

# Obedience and Commitment

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon calls for a deeper commitment to God and active participation in missions through obedience and faith.*

**Duration:** 22:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:17, Mark 2:14, Romans 1:1, Romans 12:1-2

**Topics:** "Obedience"

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## Description

The video in the sermon transcript is about the importance of total commitment to Jesus Christ, especially in regards to world mission. The speaker acknowledges that some people may be resistant or fearful of responding to an invitation due to past experiences or confusion. The devil is portrayed as a specialist in selling fraud and bringing doubt. The speaker emphasizes the need for a deeper commitment to Christ and the importance of spreading the message of the Gospel through films, particularly in languages that are often overlooked.

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## Transcript

Well, the time seems to have gone by very quickly, at least for my wife and I. And I think with every ministry there are blessings and there are difficulties, and one of the difficulties of our ministry is that we have to keep moving on. In fact, with all the problems we have right now, I should be back in London, England. And sometimes even my own leaders wonder what I'm doing, coming over here.

But I believe it has been in the plan and purposes of the Lord. I also find it very difficult not to have the time to get to know more people personally. All her work has been built on very much in-depth personal relationships.

All of us as leaders in O.M. spend a large amount of our time just building relationships, far more than we ever spend preaching. But we believe the Lord has brought us together here for a real purpose. We had an exciting time at the book table this morning, especially after the third meeting, and you probably thought that we closed it down by now.

But we do still have some books left, and we would just love you to go there and take a look again, and especially pick up some of the free material about different countries of the world, especially that booklet about India. A few nights ago I mentioned the most special thing on the whole book table that no one would notice unless you mentioned it. I haven't mentioned it for a couple of days, and that's this little

packet.

People look at it and they just put it down, and I should tell them what it is. But in this little packet there are five books. Powerful Prayer, the most powerful book I've ever read on prayer.

The reason why, Humility by Andrew Murray, Prayer to Christian's Vital Breath, and a book for young people. And on top of it, a two-dollar book about a man who worked in China, The Guiding Hand, Alfred Boschhart, a dear friend of mine who now lives in England. And these, in their original edition, would be worth about five or six dollars.

But we put them in these magazine books. We produce them a hundred thousand at a time in many, many languages. These are all in English.

And they go out all over the world. In fact, we have a warehouse in Georgia. You might pray for that.

We're looking for some personnel for there as well. Just to receive tons and tons of literature from different printing presses around this country, and then ship them out to the ships, because the ships can't carry all the literature, even though the ships have a 400-ton carrying capacity. We want to offer that to you for the special price of two dollars, and with it, another two-dollar book.

You won't believe this. A book by A. W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous. A powerful book by this man of God.

We're putting the two together for two dollars, so I hope you'll take advantage of that and read it. This is my greatest urge that you will read these books. Somehow take the time.

This is some time for reading. First the Word of God, of course, and then some of these books. And then the book I mentioned on Wednesday night, the 25th anniversary edition of Through Gates of Splendor, a book for young people.

The men who gave their lives in Ecuador. A new edition with an update on what's happened to all the widows of those men who were killed in Ecuador. A great little book.

Another book I haven't mentioned yet. It's a bombshell, and it's called The Golden Cow, about materialism in the 20th century church. I really believe this is a massive area of deception among God's people.

None of us, I include myself, are excluded. And this book, the first two chapters are a bit heavy, but as you get past them, you will come into some very, very strong statements that need to be considered. By John White, some people believe he's the best prose author in America today.

Christian author. His other book, I wish I'd brought it up here, Eros Defiled, about impurity and sex, is also available on the book table. So The Golden Cow, and then of course, not to forget again, this great book, Operation World.

I have a fear that if you don't get this now, you'll never get it. It's just not a book that's around. Easy.

I would love to see you, of course. Have your own little bookshop right here in the church. Maybe you do, and I just haven't seen it yet.

This is a big place. I'm not around for everything. I did get into the television studio.

It just about blew my mind. This is an exciting place. This is an exciting city.

I think I'd like to come here and live. At least for a year or so. Especially between May and September.

I hope that some of you do come over to England. Even if you're passing through, you will look us up, because we'd love you to come out and visit with us there in London. We could even perhaps give you some free accommodation.

