

Power in Prayer

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christian literature, prayer, and balance in evangelism and discipleship, and highlights the need for wisdom in dealing with other religions and the state of the Church in terms of world missions.

Duration: 1:11:45

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking notes during Christian conferences to avoid wasting time and forgetting the messages. He references James, highlighting the need to not just hear the word but also put it into practice. The speaker promotes the use of printed materials, such as books and tape albums, to deepen one's understanding of topics like relationships, communication, and experiencing God. He also mentions a book on prosperity and warns against the extremism and materialistic focus that can sometimes be associated with it. The speaker encourages the audience to seek wisdom, discernment, humility, and other biblical principles alongside their faith.

Transcript

Now, how many people have their notebooks handy? We like to see the notebooks handy because we're here to learn how easy it is to waste time in Christian conferences. You go, you hear a challenge, you don't get any of it down, and a couple of days later, you can't even remember what you heard. You might say, oh, that was a great message.

God spoke to my heart. I think of those words in James that God doesn't want us to be hearers of the word only, but doers. Now, without apology, we believe in the printed page.

If you look behind you, you see just a little mini display, not much room here. If you go on the ship Dulos, you can see a real literature display. But here you have a little mini display of a few books, quite a few on that table, actually.

If all those went, we'd probably consider it a mini revival. The average person does not understand how important the word of God and Christian literature is in Christian work. There's not even 5% of people in Britain who are believers, there's certainly not 5% that have a vision for Christian literature.

Within OM, we don't even have more than 25%, because OM is many things, not just literature. Church planning, leadership training, you know, you name it, we're in it, in terms of evangelism and discipleship training. And we're having difficulty maintaining the vision for literature within Operation Mobilization.

Doesn't that sound strange? Now, we just believe that the books God has given us here are to go out and bless people. And also, there's a considerable display of free material, and I've just brought some more. Some of that I'm going to mention more in the morning.

But I'd like to urge you to just think about getting certain books. You may not be able to get them now, but you can write the title down. That's why I wanted you to have your notebook.

For example, I want to urge you to get this book about Turkey. Hardly any Christian books ever written about Turkey. It's an easy-to-read book, about one of the first persons that ever came to Christ through OM's work in Turkey, who's now with the Lord, Canaan-Eraz.

And it's called, My Big Father. Turkey is one of the most un-evangelized nations in the world. There are 40 million people.

A recent survey showed there are only 100 Turks from the majority group, which are mainly all Muslims. Only 100 going on for God, in the nation, 40 million. And we believe God is going to appoint some of you as unofficial recruiters for the land of Turkey.

And that as a result of being here, some of you are going to read this, share it with others, and sign up to pray for the land of Turkey. 90% of the people we've sent into Turkey have not been able to stay, 90%. One was shot at the doorstep.

Others have been imprisoned and blacklisted. There are no missionary visas for Turkey. But there are open doors.

And of course, there are hundreds of thousands of Turks in Europe, mainly in Germany, that we're working with. And we're praying that our work among immigrants, that's not exclusively Muslims, but especially may greatly increase, and that will include Turks. I'd like to strongly recommend this book, just published in the British edition.

It may have been mentioned already. It's only published a few weeks ago, Healing for Damaged Emotions. A book that is so important in a work like OM, because people come on OM when they are young.

They come on OM from all different backgrounds, and they bring with them their problems. They don't leave them home. They bring with them their hurts.

Some even come on OM because they're running away from something. That's not unusual in the world in which we live. And we are trying to find a balance in OM, in terms of reaching in to people's lives in a counseling ministry, discipleship training ministry.

I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that ministry. And reaching out in evangelism. And especially in a week like this, it's not easy to maintain this balance, because by the sheer number of people, we cannot do as much in terms of counseling and in-depth man-to-man discipling in the light of all that we're trying to do.

Some of it will be done. But that's a book that helps us in that ministry. So many have been helped by this book on OM.

It's one of the, it's the fastest-selling book this publisher, a very big publisher, has ever printed. There it is, available at half the price of the old American edition. How many of you have ever read Dr. Lloyd-Jones's book, *Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure*? Raise your hand.

I consider this the best book of this century. And I've gone through 1,000 books in a survey before I made that decision. The best overall book, nothing compared with the Word of God, because the Word of God is in a complete separate category.

That's the Word of God. These are sermons in print, based on the Word of God. Just like if you're making a tape of my message now, and you write it out, and that's generally what Verwer books are, because I can't write.

They just take tapes, and they edit them, and then I try to correct them and add some quotations from Tozer, which is usually the best part of the book. And then these crazy publishers go ahead and print it. And the amazing thing, they actually sell.

But here is, I believe, the best overall Christian book of this century. And if you get only one book, I would recommend this. If that doesn't help you in your spiritual life, it'll take a year.

If I had to choose one year in Bible College and that book, the decision would take me about 45 seconds. Guess what it would be? It would be the book. Fortunately, you're gonna have both.

I had both. Why they didn't introduce me to this man's writings when I was in Bible College is beyond my comprehension, except that many evangelicals lack vision and understanding when it comes to books. So I commend this to you.

I would count it worth coming here. I could pass through here on the way to Ulster, where I'm going, just to tell you about that book. A new book by A. W. Tozer, published today.

Interesting, Lloyd-Jones introduced Tozer to Britain. And then O.M. brought his books in. And now most Christian leaders in Britain have read A. W. Tozer.

Whatever Happened to Worship? With a forward by Graham Kendrick. A brilliant book on prayer, because tonight we're talking about faith. We're talking about prayer.

We're talking about the power of God. We're talking about how to keep all that in balance. And here's a book on the subject of intercession by an OMF missionary, one of my favorite societies, should be everybody's favorite society, OMF.

What a great work they have done. I had the joy of having lunch in Singapore recently with James Hudson Taylor III, the great grandson of Hudson Taylor. I got renewed just looking at him.

