

# Message (27-01-1996)

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon highlights the foundational principles of integrity, relationships, and balance in ministry development and fundraising efforts.*

**Duration:** 36:40

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19

**Topics:** "Christian Growth", "Church Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of development in the Christian faith. He emphasizes the need for individuals to change their habits and align them with God's will. The speaker also highlights the significance of the local church and fellowship in spreading the message of the Gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission. Additionally, he mentions the role of ministry in reaching out to people, loving them, and ultimately leaving them in God's hands. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the ultimate goal of bringing glory to God and seeing lives transformed through conversion and the establishment of churches.

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## Transcript

Father, we thank you for what you're doing around the world. We thank you for this 40 years of provision. From those first Gospels of John that dear Henry Reid gave the money for, that Randy and I stood.

To the money that you are providing to pay the bills at this very special conference. We realize that seeing finance come in from your work is part of our calling, is part of basic spiritual warfare. And we desire, even as we share about these things, that somehow you receive all the glory and all the praise.

Help us now to continue to grow, to continue to be ready for change, to be open to the many different ways that you work, and to build on a firm biblical foundation. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

It's a privilege to share with you on this subject. I was asked to do this because I went down to a special meeting in West Watch when I spoke to those who were gathered there, really carefully looking at this whole challenging area. So some people approached me to share more or less similar ideas.

Basically it was incorporated into nine words about development. It's hard to remember whole messages. So some of my ministry over the last years as I go to churches, I've been just sharing with people often just four words.

And asking them to write down those four words. In some cases, those who took notes and wrote those things down received a free book at the book table. This is to be quite a start.

Especially if people start grabbing paper from their neighbor in order to write something down. There are about nine words. I may share only seven at this time because there are so many other words you can find yourself.

The first word that really comes to my mind this morning is the word integrity. And I think as we go into this area in our ministry, that is my first clue. I know when we get excited about what we're doing, that may not appear to be our first desire.

Our first desire may appear to be to get a hold of finance for the kingdom of God. I'm going to say at this point, I believe one of the reasons many people don't give, and this morning I'm not speaking about one particular area of development, such as raising your support, but I'm speaking of a whole larger picture of development. But I believe one of the reasons people don't give more, especially wealthy people, is no one has really shown them, demonstrated to them, what their money can actually accomplish.

It amazes me how the Lord's people are sitting, even churches, on so much money that could be invested, for example, in the Word of God in a place like India and multiply into people's lives. That would create treasure in heaven, almost beyond comprehension. But as we go forward in this work, I hope the word integrity will be one of our favorite words.

For example, if we receive money for a particular project, if that money is given by a person for a particular project, we have to make sure that money is used for that project. We cannot say one thing and do something else. That may seem like an understood, but believe me, in the complexity of spiritual warfare and world evangelism, you cannot presume, even when that money is sent out to a particular part of the world, that it's going to be done.

We may think, well, I've turned that money over to them and I'm out of the loop now. I know that gets very, very complicated, but I don't think any field leader minds being asked some questions about how the finance has been used or whether that project has been completed. I've had to go back to donors and prayer partners and explain that what they gave funds for is now becoming a reality.

Without solicitation, recently I received a very large gift from the sports ministry with NOM, which fairly exists. So I went back to this person and explained that we're working on that, but if we don't see something by the end of the year, I'll come back to him and return that gift or renegotiate how it can be used and he said that's fine. Integrity, of course, is a subject so great, we could easily take our entire session up talking about it.

As we deal a lot with people in the Christian business world, we must understand they are battling this problem on a daily basis, more than most of us can realize. We will need a lot of wisdom. We will need a lot of grace to battle with them.

Some of the people you get involved with in the financial area soon are seeking your advice, even about business affairs, even about major decisions that can involve many, many millions of dollars or Deutschmarks or rubles or whatever, and it can get pretty scary at times. You can easily get beyond yourself. And so honesty, integrity, openness, I tie all those beautiful words together, are one of the foundations that we must build upon.

