

Serious Christianity

by George Verwer

We must balance our seriousness with humility and openness, recognizing our limitations and the potential for mistakes, in order to be God's serious people.

Duration: 52:37

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Soberness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of training and having a serious commitment to God. He compares the dedication and training of Olympic athletes to the dedication needed in ministry. The speaker also warns against having unrealistic expectations and encourages new members to understand that their time on the ship is just one step in their lifelong journey with God. He highlights the fact that as humans, we are a mixture of emotions, personality factors, and burdens, but it is important to remain open and honest in our pursuit of God. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the seriousness of our relationship with God and the need to have a sense of humor and laugh at ourselves.

Transcript

We're expecting George to come shortly, he's on his way. For those of you who have just joined the ship, we want you to stay behind after George's talk this morning. I'm not quite sure when that will finish, but it should finish between quarter to nine and nine o'clock.

And all the department heads, if all the department heads could also stay behind. This morning, those of you who just joined will be assigned to your department, so you'll be meeting your department head and then you'll all go off together to your respective departments and learn your new jobs. Any questions about that? Yes.

Sorry? Oh, boat drill. Is there a boat drill today, Captain? Okay, we're going to postpone the boat drill today. Well, let's just commit our day and our morning to the Lord and ask for God to have you stand upon George and speak to us.

Heavenly Father, we do thank and praise you for this new day. Thank you for giving us the sleep and the rest that we've needed. We want to commit ourselves to you this morning.

We pray that you would have your hand upon us. We want to hear your voice. We want to respond to your word to our life and pray that this morning we will really have an ear to hear and a heart to respond.

Pray that you'll be speaking through George and speaking to our hearts. We also want to pray for all of us that are beginning new jobs today in different departments. Pray that you would help us to learn and to understand and also to become effective in our service for you here on board the ship.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, Andrew's giving me the thumbs up that George is there somewhere.

Okay, here he comes, George Brewer. Well, it's great to be back on the famous ship Duluth. Sorry I wasn't with you in Japan.

After I was with you in the Philippines, I went to Japan and got really injected with a vision for that country, so I'm going back there on Sunday very briefly. I don't know how many of you have seen this book, *The Unseen Face of Japan*. How many have seen this? I wish I'd gotten this to you before Japan, but I'll give this to Lloyd to put in the library, and if some of you got a little bit of vision for Japan, I think you'll find that very interesting.

I spoke at Cumberage Baptist Church outside London just before I came here, and that man, the author, came to the meeting, and I hadn't seen him in years, David Lewis, so I'm hoping someday we might be able to link him into coming to the ship. I'm sure I don't have to say this, but let's be in prayer for the program here. I think we're a long way from the city, so people that come out here are probably fairly serious.

I had a most exciting thing in the meeting last night, and I was a student at Moody Bible Institute, that's a long time ago. One of my close friends was a man named Dick Nusher, and he's a very complex, introspective person, and I don't think I realized we were all going through so many struggles. I don't think I realized how deep his struggles were, and he married a rather unique woman named Ruth.

They were both original people in the early days in Mexico. To make a long story short, they were just sold out for the Lord. They went to Turkey.

In fact, I think their names are mentioned in the book about Canaan, that book about the land of Turkey. They went back to the States and had a very hard time. They divorced years ago.

He backslid completely years ago, left everything. I'm pretty strong at keeping people's addresses, but after seeing Ruth once and talking to him on the phone maybe 15 years ago, somehow they kept moving. I lost their address.

I've never ceased to pray, and their daughter was here last night. She is going on the youth of the mission strong in God. I got her email.

She had to rush off with the YWAM group, but I had a chat with her and got her email, and we'll be able to get back in touch with her mother and father. I think one of the things you may learn from my visit, which you probably already have learned, we've got to keep relearning, but it's one of many things that are on my heart for this morning is that little things can mean a lot to people. Sometimes little things just mean a little, but if you keep doing little things in the name of the Lord and unto the Lord, they can mean a lot.

My uncle is a millionaire. He's an atheist. His name is Wilbur Dutchess.

He's the vice president of a very famous company called Gordon's. He's moving around the 90-year mark, and my aunt is, I think, a nominal Christian. I'm not really sure.