Do you use that word accommodation? Big accommodation? A flop? Anyway, we're there. I would love to have some of you come. We would appreciate your prayers for the coming summer mobilization.

We still need more young people, and it's still not too late for young people to sign up for a summer of service. Whether I am in Spain, Italy, Belgium, France, Southern Ireland, Great Britain, or somewhere else. As I shared the other day, we believe this is a sensible and biblical way to help in the ongoing task of mission.

I consider Des Moines a great Christian film center. Somehow, I failed to get down and visit my friends from Mark IV. We've been using your films all over the world, especially around England.

We've been showing Thief in the Night to all of our Amillennial friends. They get quite shaken by that. But people have come to Christ through those great films.

I think maybe I ought to go down there tomorrow and buy a few. The prices have gone up lately. I guess that's inflation in Des Moines.

But they're great films. I hope all of you are praying for that ministry, because though it's here in Des Moines, it touches many, many people all over the world. We're showing those films on our ships often, and people come to Christ through them.

I am convinced very, very greatly about the ministry of films. One of our main ministries is to put films into other languages. We've put a number of films into 10 Indian and subcontinent languages, and some of those films were just the first films ever to be put in those languages.

As usual, most things are just for the English people. Then maybe the Spanish, little French, little German sometimes get involved because they've got money. But often the poor countries, when it comes to films, they get nothing.

There's almost nothing in Hindi. 200 million souls speak Hindi. Almost nothing in Arabic.

I spend a good part of the afternoon previewing Arabic teaching films. I also make little films, teaching films for the believers in the Arab world, because I can't visit all these countries. But my wife and I, the Lord provided us an old diesel bus, a 10-year-old bus, and we converted it.

We just did an overland trip of about 5,000 miles in this old bus, all through Europe and then through North Africa and across through Saudi Arabia. We almost didn't get through Syria. They're not too keen on Americans there.

We made some films in the midst of this trip, and I was previewing them because they have to be duplicated before they can be sent back. Praying for the ministry of films that God has very much put on our hearts, our entire audiovisual studio and dozens and dozens of films were all burned in our fire in

Bombay. Some of you may know we had a devastating fire that destroyed our entire central operations, literature warehouse, probably the largest in Asia, and all of our offices in Bombay just a couple of months ago.

And this, because of a number of complicated reasons, was not ensured and it set us back a long way in that work. Fortunately, most of the films were out on the scene where they should be, out on the field, and God has just used those films to bring many Indians to Christ. And I hope you will, some of you at least, pray about becoming and become a prayer warrior with us in this ministry.

Now I want you to turn with me in your Bible to two particular passages of Scripture. First of all, Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12.

We have 11 great chapters of theological truth. And then we come to chapter 12, and I believe it's a chapter worth memorizing. We're just going to look at verse 1 and 2. Because I believe that God wants us to end this misconception on this note of total commitment.

We're going to be giving you an invitation, and I'll give you a warning at the end, for people to make a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ, especially in regard to world missions. Now I know when some people hear about an invitation being given, they think, oh no, not again. And there's some people that fear responding to any kind of an invitation because they've already done that, and maybe they feel much has happened, or maybe they feel enough has happened, and there's no need to go through that again.

But I really believe that God is trying to target in on some people here. I think that in my heart, and I think that in some cases there is resistance. Maybe fear, maybe fear of failure, maybe confusion.

The devil is a specialist in sowing the seed of confusion, breeding the seed of confusion. And because we're not sure of what it's all about, it seems to be an unknown area, we hold back. And I think one of the verses that has helped me to recommit my life again and again is Romans chapter 12, verse 1. I remember when I was a student at Moody Bible Institute, I'd already gone to Mexico, I was already winning people to Christ, I was already involved in prayer meetings every single day of the week, I was walking with Jesus, and yet when I called James Smith, priest at Moody Church, and he gave an invitation, I knew that I had to go forward and recommit my life again to Jesus Christ.

It was hard because I was sitting next to the woman that I was in love with, who later became my wife, and I thought, well what will she think if I go running forward? She'll probably think I'm emotionally unstable. Probably was. From the time I got to the front of Moody Church, and I found out later, no one else out of 2,000 people went forward that night.