When you've made a mistake and you've goofed, to give the term, to go back and share that openly and honestly, realizing you may lose a donor at that point, I believe glorifies God. And our concern must not firstly be the finances needed for God's work. Our first concern must be God's glory, the testimony of the Church, the testimony of our own work.

The second word that I want you to have as a foundation for development in your country is the word relationships. Again, the whole area of fundraising in certain countries can get extremely ugly, yes, in any country. People are paid big money to go out and find money, and if they don't find it, they are fired.

It's as simple as that in some places. There can be a tremendous amount of hurt in this area. We're all vulnerable.

Most of us don't want to go two or three days without any food on our table. Some of O.M.'s greatest weaknesses in years gone by have come to the surface when teens have run out of money. And to think that money is always supplied is to think that God always heals.

It is a mistake. It is a mistake I made in the early 60s that I am indeed very sorry for. I rapidly learned the fact of a mystery that, humanly speaking, some of our prayers for finance, it just doesn't happen, just like quite a lot of our praying for people to get healed, it doesn't happen.

They die. They go to heaven. I've had people that I prayed for forgive me for my lack of faith.

After I finish praying, they get worse. And that has been a sobering, difficult lesson. If you're going to get into the area of development, your heart is going to be broken many, many times.

On the other hand, to keep that in balance, I don't know how you can live on this planet, get involved with people, and not have your heart broken many, many times. I always wondered when I was younger why so many older people seemed to be discouraged or bitter or cynical or seemingly out of the race. I heard all these horror stories even way back when I was a student.

Now, being the age of many of these people, I see how easily it happens. And I have a great concern. Sometimes we start relationships and we give an impression to the person that we're committed to them, we love them, we appreciate them.

But in the passing of time, they no longer hear from us and when we meet them again, we don't even know their name. Quite a normal occurrence if you're involved with a lot of people. Let's beware of building up false expectations, whether it's in development or counseling.

Some of you know that in the 60s, I was involved in very, very in-depth counseling. Some of the most positive feedback in my ministry came from counseling and seeing people come through. But in the passing of time, like three or four years, you're unable to maintain all those relationships.

Life changes. People get married. They have children.

They have relapses, and in some cases, completely lose their Christian faith altogether. Beware of boasting about what may have happened this week or even this year. Share about it.

In humility, give praise to God. But realize we are in a marathon race and when we're dealing with relationships in connection with fundraising, we're dealing with something even more complex where we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God every day, where we need to be honest and confess our faults

and our weaknesses Sometimes in OM, we emphasize the privilege we have of ministering to others. I have to confess that in much of my own work in the area of development, people have been ministering to me.

My message of development is development in weakness, much weakness. And as I share my struggles and as I pray with people, as they in turn share some of theirs, a partnership is built It's a high, as we say today, synergy partnership that can really bring a lot of fruit for the Kingdom of God whether there's big money involved or not. In the midst of praying through my whole mailing list, prayer partner list, and I realize that on every full page of names of people I'm praying for and involved with, many of them are only acquaintances.

Some of them, to be honest now, I don't know who they are. Their name is there. It's built up over 40 years.

But I realize most of the people on each page are not particularly giving to me or to Operation Organization. They're people in ministry who are receiving. They're people who are giving to their own church.

They're people who are giving to others. I started building relationships almost at the very moment of my conversion. In fact, in my life, I had many relationships before my conversion and some of them are still linked today.

I just had time with two of my high school friends. Can you imagine? No, I've never lived there since 17 years of age. I had a fellowship with high school friends who I've been supporting who work financially for many, many years.

It's quite an experience. Pray for Me is 1996, is my 40th high school graduation reunion. It starts Friday night in October.

I'm already booked in with a big dance. My wife and I are thinking of taking dancing lessons to prepare for this event as I'm sort of forgot a lot of the old steps. We are interested in people whether they ever did or not.

We can confess that openly and honestly. We're in the people business to win them to Jesus, to love them, and in a sense after that to leave them with God. If they give, praise God.