Praise God, what a challenge. Well, this is from that great mission, *Born for Battle*, 31 Studies in the *Spiritual Warfare*. Now, we brought a few little specials.

This, that whole table is all part of STL. That's the literature arm of OM, which, by the way, really needs your prayers at this time as they're short of personnel, especially people who've got wisdom in the area of

computers. And if you know anybody that can operate these little machines, I can't even stand looking at them.

Never been into screens myself. But if you've got a friend who knows Jesus and can operate computers, we might have some challenge. And you can always talk to David Barnes there, smiling behind the book table, and other STL people about that.

So most of those books all belong to STL. But I brought my, I brought my little diesel table over here. These books I sell to get some diesel money.

You know, in OM, it's everybody for themselves, trusting Jesus, you know. I don't expect Les Wade to give me any money to get out of here. He probably can't get any to get out himself.

He can set your table up over there, Les. He's probably getting a kickback on the, on the STL books. I mean a cut.

But I've set up a table with some Verwer message chassettes, because I want to get some more ministry to you, rather than just these two messages. I want to talk to you on some interesting subjects, like relationships and communication and experiencing God in the depth of your soul. And so I brought these tape albums, and they're available at a special price.

Also, I brought a new book that's almost unheard of in Britain. I always like to surprise people. With books they've never heard of.

And I'm gonna give this book to Les Wade. Bet you've never seen it before, have you, Les? Look at that. I'm gonna give this to you as a gift.

You know, there's a lot of extremism coming in Britain right now. A lot of it from the states on the subject of prosperity, health, wealth, miracles, you know. What do they call it? Positive confession.

You want a jaguar? In the name of Jesus. There it is. It's yours.

Name it, claim it. Leap it, lump it, all the rest. And a lot of beautiful people are getting caught into these things, especially in the States.

The man who wrote this book, Charles Fara, is a leader in the charismatic movement. So, you know, this is not somebody throwing stones against healing or against miracles. No way.

He is a professor of theology at Oral Roberts University. So that tells us something. And he has written this book that exposes extremes in the area of miracles and healing.

It's called Faith or Presumption. Stories that have never been told, dead people, as a result of extreme teaching in this area. One church in America, 75 people dead.

We need this book in Britain right now. And it's taken me a while to get a hold of it. Assembly of God minister in Malaysia gave me his copy.

I didn't know it was in print. And I've just got a hold of these this week. From the pinnacle of the temple.

And I will tell you, if you are not able to discern between faith and presumption, you're going to get in trouble. Sooner or later, you're going to get in trouble. This book isn't a total answer.

But are some really serious thoughts on this important subject. And I have brought that along because it just last-minute arrived and is not available in most places. Is there really only one way? There's no tougher problem than this.

Do you know people just absolutely ridicule what we are doing here this week? To take the gospel to people of other religions is now being ridiculed up and down Britain. And on television, there's so many things that make anybody who believes that Jesus is the only way the truth in life look like some kind of bigot out of the 18th century. And I tell you, we need a lot of wisdom in dealing with this.

Here's a book on the subject, Jesus is the only way. We're giving it half price. And it will help you with probably one of the most difficult theological issues you could ever get into.

And I praise God for Dick Hillis, a great missionary leader, who wrote this book about Jesus Christ and the exclusiveness of Jesus Christ. We want to love these people we meet. We want to talk to them.

We want to esteem their culture. We don't even want to belittle their religion. But we are committed to truth.

And we are committed to preaching Jesus Christ. We will not manipulate people. We believe all these different religions deserve their social rights.

They deserve, you know, equality of citizenship if they're a British citizen or whatever. And in fact, we are their friends. That's why this is called friends from abroad.

There are two sides to this ministry. You must understand. There is the side that represents the human factor.

We want to love these people. We want to help these people. We want to help them get a bed in the hospital if that's necessary.

We want to help them if they're being treated unjustly. We want to help them if some policeman is pushing them around just because of their race or background. We stand for justice.

We are their friends. We will defend their right even to build a mosque, especially when they will defend our right to build our churches in Saudi Arabia. We haven't got that sorted out yet.

But we are friends. And there may be someone here who's a Muslim or a Hindu. We are your friends.

At our leadership conference, some kind of person of Muslim background came to me after. I don't know if he was a Muslim or Christian from what he was saying, but I listened to him. And we realize, of course, we need dialogue.

We need to listen to one another. We are learners. But the other side of the coin.

We are disciples of Jesus Christ, and we must, as Paul said, preach Christ and Christ crucified. We cannot be silent, even though socially it is getting more difficult, even though there's more and more intimidation coming against us, even though we know we have made mistakes. We are committed to preach and teach Jesus Christ.

That brought Stephen to the end of his ministry very quickly. It brought death to many people in the New Testament. But we are committed to this.

And you know, when I talk to my Muslim friends, I often apologize for the terrible things the Church has done. I've done some extensive study on the Crusades, great blotch in Christendom, and I explain that there's nothing worse than the Church of Jesus Christ, than when it gets away from Jesus Christ himself. Because it will have a name that is alive, but in fact, it's dead.

We have, you know, great shame in our hearts when we think of the Crusades, and we think of all that's happened in the name of Christendom. That's why we need these both, both aspects. And what a joy it is to have friends from among these people.

And I tell you, many of us involved in this kind of evangelism, we know that without both factors, there's something hollow in it. If you come here to this city, and you go out in the streets and give out the gospel, but back in your own hometown, you're not treating justly those who are friends from abroad, and they're being discriminated against, and all this kind of thing, and you're not interested, you don't take any time to open your home, you believe it would be evil, evil if your daughter married one of these people, and all this kind of thing, you know, there's something hollow about doing this kind of work. And we don't have that side.

Well, that's, that's a separate message. I throw that in, no extra charge. That wasn't even booked in advance.

Les always writes me way in advance, wants to know what I'm gonna speak on. Interesting, praise the Lord. Try to give him something vague and general, so that I can speak on what I want when I come.