That's hard to understand, with a speaker like Oswald J. Smith. That's his father, Paul Smith. He's been here, I believe, a couple of times.

And I went back into the choir room, and since hardly anyone came forward, no one paid any attention, so the choir just came rumbling in, almost stepped on me. So I, that's the truth, I'm really small, I went down into the basement, and I got under a table, and I went my way back to the cross, and confessed things that the Lord had convicted me about. One of the biggest was an unfriendly spirit.

God convicted me of being so caught up in my burden for worldly evangelism, and winning Chicago to Christ, that I was unfriendly. And I had a wrong attitude toward people. Have you ever let the Holy Spirit deal with your attitude? He's very concerned about your attitude.

You know, we evangelical Bible-believing people, we sometimes can have a smile, a wonderful little gospel smile, and inside you can have a disposition of a rattlesnake, just been stepped on by an elephant. God's concerned about dispositional sins. So they talked about that.

God's had to deal with my disposition. I'm one of these moody characters. Nothing to do, I can assure you, with D.L. Moody.

And God has had to deal some heavy blows to me. So again and again, I've had to recommit my life. Again and again, I've had to go back to Rome and stop the child.

Verse 1, let's read it. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that includes your sisters, you don't have to re-write the Bible to get the sisters involved, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed in this world, but be ye transformed.

David Phillips, I think, says, don't be squeezed by this world, into the mold of this world. Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I want you to turn to Mark, especially young people, to Mark, chapter 1. And I want us to look at Jesus.

Mark 1, verse 16. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. They were fishermen.

Ordinary men, not very well educated. I don't know how old they were. I don't think they were too old.

And Jesus said unto them, Come after me, and I will make you become fishers of men. Isn't that tremendous? And immediately they took their net and followed him. And when he had gone a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother were also in a boat, mending their net, and straightway, or immediately, he called them, and they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants, and they went after him.

We often sing Jesus, the same yesterday, today, forevermore. Do we really believe? Do we believe that the Lord Jesus is still working in this way? Still moving amongst us? Still speaking to ordinary men and women and saying, follow me, I want to make you fishers of men. Look over in chapter 2. Here's Matthew, very different type of person, businessman, corrupt to the toes.

Verse 14, chapter 2, And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office and said unto him, follow me. And he arose and followed him. We've had teams in evangelism in Israel for many years.

Another strategic country I'd love to talk about. Wide open for the gospel. And I was there ministering to our teams and preaching in the churches, and I was preaching in the church in Nazareth, and the next day I went down and I did a little Super 8 film there along the Sea of Galilee, and all my mind just went back to this great experience.

Jesus Christ in authority. Jesus Christ in absolute obedience to the Father. He said, my will is to do the need of the Father, or my need is to do the will of the Father.

Saw these ordinary men and said, follow me. And I believe that in these days the Lord Jesus Christ has been in our midst and He's saying to some of you, some of you young people, follow me. I'm going to

make you our fishers of men.

Now we know there's a biblical teaching that we're all His witnesses. We agree with that. Every Christian, to some degree or other, we're all His witnesses.

But we also see from the New Testament that God, and it's been happening for 2,000 years, leads, calls, sends somehow to be full time in evangelism. This church is partly what it is today with such a great ministry worldwide because certain men sense the word of the Lord, the call of God, the sending of God, whatever you want to call it, and they're here full time. But they are going to be able to give their whole day to fishing men.

God, surely we see this in the New Testament, will lead others into normal secular occupation. They will stand behind those who go out in missionary work and they will be a witness where they work and wherever they can whenever possible. We need both.

Let's never allow division between the two. I have a very high esteem of people who commit themselves totally to God and stay in the hard, difficult, challenging secular jobs. If it wasn't for so many people in this country, in England, in Germany, in Sweden, standing behind our work, praying for us, we just wouldn't be out there.

We need each other. But I believe, since it hasn't been emphasized so much, and at this final moment of this convention we need to understand, David is looking for salvation. Even in this great congregation who will leave their nets.