My mother died the same year we lost the Lagos, and I found out somehow, I have a lot of relatives, that it was my aunt's 90th birthday tomorrow, 90, nine zero, and so I just phoned my aunt. It's still a good evening time there in the east coast of the USA, and I just was able to wish my aunt her happy 90th birthday. If you don't think that helps make a person's day, then you don't understand too much about people, but just before that, I phoned a guy named Charlie Schottmeyer.

That's a funny name, and a Dutch background guy in my part of New Jersey. If you're not Dutch, you're not much, and so I phoned this Charlie Schottmeyer. He just happens to be in the fuel oil business.

We have been friends since 10 years of age. It's not easy to maintain those friendships, you know, that started at five and six, so you got to head start. You're also young.

If you start making a list and praying for people that you met when you were five, you're six, you're seven, you're eight. I'm in touch with people that I met at almost every age level. Including, well, I won't comment on that, but I called, just called Charlie this morning.

I wasn't, it's his 60th birthday, a couple years behind me, and they wanted me there in New Jersey. He had a big surprise party for him. He's a very well-known political figure in town and business person.

They donated all the money from the birthday surprise. They encouraged people to give all the money to Operation Mobilization. This was such an encouragement to Charlie.

He just told me on the phone because he wasn't sure where his wife stood about O.M. and, you know, me, because I blow into town and usually have time with him. She's not always available. Her mother's very ill and sort of dying.

Anyway, his birthday party took place on the weekend. It was a surprise. I had a little email blurb that they read out to everybody, but his actual birthday is the 27th, and it's still the 26th there, and so he said to me in our conversation, my birthday actually is the 27th.

I said, Charlie, here in Taiwan, it is the 27th. I think it blew his circuit. He said that phone call was the best birthday gift he could ever, ever get.

We've been linked together for 52 years, and I hardly ever go to New Jersey, and he has put a lot of finance into Operation Mobilization. So little things count. You can't always easily pick up the phone.

Your budget may not always allow for that, but in the future you probably will be. Telephone calls are coming down. People are, I was with a friend in Dubai.

He talks hours on the phone, all through his PC, costing next to nothing. PC phone calls is one of the most radical breakthroughs in communication the world has ever known, especially for those of us who like to hear the voice. In PC phone, there's a little bit of a delay for prayer.

I'm excited about Mosbach and what they do there. This is one of the latest things that came to me out of Mosbach. I only have one copy.

I've ordered a whole lot, a lot of letters I'm dictating on this trip, hundreds and hundreds of letters. A lot of them will get this enclosure. This is the advantage of old-fashioned post mail over email.

Enclosure. So now with email, though pictures consume a lot of time on the screen and all that, in the future it'll be much easier to use enclosures with email. And I hope all of you, sooner or later, will take a look into my website, georgeverwer.com. I urge you to get your own domain name listed, because if not, somebody else will.

Maybe even open a porno site on your name, which if you're married doesn't always enthuse your wife. So anyway, they're celebrating 30 years of ship ministry. A little brochure, and I'm sure the communication experts in Mosbach would be happy to send extra copies of that to your prayer secretary to get out.

If you get any difficulty from them at all, please email me, and we can try to work on that, send them some money to pay for them or something. But we want to get the word around. A vast percentage of all believers around the world still don't know what the ship ministry is actually about.

People even come on the ship, they don't know what this is about. You have to communicate. You have to sell them.

I hope all of you get these copies of Relay Magazine, but I won't get into that now. I want to share something God just put on my heart this morning. I'm always praying.

I just have these few opportunities to share, and I really want to get God's mind, and I'm sharing a message that I've never shared by this subject ever in my whole life. How can you come up with something new at my age? Let's pray together. Our God and Father, we praise and thank You for the opportunity to look into Your Word.

We praise and thank You for the reality we have in Your Son, Jesus Christ. We're all earthen vessels, including George Burwell, that is for sure. And yet, this treasure dwells in this earthen vessel, and we want to learn how to see the release of Your Spirit in our lives.

And help me as I attempt to put some rather strong thoughts across this morning. In Jesus' name, Amen. Many times I've come to the ships with a lot of humor.

I've even dressed up like a clown. I've wore my funny hairpieces. And we've had lots of laughs here in the past.

We're probably not going to have so many laughs at this particular session this morning, though when you attempt to be serious, of course, sometimes it can be quite amusing, for our God does have a great sense of humor. I've emphasized that. There's been a greater influx of humor into OM in the past, say, 20 years.

And we get criticized for it. In some denominations, they teach that humor is not from God. I won't name the parts of the world, but humor is greatly misunderstood.