What else do I have? I have a lot of magazine books. Every time you buy a book, you can claim a magazine book free, if you can find out where they are. This is one, why Revival Tarry's, a lot of people have paid a pound or two for that book.

I believe in music. I believe that music is one of God's methods to reach people for Christ. And often I find the average OM display, they don't have music tapes.

So I bring my own, especially Keith Green. For all that reduce price, God is using this man to touch hearts. I wish I could speak to you on a contextualized approach to reaching pagan English young people.

That's one of my subjects I haven't been speaking on too much. But just as we have to contextualize to reach Muslims and Hindus, we have to contextualize to reach our own young people. And I tell you, many, many Christians are very ineffective in reaching English young people.

And one of the things that's helped us reach young people in many countries is contemporary music. And it's something we've been doing for years. I wish we could do ten times more.

But Keith Green was in that ministry, his tapes are there. Lastly, I wanted to just mention the fact that if you miss these maps of the world and these prayer cards, you've missed one of the most helpful tools in prayer you could ever get your hands on. Are these available at a special price? I'm sure they are.

Don't, you know, these people at the book table, don't accept the first price they give you. This is Birmingham. This is Birmingham.

You get them to reduce the price, at least on this item. Look at that. The prayer cards are free with a map.

Les Wade's gonna cover that out of his pocket money. Praise God. I am so excited about books.

Really, I'm almost tempted to just just leave OM as it's got so big and complicated and just get involved in Christian books only. But I don't have a confirmation from the Holy Spirit on that at this point. After reading through all the memos and correspondence that came in the post today, I just thought, you know, how did I ever get in this thing? Just three of us went to Mexico.

We were just going to evangelize. This summer it'll be 3,000. Stretched out across 50 nations with two ships, 1,600 long-term people, a couple thousand others joining us at different times of the year.

And the amazing thing is all of our leaders want this coordinated. They all want, you know, absolute efficiency, everything done right. But we don't want any people or any money to be given to that.

They want me to have just a little tiny team down in Bromley and a miracle bucket and a miracle desk. You know, any problem OM has, we got hundreds of problems. We got hundreds.

That I put it on my desk, in the name of Jesus, be thou resolved. Don't spend any money. We want all the money for Bibles and gospel tracts and for the front lines.

And I tell you, we would appreciate your prayers that our little international coordinating team trying to hold all this together, together with Zaventem and Peter Maiden and Carlisle and a few people committed to the overall task of leadership, because we are, we're under tremendous pressure. And so many of our workers, one third of all OM people don't get proper support. It is a nightmare.

Then somebody comes along and says, well, God's work done in God's way never lacks God's supply. Well, if that's the case, then OM ought to quit. Because for 25, 30 years we have always lacked.

We've never had what we needed to do the job we felt God had put upon our hearts. Now, we've never suffered in terms of lacking food and clothing. That's a promise from God.

Philippians, though I know some people who have, different countries of the world. So that's a bit of a mystery. But you know, some of these things are not quite as simple as maybe we thought when we read our first book on faith.

The work of God around the world is suffering tonight. And I can tell you, as one who's ministered in 50 nations in 30 years, sure, God is blessing. God is answering prayer.

He is faithful. There is no question about that whatsoever. But God has entrusted his work to his people, and his people are not faithful.

And they are not generally concerned with world missions. And they certainly are not giving very much money to world missions. And there are many churches that haven't given a single missionary, or sent a single missionary out in a decade.

And so, when we think of the problems, and the difficulties, and the lack of money, and the lack of manpower, it's not, in any way, saying anything against the faithfulness of our Almighty God. But it is something to be said about us. And when I say the Church, I mean us.

And I believe unless there's greater revival and increased vision in the local Church, the work will continue to be hindered on every side. I just read a letter coming up here from the leader of WECC in America, a very conservative mission when it comes to this whole thing of money, and very slow to talk much about money. Just, you know, not quite as bad as we were for 20 some years.

We tried to out Mueller George Mueller. We tried to bypass Hudson Taylor. We developed the spirit conspiracy of silence that could have stopped even a dinosaur on an attack.

And I'll tell you, we have changed. And we are not going to be silent anymore. Even if we have to fold up OM to do it.

Because personally, I'd rather leave OM and give myself to the whole body of Christ. And battle to see this job done with the whole body of Christ. Because our big vision is in OM.

It's the whole body. It's the local church. It's all these missionaries out on the field with all the struggles and the problems and the battles and the discouragements.

Trying to penetrate the Muslim world, the Hindu world. And in the midst of all the problems, then they don't get their support. And many of them, I'll tell you, more than has ever been written up, many of them get discouraged and quit.

Not only for that reason, because Satan has a multiple attack to discourage people on the mission field. And I would estimate even in OM, and we're a fairly dynamic movement, we probably have 20% of our personnel now that are fairly discouraged. Fairly discouraged.

Not just for one reason, though the lack of finance and the struggles and the guilt connected with that has probably been the major reason for a lot of the struggles that we have. And so after I share from the Word of God about faith and prayer and the power of God, and as we get into the prayer meeting, we are going to pray for finance. We are going to pray that finance will be released for the work of God.

For WEC. For OMF. For unknown smaller groups and fellowships.

And for the work even here at home. And we know Satan is really putting the pressure on local fellowships. Very few fellowships in Britain have not gone through division.

A lot of people left their older fellowships and they figured getting new churches with this greater reality and greater liberty, greater power, and that's going to get on. And in OM we're committed to the older and the younger and the newer. We're committed to all the fellowships that love Jesus Christ and believe in his Word to varying degrees.

We don't agree with everybody. But now many of these new fellowships, do you know what's happening? Major divisions. It's the same thing.

History repeats itself. And we've come to see, I believe we have come to see in Britain in the past years, the need for more humility. For more humility.

