put down to help you get the most out of the OM here is set goals. Set goals. I'd like you to turn in Philippians.

I wanted to use this as my scripture reading for this morning. In the book of Philippians chapter 3, verse 7. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them dumb, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, that I may know him.

That's, of course, the one main goal. Know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I'd already attained, neither was already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, for that which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do. Here's the key thing. Forgetting those things which are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before me.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I think they're very good words for setting a foundation when we think of getting the most out of OM, getting the most out of this year. We don't have to call it the OM year.

Getting the most out of this segment of prize. I feel so guilty, and I thank God for his grace that immediately cleanses of guilt the moment guilt comes up, but I feel so guilty for the opportunities I myself have personally missed in the past month. That's one thing I saw during these days of being set aside.

But I think that one of my needs is to set more goals. I set more goals last year than I did this year because I somehow got wangled into the IT program, probably by my own ego drive. But anyway, I got in it, and I set a lot of goals, and I accomplished a lot more.

For instance, I was determined to listen to 100 cassettes, and I did with notes on them. This year I wanted to also listen to a lot of cassettes, and I've got up to about 10. Setting goals, I think, is very, very important.

I think that when we get out into the secular world, many of us will, we're going to find ourselves overwhelmed, overwhelmed, because the secular world is very complicated. I figured out that if I was living in the secular world with my family, that apart from my job, that would be an eight-hour thing. Probably I'd be in a business world, probably more like 14 hours.

So apart from that, I figured out that I would have at least 100 other things I would have to give thought to, just as a normal husband. House owner, if I was a house owner. If I wasn't a house owner, I'd be a renter.

I would have 100 things, everything from the lawn, to the garage, to the car, to the rent, to the electricity, to the milkman. Well, my wife hopefully would take care of him. And I figured out there'd be at least 100 things that I would have to give thought to, and that, unlike us, a lot of those things are taken care of by somebody else.

Somebody else is doing it. I don't have to give a single thought to electricity. You know, most people in the secular world, they have a headache with electricity.

I know my father's an electrician. I'm pointing, hey, make big money. Big money.

Because this is a world of electricity. And there's this story, all of the United States, everybody's got something broken down. You can't get it repaired.

The husband can't repair it. And men are taking courses now in electricity, so they can repair their wives, this and that. Everybody buys all these appliances.

They all break down. And even when Dave Thomas went to Bangladesh, the middle of no man's land, the main thing he had to do when he first went there was repair the appliances of the missionaries. Isn't that true? Right? A world of electricity.

So we think if we're out in the secular world, we have our own home and everything, and everything's going to be wonderful. We don't have all these pressures of the community life, and having to get the meals at certain times. You suddenly discover your wife likes you there at a specific time.

And if you don't get there at a specific time, the whole house is going to go up in smoke. And I was just realizing that it is going to be tougher. I know I've said this before, but I don't think it's sunk in.

It is going to be tougher when we get out into the secular world. That doesn't belittle this experience. God can give you only so many experiences at once.

This experience in life is no holier or more special than the next experience, which may be a secular world experience. I'm not saying you have to have that. You can't do everything in life.

You don't run around in life just to prove yourself. Go become a coolie. I've always wanted to do that, just to prove that you can be a coolie for Christ.

And become a shoeshine boy so you can prove that the grace of God is available to shoeshine boys. That's all great, but you know, you don't accomplish so much if you run around in that circle. God has to show you his plan, and you've got to walk in that.

Anyway, setting goals is important. Get some more goals. Determine, for example, that you're going to put your prayer letter out every month.

If on the 30th day of the month, you don't eat until the prayer letter goes out, you're going to do it. Not because your prayer letter is going to shake the whole world. It may shake a few hearts, but because you believe in setting goals and accomplishing them.

Not keep saying, well, it doesn't matter. If you get back in the secular world, and you have your income tax that has to go out on the 30th of March, and you approach that as you approach your prayer letter, what's going to happen? You may discover a little man knocking on the door and taking you off to the little police station, because you haven't paid your income tax. The secular world is much more brutal, much rougher than the evangelical world.

The evangelical world is always the sovereignty of God, the providence of God. He will overrule. It doesn't matter.

Somebody else will pick up the ball. The secular world is brutal. This is why probably one of the best ways to learn anything on this ship is get in the engine room.

The engine room is brutal, as they've seen on this journey. You don't talk to the engines and say, look, chaps, sovereignty and providence. I tell you, those engines, if they decide to act up somehow, it's not going to be taken care of with cold cream.

Even prayer won't do it. It's going to take a lot of hard work. We feel that it's a little warm because the air conditioning was off, and that was a tremendous answer to prayer.

That very morning I was upsetting my soul. I was thinking, this ship doesn't appreciate this air conditioning. I hardly ever hear anybody jumping and praising.

We used to jump and praise when the air conditioning, when it first came, because we had fought for seven years of a non-air-conditioned ship. The quotation to put air conditioning in the ship was 20,000 pounds sterling. It was out of the question.

Through work on the part of engineers, we put our own air conditioning in. We knew it may break down sometimes, but it hasn't broken down that much. But people hardly ever thank God for it anymore.