If they give to someone else, praise God just as much. If they don't give, well, pray for them. Maybe it's your time to give to them.

The third word that I've written down that I don't need to say much about is the word support. As we've had such fine teaching and this teaching is widely available from Henry Janowski, the Director of Development in the United States. I did share with the group gathered at Westwatch that 75%, about 75% of all OM money comes through support.

And that's something we have to remember. On the other hand, the other 25%, which is a big part of my concern and the concern of many of you, is a lot of money. And I believe quite a few fields have run into difficulty because they've tried to run their whole field from people's support.

I've tried to say from day one that it's an enormous mistake. You as a leader must be a pay setter and you must trust God for some general money. You must trust God with your people, not you doing it on your own.

Sometimes in development we hear the word I a lot. God dealt with me about this and I'm more into the word we because I know in my own small operation without the people around me, my wife, Vera, May, the woman at the switchboard, the other people who help pull the team together. Without all of them pulling together as a team it's not going to work.

Beware of the I in your own ministry. Beware, brothers and sisters, of your own ego. It creeps into Christian work and especially development in very subtle ways.

Don't think it didn't creep in as well in the old days when we had different terminology and somewhat of a different strategy. Satan is not a jerk. He knows how to infiltrate any strategy, the most lofty, beautiful strategy with the most idealistic principles.

Satan has already studied it for quite a few years. That's why I love those words in Ephesians 6, take the shield of faith wherewith you'll be able to stop the fiery darts of the enemy. As a leader you have a responsibility to help your people in their support.

Third-party editors, as I have been involved with them for many years, 80% of the time produce some results. It is difficult for a person to present at times their own ministry. Some are much better at it than others.

But you can present the ministry of your fellow team members. I've done this again and again, seen some of the most encouraging results. It isn't always overnight.

We can help one another. We can bear one another's burdens and we at the same time can bear our own burden. That's what it says in the Word of God.

And I am so excited about what's happening in the area of support breakthrough. You know, I think it's one of the most exciting areas we're in. And we've seen that in the lectures that we've already had.

My fourth foundational word is the word disappointment. For every victory there seem to be many defeats. We have to be ready to handle them.

We live in a very, very fast-changing world. And people who are in development are often at odds with one another on how it happens and why it happens. The same is true of the people in the business world.

Have you listened to Tom Peters lately? He's coming for a big seminar in Singapore in a few days. He seems to contradict his previous writing. And I appreciated what Henry had to say about us contextualizing this into our own situation and our own experience.

Because we are all so different. In my own approach, meetings have been really number three or number four on my list. Amazing things.

I share openly in the meetings sometimes about the struggles we face in Christian work about finance. I go to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 for the Word of God teaches about money. And if we're going to teach the Word of God, then we have privilege to teach in meetings about money.

Never forget a couple years ago I was sharing openly about O.M., some of the needs. A man walked up to me at the book table because one of the keys in any meeting, the people you meet before, the people you meet after, the addresses you get, meetings are people. And I motivated him to take many, many meetings.

Though it's very true that for your own personal support, just taking meetings wouldn't necessarily bring an end to what you do before, what you do after. It's also how you share and we're all different. But I've had similar experiences many times.

This one was one that I'll never forget. A man came to me at the table and he said, I just don't understand how an organization as fine as yours could be lacking money. And within a couple days he sent 20,000 pounds sterling and has been a regular supporter now, a big supporter for many, many years.

I think the bottom line in all of this is just being faithful to what you sense God wants you to do on any one day. And realize that God leads different people in different ways. And to be a free spirit.

I could never do what I'm doing if I wasn't, by God's grace, a free spirit. In the 60's I would be much more concerned about what each one of you would be thinking about what I'm saying this morning. I'm still concerned about that.

But I'm a free spirit. I know it's not possible for me to communicate without some misunderstanding. In a tougher meeting, say in this particular meeting, and I was really pouring my heart out about the psychotic commitment, the unreached, the reality of heaven and hell, I probably have some fairly significant misunderstandings, maybe even a few letters.