The need for less judgmentalism about the other brother, the other church. For less generalization about what's going to resolve our problems. If you think that coming on OM, going through this week, is some kind of total answer to your spiritual struggles, you're in for a big surprise.

Because the challenge is much bigger than that. It's a challenge of a lifetime. Obeying God, following his Word, finding biblical balance, exercising spiritual discernment, growing in wisdom and stature as the Lord Jesus did.

And if Jesus had to grow in wisdom and stature, what about the rest of us? Therefore exercising restraint and patience and balance as we go forward to evangelize the world. Let's now turn in our Bibles to that great passage that I think you all know about in Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12.

You know, we had a tremendous leaders conference two weeks ago in Manchester. I've been reading, coming up here, a number of letters. I will tell you God just worked in that conference.

How many of you were there? A number of you, praise the Lord. Many, many were filled with the Spirit and got a new vision, refilled with the Spirit, began to experience something of God's deeper working in their life. And the letters I've had have been very, very encouraging.

And we believe also this week is going to be a turning point for some of you. And we believe God is going to teach you something about faith and something about the power of God in a balanced way. And as you probably have heard many times from OM, we believe in total commitment with balance.

If you prefer a different word, total commitment with love. If you don't want to talk about balance, no problem. Just memorize and put into practice 1 Corinthians 13 and you'll never have to even mention the word balance.

And in OM when we speak about balance, we're not talking about compromise. We're not talking about one foot in the world, one foot in the church. We're not talking about surrendering your major doctrines.

We're talking about sharpening the sword, not making it more dull. We're talking about letting one strong biblical truth bring another biblical truth into the right perspective. Did you get that? Letting one strong biblical truth bring another strong, even extreme biblical truth into perspective, into balance.

Hebrews chapter 12, Wherefore, seeing we also are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking on to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Now this passage of Scripture comes after Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11 is about faith. Verse 1 of Hebrews 11, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

For by it the elders received witness. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. What an insight into physics.

So that things which are seen are not made of things which do appear. And then it talks about the faith of Abel and the faith of Enoch. Look at verse 6, For without faith it's impossible to please him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. I get letters, not many, but every once in a while I get letters. People are worried that OM is changing.

Praise God that OM is changing. Anything that's alive and that's growing and that's under the direction of the Holy Spirit will change. Not departing from the basic biblical principles of God's Word, but sometimes in organization, sometimes in focus.

We're not having radical changes of policy in OM, but we are fine-tuning certain things that we can demonstrate more reality, more love, more balance. In those early days when OM exploded in Britain and 900 British young people came in one summer, hardly even knowing what they were getting into, we often hear the good reports of those days. But there were many bad reports.

We made many mistakes. We were young. I myself was immature.

I was on fire, but I was immature. I was extreme. That doesn't mean God wasn't using me.

And often when something is being born, God uses extreme things. But it seems that after that thing is born, unless the person and unless the movement comes into balance, it goes into burnout. And I've seen whole organizations go into burnout.

I've seen many Christian leaders go into burnout, faith burnout, leadership burnout, extremism burnout. It's everywhere from Los Angeles to Honolulu to Alaska and the uttermost parts of India. Our burden isn't discipleship for a week, young people.

Our burden isn't to get you excited for a couple of weeks and get your adrenaline pumping. Our burden is that you get into God's race, Hebrews 12, 1 and 2, and that you run that race the rest of your life. That's why I allowed this title, I didn't choose this title, No Turning Back, on my latest book.

I wanted to call it The Human Factor because this book, a follow-up on my other book, Hunger for Reality, that brought me 14,000 letters, is a lot more down-to-earth. There's a lot more of Verwer's failures in this book, and there's such spicy little things in here about marriage and sex and failure and what to do when this goes wrong and that goes wrong. And I've just been so encouraged now at the feedback I'm getting from this, but I couldn't call it The Human Factor because Graham Greene pinched my title.

And I saw that in Smith's and had to change the title. But don't be turned off by the title. This is our burden.

Our burden is to give you some of the truths that God has given us for 20, 25, or 30 years, that you may run the race so that you can come back as an old middle-aged character like me and give your testimony. It's so great to be in these mid-years. I'm in the mid-life crisis.

Praise God. I love crisis. All life's a crisis to me.

Just preaching in the average church at all the long faces is a crisis for me, but it challenges me right out of my shoes. You know, when I was young, of course, people expected me to explode any minute. People used to even write me.

I'm worried about you. You're gonna explode. You're gonna have a nervous breakdown.

Slow down. I've had more exhortations to take a vacation or a holiday than almost any other single exhortation. But you know, all these years, I haven't had this nervous breakdown that people are prophesying.

I haven't even gotten near it. I'm not the type. I don't think it's because of some great spirituality.

I'm just probably not the type, though I have learned some of the secrets of the rest of faith. And spiritual survival. May touch on that a little in the morning.

My problem is causing other people to have nervous breakdowns. This, this is my difficulty. This is why many years ago, after seeing a few people have verbal related nervous breakdowns, including almost my wife, I decided it was, it was balance or bust.

I don't think I've ever said that before. Balance or bust. OM is changing to some degree in our understanding of faith and prayer and the power of God.

And rather than give you one of my old verb word tapes on, messages on faith, you can go get one of those tapes. I want to share a few of the newer thoughts God has been giving us about faith, about prayer, about the power of God. And, and I hope that somehow you'll be able to incorporate this into some other things God has been teaching you.

First of all, faith is exercised in different ways by different people. Whatever you do, don't try to copy other great men of faith. You can learn something from it, but don't try to copy.

I was reading something even this week by a great healer evangelist in America who launched out in faith in a particular area and God greatly blessed. He was teaching this to other ministers. Many of them launched out in the same way and most of them failed.

This is where OM has done some harm in the past. Now I've already taught on this years ago, but, but I didn't emphasize it enough because I didn't understand it enough. I've been speaking on balance and love almost from the beginning of OM.