I have been highly criticized for my humor, especially things like my global under trousers and uh, different things that I have done. And in the name of balance, as I was praying about what to share, I decided to speak on this subject, a brand new title, Why We Are God's Serious People. Anybody who knows me know that even from my earliest Christian days, I was an incredibly serious person.

I became over serious. If you listen to my original orientation tapes, nine tapes that tens of thousands listened to for a period of 25 years, you will find the over serious, uh, sort of missing humorous George Verwer. I tried to listen to some of those tapes as part of a 40th anniversary celebration or some other celebration in my head.

And I got, I think, about halfway through the series. And as I was listening, I thought, who in the world is this? We all change. We all change.

I was, as a student at Moody Bible Institute, over serious. When I went to the first party, I walked out. I believe there was a lot of superficial nonsense.

I just walked out the first party of the freshman class at Moody Bible Institute. I'd already met another rather serious director named Dale Rotas. We met at Maryville College in Tennessee, where I was a first year student and he was a second year student.

And he was older than me in the Lord as well. And he was hyper serious. And I was, uh, you know, almost superficial next to him.

He was also more of an intellectual, more of a thinker. And when I went to Maryville, Dale was a huge influence on me. I was warned about Dale.

I was told that he was actually baptizing people in the showers. And so I wanted to find this, this fanatic. And I met him on Sunday morning.

I'm still in touch with a pastor who preached that Sunday morning. In fact, just talked to him on the phone. He had a very difficult pilgrimage as well.

A man named Jim Crenn. And Dale and I walked home from church and we've been linked together, uh, ever since 42 or 43 years. Dale could especially be serious when George Verwer was doing something foolish.

And he was my Nathan. He had the ability to take me aside and say something along this line. Well, God is using you, George, praise God.

But there are all these little buts. Uh, you know, if you did this or if you didn't do that, uh, if you said this or didn't say that, how much more, brother George, God would be able to use you. And of course, uh, I had to repent.

We are at the end of the day, however, with all of our personality quirks, with all of our humor, and I hope you're able to laugh at yourself at very, very basic. I picked up a very strange habit, according to my wife, on airplanes, where you often sit silent for quite a while. Automatically, when I walk into the toilet on an airplane, I start to talk.

I make faces, I make jokes, I talk out loud in Spanish and English. Uh, there's something also about the flush of an airplane toilet. I always feel it's the end of the world.

You know, you push the little button and then a few seconds later, shh. Reminds me of my toilet on the very first ship, Laga, which was also my office. And I covered, I covered the toilet, one of these powerful, uh, seawater toilets.

I covered it with a very nice box, and you'd come in for fellowship with me, and you'd sit on top of that box. But the handle was a pretty strong piece of iron or steel, well, we couldn't change that. And some people, when they'd sit there, they'd get nervous, and their elbow would hit.

And, you know, shh. The guy would sit on the box wondering whether this was, uh, Burwer's way of punishing people for breaking the social policy. Well, it's good that we can laugh, because, um, some things in life are so humorous, and we need to be able to, uh, laugh at ourselves when we do something silly, and we need to be able to, at times, really be a lot less serious.

Many of us really are too serious about ourselves. We take ourselves too seriously. Jill Briscoe, Stuart Briscoe's, um, wife, in answering questions to a group of leaders at an OM conference, uh, how was she handling all this fame? How was she handling all the invitations to speak all over the world? She's as good a speaker as her husband.

And one of the things she said was, Don't take yourself too seriously. It's a beautiful, beautiful thought. However, this message is, uh, is a serious message.

We are God's serious people. And as often in my messages, I've got seven points. And if one year from now you send me the seven points and your home address, or some land-based address, not the ship, we will send you seven books, one book for each point.

You know what books cost? We get spoiled here on this ship. I hope tomorrow to be able to give you a load of free books. And for one of the first times, I have Mark Knight around to help me find the books.

Giving away books the other day on Lagos II. I've just come from Lagos II in Istanbul. I hit my head six times in the book hole.

Very low ceiling. Fortunately, I had a hard hat on, and that was really helpful. But some of us don't realize just how expensive books are, and so when you can get a free book, especially if you're the kind of person that also wants to give away books, uh, take advantage of that.

Even if it's a book you don't particularly want to read, you can give it away as a birthday present or something. Number one, we are serious about God. We believe in God.