I guess it would be considered sort of out of place to thank God for the air conditioning. And that very afternoon after I was thinking that in my bed, all of a sudden, it got hot in my cabin, and praise God for that. And I'm sure when it went on the next day, they expected it to be off for three days.

It went on right away the next day. I'm sure all of you were just praising the Lord. I hope so.

Little things on the good side often don't mean much to us. Little things on the negative side, wow, they become almost overwhelming enough to lead people even into the divorce course. Setting goals, setting goals.

Are you setting goals? Have you ever made a list of the goals for the next five months, or are you just drifting? Just drifting. It's easy to drift in OM. You go down and make a list of all the things people do for you that you can live while in OM.

There's over a hundred items. If you want me to produce a list, I will. Things you don't even think about from the very day you first came.

Right to here. Especially on logouts. Very quickly, a few other items.

Number two, avoiding pressure. Avoiding pressure. This is linked to lack of discipline.

If you avoid pressure, you're guaranteed not to get out of OM what God wants you to get out. Pressure is God's perhaps most important instrument for creating character, for creating men. It has to bring pressure.

I went last Thursday to be with my family for a couple days to fulfill a promise to Thomas Samuels to go to the Lucey Center. I didn't really want to go. I didn't want to travel 12 hours to get there and 12 hours to get back.

I would have liked to go for a month, but I did have some desires to go and to rest and to spend some time in prayer. Of course, I got the opposite of I expected. I got very ill, the high fever, been on my back almost ever since, and I just praised God for that experience.

It wasn't much. It wasn't any great pain, but I praised God for that experience. For the pressure was involved, we didn't quite figure out how he was going to get back to the ship.

A number of other complications came in, wondering if the van was going to keep working as we went over 7,000 foot mountains, a few other things. But every pressure that we can possibly allow, we don't go around just creating them, is definitely good, definitely what God wants to do. Thank God for the pressure.

Thank God for the changes. One of the ways that God creates pressure is by changing. He knows that we have a tendency in ourselves to build the easy way.

Even as oil leaders, we try to make it as easy as possible for you. I know some of you don't believe that, but we do. We try to make it as easy as possible.

Even this year, we're planning how we're going to fly. Look at that. Fly the women and children home from Singapore.

We're going to have the easiest possible way. But God works differently. And one of those planes you're flying on may end up stranded, landed in China, or hijacked to Saudi Arabia, because God's way is a way

of pressure.

The earth is the only place he can do this. There ain't going to be any of this in heaven. The special place, the only place in all of eternity, in all of time, in all of space, in all universe, in which God allows any suffering, any difficulty, or any pressure.

So God's got to take advantage of this tiny, tiny speck of time and space. And so he's got to allow pressure. And that is God's method of working.

Don't run away from it. And take the discipline that we have in Jesus Christ through the power of the cross to go head on into the problem. Another thing that hinders this getting the most out of the arm here is a lack of seriousness.

I've met people, I think, literally joke their way through the year. One big series of jokes. Now, a sense of humor, of course, is vital to the movement.

It's either laugh once in a while or crack up. I know also this whole area of humor is a great controversy, whether anyone should ever laugh in a prayer meeting or what, and where the Holy Spirit comes in and goes out. Of course, the Holy Spirit doesn't laugh.

And I do believe, however, there is a greater danger that we lack seriousness of purpose. Many of us in our lives don't have a real purpose. I don't mean you need to know what country you're going to work in, but you have a purpose.

You have a goal, and we should have short-term purpose. We should be serious about what we're doing. Quickly, another danger that hinders us in getting the most out of the year is taking on the non-participant role.

The non-participant. There's a number of reasons for doing this. Shyness is one.

Fearness is one. Playing it cool. And this is a green hindrance.

Everybody here has gifts. The Holy Spirit wants to give gifts, but if you, because of shyness, reservedness, fear, hold back, you won't lead out in prayer, won't exercise your little gifts that God has given you, what a quench that is to the Holy Spirit. I'm convinced there are girls in here who have an ability to speak to women, but something keeps you from opening up your mouth.

You're hindering the work of God. I'm convinced there are girls who are gifted counselors, but your reservedness, your quietness, maybe you've been hurt when you first tried it, is keeping you from getting into what God wants. I'm convinced there are men in here who are gifted preachers, but you're playing it cool.

You're shy. You're backing off. So you're hindering what God wants to do with you, and you won't get out of this year what you should.

What I'd like to say about that, but time is God, and some people don't like the devotional times to go over. I especially noticed some who don't like them to go over, some who hardly attend, but I'll just come to a close quick. Unbelief.

Unbelief. This often is linked to three things. Insecurity, lack of confidence, doubting God's word.

I picked this up in Singapore. I went in to the Dale Carnegie Institute just for curiosity, and I picked up their little folder. You just look at that.

You look at what the world expects their men to do. You look at what the secular companies expect out of men. You know, when I read this, I wished I could take every leader on OM, everybody in OM, and get them off this work and get them in the Dale Carnegie Institute.