And I've used this illustration before when I was a student and our big thing was praying, praying in things. We, we prayed in money. We prayed in soap.

We prayed in wives. We prayed in vehicles. We, we were, prayer was, you know, people thought of OM as mainly a movement of prayer.

And people would even exaggerate our lives of prayer and the miracles. Also, we were known for not spending any money except for Gospels and, and for the work of God. If there was ever a group of evangelical Scrooges launched in the 20th century, it was Operation Mobilization.

And I was Chief Scrooge. Some of the stories that people think are myth are actually truth. It's a problem.

But I never would buy any soap. I didn't believe in buying soap. I didn't believe much in washing either, but I was changing on that.

And so I would go into the shower and I would, you know, name and claim it. Soap! And usually I found some. Sometimes I had to scrape it off the floor, but I usually found some.

And one of the young disciples, one of the young little Verwer disciples at Moody Bible Institute, you know, if our leader can trust God for soap, you know, I'm gonna get into the soap releasing ministry. I'll never forget when that brother came to me, having prayed with absolute sincerity, having gone to the shower, absolutely believing and unable to find even a square millimeter of soap anywhere in the entire shower. Now we can laugh, but you can you imagine how this kind of presumption and how this kind of foolishness can penetrate a work? All in the name of faith, all in the name of trusting God.

Can you imagine when we took this kind of teaching out to India? We thought we had found heaven when we got to India. These Indian brothers were more willing to trust God for the ridiculous, the impossible than

any of the people we'd ever met in Europe. And I used to say some pretty interesting things.

Now we have 30 years of experience in India 23. Brothers and sisters, God leads different people in different ways. Faith is not some little narrow thing that you can just get a carbon copy of from somebody else.

And you can read the biographies and you can go to the Christian films and you can develop your Christian heroes, but you are still you. And we need, together with faith, wisdom, discernment, humility, ability to bounce back when we fail, and a lot of other basic biblical principles. I'm here to testify with every inch in me that God has answered prayer again and again over these 30 years.

We have seen him supply finance. We saw him supply these two ships. We saw saw him supply people when people leaders said no one is going to join this work.

We have seen him do miracles. We have seen people heal. We have seen tens of thousands of people come to Christ.

We have seen probably a hundred or two hundred different missions born in answer to prayer out of OM that are now separate operations. I could keep you here all evening. Many, many people have asked, many publishers have asked OM to write a book about all these great answers to prayer.

But I said, you know, we already have so many books on answers to prayer. Maybe I'll write a different book because brothers and sisters, I'm here to testify just to bring this into balance. I believe that I must be committed to honesty and honesty causes me to say to you that many of my prayers have not been answered.

Now, maybe you can't handle that. Maybe you have to go look for a simple answer to that. Maybe you want to change the vocabulary.

I'm not saying God is not listening. I'm not saying God is not faithful. But I am saying simply that many of my prayers have not been answered.

Now, some of them, I'm glad they weren't. But my prayers concerning Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq, Sudan, I could give you a list of a thousand different prayers, many of which I have now prayed for regularly for 28 years, have not yet been answered. I've seen indications of answers.

I've seen answers. Suppose I pray ten prayers connected with Turkey. I see one.

My hope is built up to keep pressing on with the other nine. And as we start thinking about evangelizing Muslims and Hindus, as we start thinking about penetrating the Uyghur people of China, the Turkmen people of the Soviet Union, if we just engage in flippant praying without counting the cost, Luke 14, if we don't understand the nature of the spiritual warfare as outlined in tremendous books like this one, Born for Battle, by Arthur Matthews, eventually we're just going to be discouraged. I'm finding more people discouraged among the Lord's people than I can ever imagine.

In my talking to people and thousands of people write to me, I find many because God has not answered prayer. Praying for relatives for years, none of them converted. Praying for their own parents for years, none of them converted.

Quite a few people, now that they know I'm honest, they become honest with me, and I could write a book on honesty that would be very, very staggering. I believe unless we're careful as Christians, because of our desire for the glory of God and faith and victory and to exalt Jesus, we can be self-deceived. We can be self-deceived.

And I don't want that. I don't believe you want that. And we talk about people that get healed, even people that have had cancer, but we don't like to talk much about thousands and thousands of people have been prayed for and they were not healed.

We don't like to face this. We throw out some little cop-out, some little cliché. It's always lack of faith.

This is brought out in this brilliant book, how the person who is sick is eventually always blamed for his lack of faith. You cannot believe the manipulation that takes place sometimes in what some people call a faith movement, and I'm not referring to any one particular movement when I say that. God answers prayer.

God is going to answer our prayers tonight, but we must learn persevering prayer. It may be many years before we see some of these breakthroughs. I've been weeping and praying for the city of London, where I live and where I've evangelized many times, gone door-to-door and sold books for many, many years, yet today the city of London, the great greater London, is still one of the greatest, most needy mission fields in the world.

Many of our prayers have not been answered. This causes me not to get discouraged. I've never, hardly ever let the sun go down on my discouragement.

It enables me to face reality. It enables me to recommit my life to the long haul. Do you use that expression? I've been over here 23 years and still haven't learned the language, forgive me, but I'm committed to the long haul.

We're not called to some sprint, like sometimes you see in the Olympics. We are called to a marathon. That's why I have slowed down a little bit in the last 10 years, as the pressure mounted, and I had less time for evangelism, less time for the offensive, and I had to spend more and more time resolving O.M. complex problems, and administration, and finance, and things that I never even dreamed of when I was in my twenties.

I have slowed down, and I learned to rest a little better, and I learned to develop certain mechanisms to relax more and to refuel. We're in the warfare, but we're not pulling the trigger on the gun every minute of the day, 24 hours a day. And one of the things I praise God for in the O.M. emphasis in the last few years is we have been teaching and preaching, get to realistically know your limitations.

Even here, some of you didn't sleep last night. Some of you are finding it hard where you're staying. It's cold.