We believe we're created by God. We believe we shall spend eternity with God. I'm not one of these characters that understand much, understands much about heaven.

Praise God for those coffee machines in the cabin. Do you have a coffee machine in your cabin? I guess I'm in one of these luxury cabins. Coffee machine.

I don't drink coffee, so it's very, very handless, handy. If you, I may give lessons later in the week on how to make good tea in a coffee machine. The key is to remove that center little place where they put the coffee filter.

Just push that aside. Let the water go from the container tank in the top directly onto the teabag. You must make sure the teabag, and you have, I bring my own teabags from England, is in the right place.

And as you try to move it into the right place, the water dripping is hot, so you get your finger burned in order to get a cup of tea. I can see that this message is going to be difficult this morning. I'm probably not in the right mood.

I need to be in a more serious mood. Let us understand this, that no matter how much we love God, no matter how serious we are about God, our pursuit of prayer and fasting, which is a huge thing, especially when I was your age, that we are still incredibly human. And we are a mixture.

As human beings, we are a mixture. We're not an amoeba. We're not some kind of single-celled being.

And in our lives, personality factors, emotional factors, burdens to know God get mixed up with all kinds of things. And that's one of my ways of speaking, is that I'm very open, I'm very honest. Something pops into my head that I think may help people stay awake, and I just throw it out, even though it seems ridiculous.

I've already done that. But at the end of the day, let's go back to the wheat. Let's throw the George Burwell straw away and go back to the wheat.

I'm also very, very aware of the limitation of preaching in people's second language, and that there can be easily miscommunication during my few days. And I've had people at times listen to me and actually become angry. And you can't imagine how people have attacked me on certain occasions, not many by the grace of God, because we're all, there's such a wide range of personality and background.

There's bound to be someone that does not get encouraged by what George Burwell said, but becomes angry or upset or difficult even believing that this character could be the leader of this great movement. There were people that thought that OM was really a great movement until they met me and my sort of ragamuffin approach to communication. Fortunately, I have a majority of people in my camp and I've had about 150,000 of them stand up in my meetings, repenting and giving their lives to Jesus, including many non-Christians.

And last night, again, by the grace of God, many stood in this auditorium to pray that prayer, Lord, here am I, send me. I also get enormous feedback from the majority of people that they appreciate me just being open and honest and vulnerable. And again, I'm not saying that's the only way to speak or the only way to be.

And my prayer is that this message may help bring balance. We believe in God. The end of the day, that is a serious thing because there's so many people who don't believe in God.

This morning, I was especially praying for Taiwan and my burden for Taiwan jumped about 20% on my spiritual thermometer this morning, especially as I realized just the vast number of lost people in this country, but at the same time, a phenomenal church. I would guess, looking at Patrick Johnston's old book and realizing it's 10 years ago, there must be a million people here who are followers of Jesus or sympathetic or a nominal Christian. From what I understand, there's a lot of nominalism.

There must be a lot of backslidden people here who once were on fire. Presbyterians are very strong here, but this is a challenging place for us to be. And let's try to increase our prayer.

Yes, we believe not only in God with all of our heart, but we believe in knowing God. And we look through the Word of God and we discover that basically the Word of God is a very serious book. That leads me to my second point.

We're serious about God's Word. We're serious about God's Word. I've read through the Bible quite a few times, spent time in the Word of God almost every day since my conversion.

There is not that much humor in the Bible. There is some, and certainly there's inference, there's certain things that we look at that can be inferred. There's certainly funny situations, but some of them would be considered actually quite serious.

Have you ever had the situation where something very tragic happened and you started to laugh? Have you tried to explain that? My Grand Canyon stories. Have you heard my Grand Canyon stories? I mean, it's wild. People go to Grand Canyon on their honeymoon and they're taking a photo.

I don't think this was the honeymoon, but this is a true story. They're taking a photo and they said to the guy there on the edge, you know, back up just a little bit more so I get a better picture. And a man backed up to improve the photo, went right over the edge and was killed.

Why are you laughing? Something about us human beings. What about the guy that went around a circle in his car as fast as he could and then drove off the edge of the cliff and was killed? What about the lady who tried the same thing and her car hit a ledge and she jumped out of the car and then had to jump herself over the next cliff? That's enough for my Grand Canyon stories. God knows everything about us and he loves us still.

Some of you are way more serious than others. You're more like the way I was in 1959 and 60 and 61. You don't see the point of some of the humor.