I'm convinced it'll do more for them than the next two months in OM, because when you go into this, you pay a lot of money as you determine, I'm going to get the most out of this. But in OM, you don't pay much. You don't pay any more than the food and the board.

So if you don't get much out of it, what does it matter? We're not believing God to get what he wants us to get out of this program. We've got more than this Dale Carnegie business all put together, because we've got the Holy Spirit. We've got the living Jesus, and he can make us men and women that make these fellows look like they're just going backwards downhill on roller skates.

But somehow, unbelief, insecurity, pride, fear, other little foxes the Old Testament talks about, spoiling the vibe, keep us from becoming the men and women that we should be. Watch out for that deadly disease of unbelief, making your OM year into nothing but a time of drifting. And then, just one or two other things, this whole thing of leaving the work to others, taking advantage of the machinery and the community.

One of the things that plagues me today about OM is it's so easy to blame OM. Anything that goes wrong, anything that goes wrong, you can blame OM. If you're in your own house and the heating goes off, then you've got a problem.

You've got to get money. Do you know what it costs to get a heating engineer into your house in the United States? I'll tell you, you pretty soon try to learn how to fix it yourself, and you've got to get in work. Whatever problem you have, you've got to solve it.

You've got to get out of work, or you've got to earn a lot more money, or you've got to take an overdraft. Eighty percent of all married couples, I estimate, live on overdraft for their first ten years of marriage. But in OM, if something goes wrong, get this guy, get that guy, blame the leader, the machinery, it's all of them, it's this, it's that.

And that's a dangerous way to live. A dangerous way to live. And I think it's one of the things that keeps us from getting out of this year what God wants.

We depend too much on the machinery. We don't even know how to put a postage stamp on a letter. Most of us haven't put a postage stamp on a letter for months.

You went to put one on, it would go upside down, or you'd put it on the back. Now that's a poor illustration, and we don't want you to put the stamps on the letter. In fact, you can't put the stamps on the letter.

But there are things you can do. Certain things people are even asked to do, like keep their cabins clean, and a host of other things. Lastly, of course, the biggest thing that hinders us in the OM year is the big, short circuit.

Big, short. I think it's terrible when we read about murder in the newspaper, we read about people being killed, and yet we harbor attitudes of hate or resentment in our own hearts, and these things are not dealt

with quick enough. I think another thing that hinders in this area are petty things, little things.

How petty we can be on Logos. How petty we can be in God's work. Petty jealousies, petty resentments, petty hurt feelings, petty pride leads to petty lack of forgiveness.

And sometimes we think we're right with everybody, but we're not, because there's little things that are in our hearts against others. Maybe our own roommate. Are you really 100% right with your own roommate? The person that lives in the cabin with you, are you having real communion, real fellowship, or is it just toleration? And if you can't get on with that roommate, who may be very different than you, and pray together, and have some fellowship together, and believe in one another, and develop fervent love for one another, not mutual toleration, not get on with one another until we get a cabin change, then what makes you think you're going to have a happy marriage? What makes you think that you're going to live someday with one person for 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 years in the same room? Don't kid yourself.

The rate of divorce and separation among evangelicals is one of the most overwhelming things I could ever talk to you about. People who are madly in love with one another, who wouldn't have ever thought anything would happen in their marriage, who? Completely wiped out. Somewhere there was something they learned about life.

I believe that love is discipline. We've got to work at it. And if you're not finding it easy to love one another in that cabin, or in that area you're working, in the deck, or the engine, or wherever it is, it's so easy to just sort of tolerate one another.

I'm not talking about an oozy thing where we're all hugging each other. I think God can show you what He means. Don't take my definition.

But I believe if God can't do that, then I wonder what can He do? What can He do? May God show us how much more He wants us to get out of this year, in every area, from our cabin, to our outreach, to our personal discipline, from our prayer letter, to our devotional life, to anything we can think of. Well, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time together.

You know, it's overwhelmed me how little time I can get to share with those people on this ship who I live with. We thank you we can cast even that care upon you. We thank you, Lord, that we don't have to allow this challenge to get our stomach up in knots, or overwhelmed in guilt.

Lord, convict us, Lord. We want conviction. And then show us where the conviction must lead to action.

And in between that, we know will be the oil of forgiveness. And we thank you that we are forgiven. You're not trying to browbeat us.

You want us more than we want ourselves to be relaxed, to be free, to be resting in you, to be moving on the wings of eagles, to be delivered from our insecurities, and from our introspection, and from our worries, and from our inwardness. We may fly on the wings of eagles. No, Lord, just deliver us more and more from our hang-ups.

We may know freedom and openness, and know reality in sharing with one another, and discussing these faults with one another, and setting goals, and moving forward by faith to tear down the enemy strongholds, and to move mountains, and to possess the land inwardly, outwardly for the glory of Jesus Christ. We thank you that on this ship we have one of the greatest battlefields, one of the greatest

opportunity arenas for learning these things, and a situation that we will not get later on. We know later on we will get a new arena, the arena of a secular world, the arena of a lonely life, the arena of a non-communal life, and we'll learn things that we can't learn here now.

But we believe that foundation of life can be learned here, because this world is a community with three billion people. Teach us, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

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