This thing, that thing, you're not used to staying with a group. Do not be ashamed of your limitations. And if you are feeling afraid, and that somehow, you know, you may be starting to come apart, you come and talk to the leaders of this thing.

And if you don't get help from these leaders, then you write a letter to me, because we are committed to ministering to people's personal needs. This is not some kind of machine where we're trying to put you

through some kind of evangelical biscuit cutter and turn out some finished product looking like Les Wade or George Verwood, or even somebody good-looking. And it's a great mistake when, as Christians, in the name of commitment, we're afraid to be honest about our needs, about our struggles.

We have people that even are afraid to admit they're sick. And now there's some that teach that to go to a doctor is a denial of faith. That's why this church had 70 people die.

Because, of course, to go to a doctor was a denial of faith. And now you have people that are claiming that they're healed, even when there's no evidence whatsoever that they're healed. They live in the light of their so-called healing, and I tell you, things are happening that are bizarre.

I mean, they're bizarre, and the world is mocking this. It's getting in the newspapers. It's getting on television.

And soon, if we're not careful as Christians, we will be embarrassed to tell people that we are followers of Jesus Christ, lest they think we're another loony. Then we wonder why people like some of us are giving a plea for balance, are giving a plea for understanding the human factor, the limitation factor. We are not little mini-supermen.

You need to sleep. You need to eat. You need a certain amount of rest.

You need release at times for certain emotional pressures. And I thank God for men, brilliant men like David Seamans, who's got the courage to write a book after 40 years of counseling. He's not a psychiatrist.

I'm not against psychiatry. But he's a pastor who spent 40 years, 30 or 40, counseling young people. You know that young people from strong, strict Christian backgrounds, in my experience, often have more emotional problems than even unconverted people? That's right.

Because if you get the law, if you get the law and you don't get the grace, you are going to develop guilt. You are going to develop emotional problems. You are going to feel you're a second-class citizen.

We have thousands in our churches now that feel they're second-class citizens because they've never spoken in tongues. I'm not against speaking in tongues. I have intimate friends who speak in tongues.

Great men of God speak in tongues. Many great men of God don't speak in tongues. What a ridiculous thing to allow the whole body of Christ to divide on this one gift.

But I have counseled many people who, in their particular church, because they haven't got tongues, are classified as second-class citizens. I had one recently come to me, all bent up. How could she ever be a missionary? Because she's prayed and prayed and sought and wept and cried.

She's been to the altar so many times her knees are starting to feel it and she's not received that gift. Therefore, she feels she doesn't have the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, she's a second-class citizen.

All she can do is sit and wait. Do you know that surveys among American Pentecostal Christians, we have many, many wonderful Pentecostal people in O.M., some of the greatest churches I ever preached in are Pentecostal. But you know, surveys have shown that among Pentecostal Christians in America, 25 to 30 percent have never spoken in tongues.

Now, if that's true in a Pentecostal church where they're emphasizing that, you know, what are you going to say about churches where they don't have, you know, that as a strong emphasis? And the devil likes to take little things like this. And even on O.M. campaigns, we get young people who sometimes come from different backgrounds and they try to push their little doctrine on somebody who maybe has never heard of some of these things. And so instead of being an evangelistic thrust where we're developing love and fellowship and reality, we get into tangents, we get into extremism, people get hurt, and then we wonder why some people who come on our campaigns never once contact us again after the campaign.

That's it. Because someone during that campaign or in the midst of it has gotten extreme or has pushed this or has pushed that, and some young people, and often it's the more sensitive and even thinking young people, they say, hey, you know, this is not for me. This is not for me.

O.M. is not what it appears when you take a snapshot at one little Easter campaign. This is just part of O.M. Les would be 100% in agreement with me on that. O.M. is many things.

Our strategy changes from country to country because we're sensitive to culture, because we're generally under national leadership, and because we're dealing with all kinds of different people and we're working with all kinds of different people, and because faith is manifest in different ways in different people. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you can only really live a life of faith if you become a full-time Christian worker. Now, sometimes when you come on an O.M. campaign, you get a bit of a challenge to become a full-time Christian worker, and that's acceptable.

But we must never think that people working in the offices and the factories are second-class citizens. Many of you, probably God is going to lead you to work in the schools and the factories and the offices and the farms right here in your own country. And that message is clearly found in the Word of God.

Others are going to be called into ministry. There are more people being called into ministry, it seems, in Britain right now than the Church and individuals are willing to finance. So that's a bit of a problem, isn't it? I'm almost as scared to challenge people sometimes.

Don't worry, I won't stop. I know how to battle fear. But when I give a challenge for people to go into Christian work, and I've given some very strong challenges and seen a few tens of thousands respond over the years, I try to point out that doesn't necessarily mean full-time paid Christian work.

Because sometimes, and it's more true in other countries than Britain, there's not money to get such a large number of people living full-time in Christian work. That's why some are becoming tent makers. That's why Romans chapter 10 talks about senders.

How shall they go except they be sent? Have you read that? Where are the senders? And this is one of our problems in OM. We have tremendous meetings, like the leadership meeting in Birmingham two weeks ago, this conference, we have tremendous meetings, most of the time young people. And most of them want to go.

And we don't have the senders. We can't get the adults that will stand with this work and that will help these young people, not just financially but the counseling, the stability, the heart-linking. And you know, before I ever went to Mexico, I was only 19, God gave me a group of older men.

God gave me a group of older men who prayed for me. They later became the board of trustees and my sort of spiritual umbrella. That's from the very first time I went to Mexico at 19 years of age.

And they also gave of their finance to this work and supported it and encouraged me. And I tell you, if you want to start thinking about long-time Christian work, then you might want to think about raising up a prayer group of people who really will stand with you. In your church, around your church, wherever.

Because I tell you, without prayer, without people praying for you, especially if you're heading into something difficult, you know, you're not going to make it. World Missions is not a lone ranger operation. World Missions is teamwork.