You don't appreciate it. We are serious about God's Word. At the end of the day, those of us who love humor and find it a therapy for our soul.

I mean, I'd just love to watch Mr. Bean if I had to choose between the Olympics and Mr. Bean. I mean, come on, Mr. Bean. This Olympics thing is way too serious.

See the faces of these people, especially lifting these weights. It looks like they're going to pop their brains. I'm definitely not going to try to lift those weights that I saw that guy lifting yesterday.

We're serious about God's Word and as we look through God's Word, though we may have a sense of humor and with the things we don't understand, we know that we must seek the Lord. We must seek the Lord with all of our heart, soul, the mind, and strength. We're told to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Working that out is a lifetime pilgrimage. And I would just urge some of you who've just come to this ship, welcome all you new people who I was with there in Debron, a lot has happened since then, to try to find balanced expectation here on this ship. And beware of unrealistic expectation.

This is just one little step in your lifetime pilgrimage. And often it has to be a smaller step than you were dreaming about when you had some of the fantasy ideas of life that you loved. Look at Romans chapter 12, one of my favorite passages.

Romans chapter 12, I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Every single statement in this Mount Everest chapter is serious.

There are over 20 serious exhortations about grace, to think seriously about God's grace, and we don't have time to go through it. You can go through dozens of other passages and you'll find it all very, very serious. We're serious about, thirdly, the Lordship of Christ.

This is one of the strongest, most significant messages of our fellowship. The Urbana Convention in 87 or 86 asked me to speak on the Lordship of Christ. If I had not done that at 17, I would not be here today.

I'd probably be dead from AIDS, and many people are dying from AIDS. And I would just urge you, and I'm aware of the struggle, especially after some months in this kind of environment, to stand strong in God in moral purity and having Him as Lord of your life every moment of the day. And I would be happy for anyone at any time to come to me anywhere, including my wonderful wife, and when I do something that's wrong or sinful, to say to me, no, I don't think Jesus is really shining through you right now.

That's what Dale Roton did for me and other people as well. I know that can go overboard. I know also people that may exhort you can be wrong.

You can't have a nation in your life. You can't have someone to correct you in your life without them making mistakes. So if you want a perfect mentor, a perfect nation, forget it.

It won't work. And you have to have the discernment to know what is from God, what is part of their own prejudice, their own humanity, or miscommunication. Fourthly, we are serious about reaching men and women for the gospel.

One of the things that is so different from OM today that is such a huge burden for me compared to those very early days is the lack of personal evangelism, the lack of passion just to go after people. Now I know in the early days we were accused of being fanatics. We would just go overboard in reaching people, and sometimes we would offend them, and we struggled as going door-to-door was almost as basic on OM in those early days as having breakfast.

Everybody went door-to-door in the movement in the early days. It was almost a requirement, or if they didn't go door-to-door, they had to be out in the street thousands of times. Parenters like me have been out in the streets giving out tracts or going door-to-door.

Before we ever went to Mexico, I went door-to-door in my hometown selling Bibles and Christian books. We've come a long way. If you want to talk about change in OM, there are certain things that are far bigger than some of the changes people talk about.

They only talk about things that they know. Hardly anyone was there in the 60s who's still on OM today, much less the late 50s. And we have a distortion of Christian leadership because we're now a movement over 40 years of age.

Leaders have to be strongly committed to relationship maintenance. I don't like that maintenance word, but relationship cultivation, you know, calling people on their 90th birthday, calling people on their 60th birthday, being there at their funerals, being there at their weddings, their children's weddings, their grandchildren's weddings. I never dreamed how complex and how many responsibilities would come upon me.

I was just a young man at 17 going door-to-door, winning my high school friends to Christ. One by one, I saw my friends come to Christ in high school. I went back and took that one meeting.

Six hundred came. I preached the gospel. 125 stood up, among them my own father.

When I went to Mexico, I just gave out tracts, did personal evangelism, and went from door-to-door. That's all we did. I did open a few bookstores.

How can we take on all these new things, holistic ministry, vision for justice and transformation, all kinds of other things that we're into, a huge amount of work, a phenomenal amount of work to keep this old ship going, and maintain that passion for souls, that concern for the lost? When I have gone to many Bible schools, I have been dumbfounded at the superficiality I have found among the students. You could barely get anything serious out of them. It was just one game after another.