I know that my very approach to life, for some people, doesn't appear to be very spiritual. I, in certain ways, don't appear to be very spiritual. But Jesus has set me free to be myself.

That doesn't mean sin. Though, failure and sin comes in as we run the race. And I just am convinced that God has to free some of us up a little more before we're going to be able to do some of the things He wants us to do in this area.

Not be afraid of failure. Of course we're going to fail. Not be afraid of miscommunications.

There will be miscommunications. That, in turn, will bring hassles between you and your co-workers. None of us want hassles.

But it happens. And we, as Christians, are more unrealistic and unconverted people in terms of misunderstandings, hassles, handling hurts. We get so uptight about one another.

I came to say, some of us here are still remembering hurts that took place to us two years ago or fifteen years ago. We really haven't totally let it go yet. And it comes up when perhaps we meet that person again or that person says something that reminds us of what happened ten years ago and we find something coming in our heart, which the Word may describe as a root of bitterness.

One of the greatest victories in our own ministry is in the whole area of trying to maintain relationships with people that had a bad time in OM. There are not so many of them. But there are, on the other hand, quite a few.

As you look, over ninety thousand have been on OM. By God's grace, we have tried to go the extra mile. Not with money and wine, generally.

But we've tried to go the extra mile to bring healing to show them that we still care. And I believe this is one of the reasons an amazing number of OM graduates are pouring phenomenal money into operationalization. We're talking long-term relationships.

We're talking overcoming disappointment to get God's appointment for the next step. We're talking a lot of phone calls and a movement that's stretched out across the globe. You can't handle this all face-to-face.

And it is very much also tied in with our relationship with churches. In some ways, the most valuable thing we have in OM are the relationships with churches. People change.

People go to heaven. People leave a church and become missionaries themselves. And the ongoing relationships we have with churches in OM is one of our most valuable assets.

And we've had to acknowledge often that they've done far more for us than we have ever done for them. They, in turn, however, have come to us and have said, you have done so much for us. When can you come again? Our church so appreciates your being with us.

We cannot have development in isolation. Development is tied in to every other aspect of our walk with God. Every other aspect of our ministry in one way or the other.

The fifth word you've probably guessed by now is the word balance. When you really get this vision, when you really see what finance can do in the kingdom of God, when you also, to be honest, see the tremendous hurt and confusion and chaos that comes from the lack of money, you probably may get over-motivated. Join the club and cry out to God for balance.

Because people who get into fundraising are natural family neglectors. They naturally neglect other parts of their spiritual life and their Christian life. Sometimes we get a little bit too competitive.

Personally, when I hear that someone decided to give their money to another Christian organization instead of OM, I can say with all honesty, I say, praise be to God. I am not competing with other Christian organizations. One of my best close friends who gives significant money for 35 years asked me for the list.

And this comes from the ethos that you develop with that person. He asked me for the list of seven other agencies that I felt maybe he should give some of his money to. And I provided him with a list.

There is only one body. Let us never get too excited about Operation Mobilization. We can be excited, but let's not get too excited.

Let's be excited about the body of Christ. As I was out jogging yesterday afternoon, a man shouted my name in the street. I thought it was someone from the government.

This is difficult for me to go anywhere in secret. I thought it would be a little easier in Singapore. A man shouted my name in the street.

I think it was a foreign missionary working with a local church near here. And we had a wonderful chat going back to Chicago after several years working here in a very dynamic church. So I interviewed him.

I happened to have my wall and my tape recorder with me. So I interviewed him in the street. And he gave me his name and address.

So at this point I want to say anything with legs is a future donor. But I actually didn't have that in mind. I didn't have enough time to think about that when I met this person.

But certainly anything with legs is a future friend. He's a future citizen of the kingdom of God. And in this kind of work that God has put us in, we must constantly remind ourselves of the ultimate goal.