And we've got to learn to work together on a team and we've got to see God raise up teams of people who will support us and pray for us and mobilize prayer on our behalf. God works in different people in different ways. I just talked to two ex-OMers when I was in the Netherlands some weeks ago.

They really appreciate OM now more than they did when they were on it. Because one of them is working in a gigantic chemical factory. Every day he walks in that door, he risks his health every day.

You know what happened in Bhopal. He works in the same kind of factory in the Netherlands, hopefully a little safer. I will tell you, have you seen what some of these people are exposed to in nuclear factories, where they make great, you know, nuclear fuel and all that kind of thing? Maybe you didn't see some of the films about that.

So my friend, he's a Muslim convert. He was an officer on the ship. He's now working in a chemical factory.

And you know what he told me? And I tell you, he ministered to me. He believes God has led him and called him to work in that factory. Now linked to that, that supplies the money to feed his children and his wife.

And I want to tell you, today, listen, it takes faith just to get a job and hold a job and do it right. Plenty of faith, just as much as any of these OM people who have been evangelizing the world for the last 20 years. And I have to take my shoes off sometimes when I see the people working in secular jobs who have supported me all these years.

And I will not go around anymore and say it's just faith or it's just prayer because that gave too much credit to George Verwer. It's commitment on the part of people who give money. It's commitment on the part of people who work in those factories and those offices and then send their check to me and maybe they discover later on that I may be enjoying something in life like a cassette recorder that they didn't even buy because they gave the money to missions.

Faith has many, many ways of manifesting itself. And this division that comes between full-time workers and the layman, that even comes between pastors and congregations because of wrong interpretations of faith, I believe is very grievous to the Holy Spirit. One man may have faith to trust God to do something in the area of healing.

Somebody else may have faith to minister to someone terminally ill down in a hospital. Words of comfort, words of love. God gives his gifts as he will.

And no matter what we do and no matter how much we know, there's also the element of mystery. If you don't develop the mystery factor in your theology, the looking through the glass darkly, here in this world factor, you're probably going to be running the rest of your life looking for total answers. And you

eventually will probably get very, very exhausted.

Faith, the life of faith, it's big. Within God's narrow road, it's big. Now we know the road to heaven that is spoken about in Matthew is a narrow road.

But let's not, with our little ideas and our extremes, let's not make that road narrower than it is. This is what some denominations do. This is what some extremist groups do.

Only our church, only our group, we are the final, last revelation of what God is doing in the world. Of course, the Mormons claim that, I guess. Beware of that mentality.

God is working in different ways in different people. You know, as you go home after Easter evangelism, I hope you're excited. I hope you're willing to talk to people about what God has done.

But I hope you'll be a good listener. Do you think the people who are not here are not doing anything? Do you think when you meet people, when you get back home, they only want to listen to you, tell what you've been doing? Do you know anything about psychology? Do you know anything about people? Then when you get back home, you will take an interest in what they have been doing. They may have, even your own parents, gone through the most horrible Easter in years, and you come prancing in the door with your big bag of books and a big O.M. smile, and they'll think you've gone right out of your head.

And in our evangelism, if we don't combine it with sensitivity and reality and a little bit more down-to-earthness, it actually just drives people away. It drives people away. And so when I think of the way of faith, when I think of the power of God, I do think of God saving people, God healing people, God bringing in money, God thrusting out workers to the ends of the earth.

I haven't departed from any of the things I've been preaching for 30 years, but I also believe it includes discernment. I believe it includes sensitivity to other people. I believe it includes understanding the wide range of ways that God is working.

I believe it includes knowing how to understand your own limitations, knowing how to handle the situation when that prayer isn't answered. I know many cases where ten people have come up for prayer, for deliverance, for help. One came through and nine didn't.

We only talk about the one who came through. The nine, and nothing happened. They're quietly, you know, shunted out the back door, or they're told, you know, come back again.

And if you talk about them, you're accused of being negative. We have a false extremism or a dangerous extremism that's coming out today that tells us we must never say anything negative. We must never have any kind of a negative confession.

Characters like me must never get up and share that they have struggles or failures, or they don't always see answers to prayer. Well, I'll tell you, I've been doing it for a long time, and I've had as many people encouraged and writing and recommitting their lives when they've heard about my struggles and my failures and the things that haven't gone well than when I've gone up and given all my positive stories. Personally, I just believe in both because I believe in telling the truth.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus Christ is calling us to follow the road of truth. And it's so liberating.

One of the greatest books, and I'm rereading it right now, is Eugenia Price's book, *The Wider Place*, where God chooses freedom. I was reading that book this week. I just wanted to jump.

That woman and her writings came into my life about 24 years ago when I was somewhat legalistic. I was too intensive. I didn't have balance.

God was using me. He's merciful. He's gracious.

God used donkeys in the Old Testament, so don't get overcharged if God uses you this weekend. But I had so much to learn. And into my life came this woman, Eugenia Price, with her writings.

I've never met her. She's ancient now. And her emphasis on freedom, her emphasis on balance, her emphasis on self-acceptance, her emphasis on the danger of becoming opinionated.

I was an opinionated person. I had an opinionated opinion on almost anything. Some of you heard my early tapes.

You heard me commenting on nuclear energy and commenting on Einstein. I didn't hardly know anything about Einstein. And I became opinionated.

OM became an opinionated movement. And we had opinions on everything. Thank God He humbled us.

Thank God He brought us to repentance. Thank God He brought us into this message of balance and love and taught us how to close our mouths. What does it say in James 1? Be slow to speak and quick to listen.

And what I was reading from Eugenia Price again this week on the danger of just becoming opinionated, I tell you, it was hilarious. God has been showing the need for reflection. You're looking at Mr. Reaction.

I can react to things quicker than you can get it out of your mouth. I was known for interrupting people mid-sentence, especially my wife. She's trying to say something to me.

She got not even to the end of the sentence. You know, preachers. This is a preacher's ailment.