Even the studies was considered sort of a joke, and people had jokes about serious things in God's kingdom. I remember a woman preaching to me at Moody's. She became a close friend, Angela Datuma.

And by the way, I've always believed in women's preachers. I never had a period of my life where I didn't believe women couldn't preach. But boy, did I run into opposition on that one.

It's lucky they didn't crucify me upside down, the anti-women crowd. And they're still out there with their clubs and their baseball bats, and their out-of-context Bible verses. But I won't get into that this morning.

But this woman shared with us students, her name was Angela, that we must handle the Word of God carefully. We must always be careful not to mock anything from the Word of God. And I think at times in my desire to communicate and bring humor, especially with teenagers, I have at times probably misused some scriptures.

Serious about reaching people with the gospel. Because we're serious about reaching people with the gospel, we become serious about our use of time. This is not one of my points.

I'm putting this under reaching people with the gospel, so you don't get an extra book on redeeming the time. But I would urge you to realize how valuable time is. I would urge you, as you have a multiple things of choices, of things you can do in your so-called free time, I don't believe and never have believed in free time.

Jesus bought all my time. I belong to Him. And I want to pray.

I do see films, but I pray and try to seriously do what I sense God wants me to do. And so all that kind of thing in my life, a lot of stories about it. As far as I know before God, with a few failures thrown in, it is with moderation.

I'm a great believer in moderation. You hear about my roller coaster thing. Believe me, it's hyper moderation because you can't find decent roller coasters handy all the time.

You've got to travel to get there. And I don't, I'm not always willing to do that. I'd urge you to understand most of you don't have a lot of money right now.

If you do, boy, you better seriously pray about how to use it. And we may want to have some fellowship together. But you have a lot of time.

You have 24 hours a day. You have the same amount of time that I have. And I know that I could not carry out my ministry these two days in your midst if I don't really pray and carefully use my time, because I

have these goals and I have these aims.

When I'm here, I have to somehow squeeze in five or six hours in which I'm mainly talking to people, preaching, teaching. I got to squeeze in five or six hours for correspondence and phone calls or things go through the cracks, and then I pay for those things later on. Because my other job, the international coordinator's job, the leadership of ICT, the fundraising job, a lot of my work is just relationships.

I cannot let that sort of disappear on any one day. Again, we're all different. I'm not asking you to copy me, but I am asking you to seriously evaluate how to use your time to work for moderation in things that are more on the side of recreation, and we all need a certain amount of recreation.

And then fifthly, we're serious about our relationships with one another. Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Would you pray for my son in Idaho? I'll be with him a week from today.

Are you Eric? Yeah, greetings from my son. His next-door neighbor, the non-Christian next-door neighbor, things have gone wrong and this neighbor now hates my son and hates his kids, and one of the kids just tried to run down one of my grandchildren. They had to bring in the police, and it is a mess.

They're in little Nampa, Idaho, and they are under a lot of stress. They love the Lord, but maybe you could just pray about that. Building relationships at the end of the day is a serious business, so don't get discouraged if you have a few collapses along the way.

We need to work hard at our relationships here on this ship. Now that OM is so big, we are having some real stress in relationships, even in the top leadership level of the movement, and with this transition going on of my stepping down three years from this month, some new things have come to the surface. So far, it's going relatively well, but Satan is trying to bring disunity into this movement, and if Satan can bring in disunity at a top level, which I believe is the bottom level, the servant foundation of the movement is not really the top, it's the bottom, because that's all we are, is servants.

Do you think I have some great authority in the ship ministry? You don't understand how OM works. I can exhort them, and I have a lot of relationships, and can try to persuade if I think there's something that needs to be changed, but that's not the way OM works. It's team-led, it's waiting upon God, it's prayer, it's persuasion, it's discussion, and it's not easy to maintain a movement of this size in which we're trying to keep sort of a degree of participation from everybody in the movement, especially long-termers.

It's long-termers who have chose the names that are on that list right now that's confidential until the 9th or 10th of October as to who will be the next international leader of the movement. Now that the list is created, and long-termers have had all kinds of input, discussion, and decisions, the decision will be made by a team of leaders and the selection committee, then it has to go back to the leaders, and then it has to go back to the general counsel for sort of general acceptance and consensus one year approximately from today. The law of hard work maintaining relationships.

Who wants to go to someone and share that they've sinned against them? I mean, let's forget, I'd rather go to bed. But we have to. If we feel someone has sinned against us, we have to go to them, and we have to share what's in our heart.