Leave their nets. For some, in the light of contemporary society and the problems, it may mean overseas service for only a couple of years and then maybe service at home. We live in a very complex society in comparison to these days.

But I believe the Lord is speaking to some about leaving your nets and following Jesus. It may mean training sometimes, maybe in a Bible college. It may mean getting involved in something like Operation Mobilization short term for a couple of years to find out God's next step.

It's not for me to give you the specific details. You need to counsel with the leaders of your church. It's the local church that should be sending out the workers.

At least that's the way I read it in here. I like to be very broad-minded. Don't want to condemn anything except sin.

I want to ask a young person, have you ever really in utter honesty presented your body as a living sacrifice and said, Lord, I'm willing to go. I'm not a missionary type. I'm dead serious.

Whatever else, I'm willing to go. And I'll put my hand in you and I'll go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do. I believe the Lord has spoken to some of you about this.

And I pray that you may act in faith and in obedience. I believe the Lord has spoken to many others about taking steps of faith in the coming days in regards to our lifestyle, in regards to how we spend our time, where we live, how we live, what our priorities are. And I pray that you would turn to the pages of the book of Acts and read something about Christianity, Christianity.

I pray that you may counsel with the leaders of your church and go to them and say, look, pastor or elder, how can I get involved? I want to be committed. I want to be a doer of the word. Sometimes when someone begins to do something, someone warns them about the danger of extremism or being too enthusiastic or getting to be a workaholic or, oh, we've got all kinds of things to put people down when they want to do something.

Listen to these words of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, that brilliant author of 27 books considered even by Karl Barth of opposite theology. Lloyd-Jones, straight as an arrow, inerrancy of Scripture, sound doctrine, Karl Barth, neo-Orthodox, even he said, Lloyd-Jones is the greatest living preacher in the world. I went to be with the Lord last year.

I copied this little quotation from Lloyd-Jones in my Bible. Nothing is more obvious about the teaching of the New Testament than this, that the Christian life is a life of activity, a life of vigor, a life of existence. The faith is given to us by the Lord, but we have to ask.

We have to ask. All day I've had people coming to me, saying, well, how do you know? First service is in the morning. I mean, are you all right? People expect that.

I mean, I don't know what your posture's been doing, but who knows how long you look. You look as healthy as a flying giraffe, don't you? I don't know what. We're called to work.

This has been a very easy day for me compared to many other days I've had. We're called to work. We're called to faith.

We're called to something that makes the Olympics look like a game. We're called to something that makes these initial steps on the Falkland Islands a real war. It's small.

We are in an all-out warfare. I'm glad for a few relaxing days in Des Moines, because I know when I get back to London and what I'm involved with there and the ships and the people and the problems and all the other shenanigans of the devil, it's going to be hard. It's going to be rough.

And sometimes it's not because of the free means and the seven means. But it's a joy. I bought with a price.

I laid my life on the altar. And though I've failed, I've sinned, and I'm not worthy, and I'm inaugural, and I'm scared, and who knows what other problem I might have. These 27 years, 27 years, they have kept me.

I will tell you, 25 years ago when I started preaching this message, especially the older folk were scared to, and they used to say things behind my back to make your hair jump. And then one thing they always said, it will never last. Infovil, extremism, fanaticism, fly by night, never last, watch out for this thing, Operation Mobilization.

Of course, God's people never do that. Some would say, oh yeah, you know when I was 20 and I was single, ha ha, oh what's with marriage? Well, you know these single people, what do they know about life? When I got married, my wife died, turned her life upside down, some incredible story in itself, five psychosomatic illnesses, strokes, deepening, even when we went to Mexico, many, many problems, and she was at the end of herself, and in the quiet of her own room one night, she just discovered that great truth, truth of the all-consistency of Christ, and fell into the arms of Jesus, and woke up the next morning completely healed of those five illnesses. I know God doesn't always work that way, but he did that night,

and made it her because we were going to break off the marriage.

Believe the woman that she's been these 22 years. Jesus Christ is alive. Jesus Christ is changing lives, and the Lord Jesus wants to do a deeper, a deeper work in our lives in these coming days, that we may be soldiers of Jesus Christ, whether it's here or overseas.

That's right. The fire has been put out.

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