Debaters. And God hit me with this word, reflection. Don't react.

Even as you're witnessing, they say something nasty about Jesus. They say something, you know, about the Bible. You don't have to immediately, you know, turn your blood pressure up to 90 decimals.

We used to get this group, the children of God, which became a cult, a family of love. And they were all loving, hugging people, love, love. But when you rejected their message, some of them used to flip out.

The hostility used to ooze out their eyeballs. And they sometimes walked down the street actually calling the wrath of God down on you. I want to tell you, if you feel the need to start calling the wrath of God down on Birmingham or any of the individuals, I'd like you to fellowship with Edward Norton here, director of the Birmingham City Mission.

And, you know, if he agrees, then you can go together and do that. But, you know, we go out with love. We go out with brokenness.

We are learners. Don't try to answer questions that are too difficult. You may meet some clever intellectual from another religion in the street.

You don't have to fake it. Just say, look, it's obvious you are 25 times more clever than me. I'm amazed at your knowledge.

And I know that if you read this book with your intellect, you'll come to Christ far quicker than I ever did. But believe me, we don't have to become hyper-defensive. And certainly we shouldn't become ugly.

But I tell you, that's not easy for my kind temperament. And God has been emphasizing reflect, meditate, faith. In one way, it's narrow because it's a narrow road.

We're all on that if we're believers. But it's as broad as the combination of all the hearts and minds gathered here tonight. I pray you'll not go away from this campaign discouraged because somehow it didn't click the way you wanted it to click.

Or somehow you didn't lead anybody to Christ. Not everybody has the gift to bring that person right to decision. That's why God gives us harvesters like Billy Graham and men that have a terrific gift to bring people, you know, to the final point of decision.

But for every person that makes a final decision when it's actually a conversion, there are usually a dozen people involved. There are usually a dozen people involved, encouraging, praying, a piece of literature, a smile in the name of Jesus. May we go out into the highways and hedges not with just faith and the power of God and prayer, but may we go out with wisdom and discernment and love, realizing our own weaknesses.

And yet understanding God's grace can do it. God will answer prayer. We will reap if we faint not.

When we get that kind of balance, nothing is going to stop us. Whatever your problems may be and your struggles, if you're a struggler like me, you'll be able to come back in your midlife crisis and share your testimony that though you're a struggler and you found it hard and you failed Jesus many times as I have, you're still in the race. That's what counts.

You're still in the race. You've still got your eyes on Jesus. You're still exercising faith because it takes tremendous faith just to keep going, much less perform all these miracles, plant churches and turn the Muslim world around.

For characters like me, it takes faith sometimes just to get through one day. I've had an awesome day today and I haven't been doing great miracles along the road. I've just been claiming God's grace to keep calm and to reflect and to love the people that I'm dealing with and that are writing to me and that I'm relating to in whatever problem that may be.

Faith. Any dimensions. Any of those books are about faith.

But if you don't get some of what I've talked about tonight, in the long run, it won't work. You'll end up in a cul-de-sac. You'll end up discouraged.

You'll end up in a cult or extremism or even in unbelief because I know people that try to press God to do something they believe must be done. And when God didn't do it, they said God doesn't exist. I have counseled people who have actually done that.

You cannot break the arm of God. We can never be God's counselor. He is sovereign over the universe and he has allowed many things that we don't always understand.

But as we come in prayer, we are not here to try to break God's arm or to press him into doing something that we're convinced must be done because we are finite and we are weak and we make lots of mistakes. And if we just had a little more of that love and patience with one another and with other members of the body and with other churches, I believe revival would come. Let us pray.

Oh God, we want to continue now in prayer and we believe that you are creating an atmosphere of reality in which we can pray in a realistic way and exercise great faith, whether it's to release finance or to release spiritual energy, whether it's to penetrate Turkey or whether it's to reach into the back streets of Birmingham or whether it's to resolve somebody's personal difficult crisis that they're facing in their own life right here in this church tonight. And so we come to you running the race of Hebrews 12, exercising the faith of Hebrews 11, yet with wisdom, balance, discernment, acknowledging our human factor, our own limitations, our fears, our unbelief, knowing that great faith is not created in the absence of doubt or unbelief, but it's created as we battle through standing on your promises, praying, persevering, refusing discouragement, refusing defeat. So we ask you to meet us now as we worship and pray together in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let us stand and sing. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

Forgive me, it's one of my old favorites for 30 years. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Any musical help would be appreciated.

Maybe some that have to go, a visitor, may not have even known. The Alpha and Omega, the Almighty, the Blessed and Only Potentate, the Lord, Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, Emmanuel, God with us, God of the whole Earth, Governor, Head of all Principality and Power, the Great I Am, the Judge of the Quick and the Dead, the King of Glory, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lord from Heaven, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord God Almighty, the Most Holy, the Son of God, Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Beasts, the Bishop of Souls, the Desire of all Nations, the Friend of Sinners, the Faithful Witness, the King over all the Earth, the Lord of All, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, Ransom for All, Righteous Judge, Savior of the World, Son of Man, Stone Rejected, Author of Eternal Salvation, Gift of God, the Lord of Glory, the Messiah, the Messiah and Prince, the Offering and Sacrifice, the Redeemer, the Resurrection and the Life, the Son of Righteousness, the Author and Finisher of Faith, the Altogether Lovely, the Advocate, the Bread from Heaven, the Bread of Life, the Branch of Righteousness, the Bridegroom, the Chief Cornerstone, the Chief Shepherd, the Christ of God, the Door of the Sheep, the Eternal Life, the High Priest, the Hope of Glory, the King of Saints, the Light of the World, the Lord of our Righteousness, the Mediator, the Messenger of the Covenant, the Prince and Savior, the Prince of Peace, the Prophet, the Quickening Spirit, the Redeemer, the Rose of Sharon, the True Light. Let's continue to worship this glorious Christ.

Focus upon Him as we pray together.

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