Esteeming them as better than ourselves. If you can't esteem them as better than yourself as you go to share where they have sinned against you, it's probably not going to work. If you've got a bad attitude, if you're angry, therefore often you need to do a little repenting.

Or it's how you say it. When you go to exhort someone or share that they've hurt you or sinned against you, it's often how you say it. And one of the things you might say as you attempt the conversation is, I don't know what to say.

I don't know what to say. I just have to be honest. I'm hurt.

I probably misunderstood what you said. And probably what someone just told me that you said about me probably is misunderstanding. Misunderstanding is so easy in this ship community.

We could hire several people just to work all day long on pastoral care dealing with misunderstanding. And we are serious about our relationship. That's why it's good to at times be able to laugh about ourselves.

And then number six, we are serious about God's marathon. The story of the satellite dish on Duluth sitting out there where he looks to me somebody could pull in at night and carry it away on a truck. I'm sure will be told around the world.

Another testimony of the great grace awakened movement. So now we can pull in television from the satellite. It's all so wonderful everything you pull in from satellite television.

Well the Olympics are certainly wonderful. And that should be a healthy input. Because this ship is about training.

And if we were as serious on this ship in our program in every department on the ship in terms of training, as those people you've been watching and cheering and clapping for in Australia, then I will tell you our ministry would be revolutionized. Your life would be revolutionized. And a lot more of our graduates would become winners of gold rather than flunkies who are divorced only a few months later from the woman they met on this ship.

That has just happened. That has just happened. And they end up sitting in my living room.

I don't want to be involved in this kind of thing anymore. It once had nothing to do with me. I didn't even know this couple even existed until the woman is sitting in my living room pouring her heart out about this incredible character that she ended up marrying all finished in a few months.

I don't get through a month without another divorcee, former O.M.er. Not a month. And it's because we often are impatient in this area. We often lack discernment.

Some would say we're just downright naive as to what it is to get the right marriage partner and then build the right marriage. And in some cases the people I talk to when their marriage is in trouble, one of them usually because of pride and men are far worse than women. And if any of you women have a lot of fantasy view about men, may God set you free.

Because at the end of the day we are wicked creatures. We are wicked creatures. And only through Jesus Christ, not on a once a week basis, but a daily basis.

And not only when we're in the pulpit, but we're in the bedroom and when we're in the kitchen. And there's many a man who's an angel in the pulpit and a devil behind the wheel. And you don't even want to talk about the way he pursues sexual relationships with his own wife.

We need to understand that marriage is more serious than the Olympics. And remember 10,000 people out there, 10,000 athletes, most of them are all losers. Have you thought about that? They all lose.

Only a few who win. In Corinthians it says, we therefore so run. Remember that verse? Is that one of your favorite verses? We run.

In Hebrews, we lay aside every weight. We lay aside every weight. That's a huge struggle in my life, figuring out what's a weight and what's just part of my humanity.

I shouldn't get uptight about it. I'll probably wrestle with that until the very end. Yes, we are God's Olympic runners.

We are serious people. We have a praise God, a sense of humor. We are grace awakened.

We believe in biblical balance. At the end of the day we are committed to excellency. At the end of the day, if we're going to get married, we're going to prepare for that marriage.

We're going to get counseling. It's completely foolish to go into marriage today without pre-marital counseling when you can get that, especially if it's an international marriage. There's enough complexities when you marry someone of your own culture, your own language, your own, you know, so easy to bond.

My wife and I have hardly ever had a day when we were not bonded. Just reading about the women of Spain pushed me toward marriage when I was only 21. I thought I won't last one day in Spain.

I was reading this paper about Spanish women. I thought the first one that comes, I'm finished. Of course, that was wrong thinking.

But I was young and I was foolish. And somehow God gave me a woman of my own culture and my own background that I easily was bonded with. And yet even there, there were so many struggles.

My marriage has had many, many struggles. So when you leap into this cross-cultural thing, and we are very fully happy about cross-cultural marriages, we can give many examples of tremendous cross-cultural marriages. There is a difference, however, between marrying a near culture and marrying a culture that is light years away from where you are.

I don't know who to pick because we got everybody, every kind of person on planet Earth. But I really believe if someone in California is planning to live in California the rest of their life, marries a pygmy from Central Congo, they're going to have a few complexities. Now praise God if they do that, and that may soon happen somewhere.