The glory of God, yes, but also seeing men converted, seeing churches planted, seeing people who are going to be God having his way in people's lives across the world. We need balance. And you'll have to work on that on your own because we just had a short time together at present.

And number six, the sixth word is the word ministry. Ministry. Our first priority is to minister to our contacts but I want to again emphasize also to be willing for them to minister to us.

Don't we realize there's a lot of people out there that want to help us? Isn't it not often our tribe that makes it difficult for people to help us? We don't look very helpless. We don't want to appear helpless. Maybe this is why all my Christian life I've had large amounts of money being handed to me.

Even in India, phenomenal gifts in those earliest days in India. I guess it's because I look so helpless. And people would give me money and I would give and ask me to buy a meal.

I met a beggar once in India. Some of you know the story. Trying to get money from me and he pulled off his shirt and showed me his skinny little tummy.

I pulled up my shirt and showed him my skinny little stomach and then held my hand out. He was a little bit baffled by that approach especially with me being a foreigner. Of course, we're all different so we don't try to copy one another but we allow God to work through our particular situation in his own beautiful way.

And then seventh, the word appointments. This has become a big word in my thinking lately because my experience is that with all the work we have, with all the pressure administratively, we don't make that many appointments. We've got to get on the phone, we've got to write the letters to make the appointments.

Sometimes you don't have to think of that much more and get all uptight at that point. Make the appointment. Maybe you don't even need to directly talk to them about finance.

You've got to make those appointments. And I know this is something we're all motivated about in these days. You don't have to be afraid of people saying no.

You don't have to be afraid of people saying they don't have time to see you. That is completely normal. We have to learn how to persevere.

We have to realize that it's going to be very different for someone like myself, 40 years in the race, and someone four months in the race. You must be patient as you develop my aims and goals in this area. It's not going to all happen overnight.

Some people that I have prayed that they would give to this work, it was 20 years before the first gift. 20 years. In the case of my father-in-law, we weren't praying for him to give, but we were praying for him to

come to Jesus.

It was some 25 years of continual prayer before this man who was originally anti-Christian surrendered to Jesus. We never had to talk to him about money. I don't think it was hardly in our hands.

But he became a very regular giver. Not just in my lifetime, but to O.N. pray for him is very ill right now. My eighth word I'm going to throw in is two.

Extra words is the word habit. Billy Graham says that Christian life is habits. If we want to live for Christ, we have to change our habits.

That's a paraphrase. Why is it sometimes we're so slow to study people who are so gifted in raising money like Billy Graham? Every letter from Billy Graham asks for money. Almost every one I've been getting for 35 years.

Every letter he sends brings in pay money. Now you can't necessarily do exactly the same, but you can at least study how other people operate. And realize the great variety of approaches.

Billy Graham always gives away free books. I get criticized for giving away books. Billy Graham got me started not only in giving away books, but if you really want to blame someone for my entire mess, I hope it's not all a mess, Billy Graham gave me the invitation to repent and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and he shall be saved.

Characters like me with mega struggles don't think at times in my low moments I don't think I was calm in a big emotional Madison Avenue blessing rally in New York City many years ago. I couldn't quickly repent when I get those deep, deep struggles and doubts that come upon my soul in a very dark way. Habits.

Change your habits. And then ninthly, a ninth word is the word church and we've already mentioned the importance of that and our desire to serve the church, work in partnership with the church and we're saying more than ever if we're going to get the missionaries we need out to the harvest field and I believe it's true of the finance as well, then we need an Acts 13 paradigm shift in our whole movement and throughout the Christian world. So that we realize the local church and fellowship is the key to world evangelism and we'll make the necessary changes to cause that to happen.

Lastly, I threw in a final word that I don't think I've spoken on much it's simply the word sanity. What you're going to say before you say it. Try to let people give you feedback.

Be open to correction. Listen to your wife or your husband or read a wide variety of different books and then know how to repent and bounce back when you fail. And my testimony is still a testimony of a failure but by the grace of God he's brought in some successes as well I can only give him the glory.

Let's pray. Lord I share these things as someone who still has so much to learn and yet I thank you that I don't have to be phony about what you've already taught me for 40 years because if I hadn't learned something in 40 years from all the people who have taught me and all the books I've read and all the exposure I've had then I really would be disqualified.

I just thank you especially for those that have somehow come alongside all these years way back to 40 years ago and for those that have that have stuck board members prayer partners churches that have linked in over the years and have stood with us giving praying loving us reaching out to us accepting us

opening doors for us sending us finance intercede Lord we are we are so grateful maybe that's the last word we are so grateful God for all you have done forgive me for my murmuring and my complaining and my bad attitudes that sometimes have crept in and enable all of us Lord to continue to walk in the spirit and therefore not fulfill the lust of the flesh and to see great breakthroughs for your kingdom in Jesus name amen now our camera people have asked me to they're worried about this

they've asked me to add a little bit after the message merge men is a problem difficulty that would be I thought I'd just share a story of yesterday every day I make a commitment every January 1st every day throughout the whole year will be a special day an exciting day and yesterday was a very special day for me I love free time I love to do my own thing I love to be alone with Jesus I love to be with people but I'm only able to give to people because I'm able to refuel when I'm alone and so I made phone calls to people around Singapore one of our prayer partners that we wanted to see was going to be here actually in a hostel talk to him in a hostel then I went out for one of my prayer walks fun walks you have such a selection of fast food places in Singapore I'm not a fast food person

you never guess that I headed for Denny's changed to McDonald's headed for Burger King and landed in Long John Silver with lovely shrimps at a very good price but my big goal was to get something to make hot water in my room so I could make tea in the morning because I've been suffering here significantly without my early, early morning tea gripping jet lag has helped I went into one shop and found one of these little things you put in a cup of water that boils the water he showed me this plug that had to fit on the end the English style plug they frightened me so I begged him to please put the plug on he was a very dear man he put the plug on tested it and we were ready I already had the tea so I thought in a lovely box I brought from Britain then I had to get a cup I had no cup I had no

pot I didn't see anything in the room I didn't want to break the glass so I had to get a cup that was an interesting experience because you have to find the right cup because I had a cup in a strange country once and when I put the hot water in the entire bottom of the cup dropped out anyway I got a cup it's quite a big mug because I like a big cup of tea in the morning then of course I had to get some milk I can't stand powdered milk in my tea though for Jesus I have it all the time but anyway I decided to get some real milk and hit the 7-11 for the milk this is 3 or 4 shots just for this project I then went to Denny's for my ice cream sundae this was to finish my adventure off and I saw this sugar I needed sugar and I saw that extra sugar and I had an integrity crisis as I took 6 sugars

out of that little bowl I later justified realising that maybe the sugar could have been legitimately used in the sundae which was always so sweet my ears tingled as I got back to the hotel and attempted to make an even cup of tea after meeting this fellow in the street I opened the box of tea and discovered I don't think this has ever happened before it was not tea bags it was loose tea there's no way the loose tea with only a cup now I'm working on how to use a Kleenex and I'm going to explain this experiment later on I dug with currency through my briefcase in which you'll find almost anything imaginable and praise god there was one tea bag in the bottom of my briefcase it looked a bit soiled but I got my evening cup of tea and I saved the bag overnight and used it for my second cup

this morning is that enough time? would you be serious with that I don't know how many of you know it in the group serious I don't know just start thinking about what's facing you when you get back there's no warmth well that didn't work I was going to give a book review seriously let's just look at this book for a moment spiritual discipline for the christian life I'm amazed that quite a few of you probably because of your budget have not taken advantage of the books we have on display here but I encourage you to get at

least one book even if you just need one Singapore dollar because you've got a long airplane ride ahead of you most of us and the right book on the right plane can be such a blessing and this is surely one of the greatest books for any of us in a way spiritual discipline

for the christian life written by Donald Whitney how's that? please don't come to my room for a cup of tea because there's only going to come

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