I want a photograph. I'll pray, and my prayer is it'll become one of the great marriages. And we have people from different cultures, Kamal from the Sudan with his wife from Sweden, a wonderful marriage.

But they're full-time in this movement. They're full-time in this movement where they get a lot of affirmation and a lot of protection. And some people have hit divorce because when they're in full-time ministry, with the protection that brings, the affirmation that brings, the grace-awakening kind of thing, despite our mistakes that we have, everything was okay.

But when they were pushed out of Christian service, which happens to a lot of people, and then the guy didn't even have any real skills to get a decent job because he thought he's going to be preaching the

gospel all of his life, a whole new set of pressures came. And when they were forced to live in a certain place where there were a lot of relatives, things started to come unglued. So in a sense in your life you do have to have plan A and plan B. You meet someone, you're planning for full-time ministry, maybe with OM or some other group, maybe in the Muslim world, you need to have plan B. Plan B, you're going to be back in your country or her country, you're going to be driving a taxi, you're not going to have enough money to pay the bills, your relatives are going to say you wasted part of your life going on this OM thing, and other pressures you've never even thought about at this point in your life.

We are serious people about running God's race. That includes world evangelism, it includes building the church, but it also includes maintaining our own spiritual life, having a marriage, or if we maintain singleness. Singleness is beautiful.

Some of the most beautiful people I know are single people. It's much, much more difficult in our culture than marriage, but it is possible. Many have the privilege of many years single and then they get married later on when they're a little more mature and some of those marriages have a lot more going for them than people that marry so young.

And then seven, thank you for the few extra minutes this morning, that's usually a tradition, hope you don't mind that, but seven, we are serious about the reality and ministry of the Holy Spirit. OM believes in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. What is Acts chapter 13 all about? I wish you could have heard what I shared here last night.

I hope you will read the book, *Out of the Comfort Zone*, that was given free to everybody on the ship. If you didn't get one, where could people who didn't get one pick up a copy, Lord? You have some idea for that? Maybe we'll make an announcement about it. Yeah, we'll bring some tomorrow morning.

I hope to hold a whole load of other books so I can get the various permissions tomorrow morning to give out. We are serious about the ministry and the reality of the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the normal Christian life.

Do not make this mistake, the Holy Spirit, that's mainly for Pentecostals. That is complete nonsense. There was major ministry of the Holy Spirit for 1900 years before the Pentecostal movement was born, and I speak as someone who often ministers among Pentecostal and Charismatic people.

One of the most unique things about OM is our marriage of the Evangelical and the Charismatic, and if you think it's an easy marriage, then you don't know what's going on. It's a miracle God has kept us through this complex thing that splits church after church after church. I see it everywhere I go in the world.

The Holy Spirit's fullness, the gift, the grace, the reality, the fruit. Nobody's fighting much over the fruit. All the fighting is over the gifts.

When the Word says God gives different gifts to different people. But the fruit was supposed to all be manifest. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, peace, temperance.

Against such there is no law. I want to be a serious fruit bearer for Jesus Christ, and that is not easy for the likes of me. Praise God, we are His serious people.

Some of you are like I was in 1961. You are a little too serious. Maybe I need to have a special session for the over-serious types.

You need to learn to relax a little more. You need to learn to take some time off. You need to pound on this leadership and get a break if you haven't had a break for a long time.

You need to somehow, you know, read some email humor. I get oiled up through email humor. I think I'll try to find some of that and share it tomorrow.

But many of you of this generation from your background, you are not serious enough. You're still sort of in your late adolescence. Life is sort of a little bit of a game to you.

You're looking for, oh when's the next silly film going to be shown here, and oh let's go have a chat over a cup of tea and just waste several hours with nonsense talk. There is a place for nonsense talk, but I don't think it's a big emphasis in scripture. If you can find it, maybe you can share that, and it'll help me because I do talk nonsense at times, especially in the toilets on the airplane.

We're serious about God and knowing God. We're serious about God's Word. We're serious about the Lordship of Christ.

We're serious about reaching the unreached. We're serious about our relationships with each other. We are serious about running God's race right to the finish, and all that that means.

And we're serious about the ministry and the reality of the Holy Spirit. Think about it. Pray about it.

Do what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. God bless you. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your Word. I thank you for giving me this message when I was really mystified about what I was to share this morning, and I just pray that you'll throw away any George Verwerstraw, any sort of misunderstandings, and enable us to take this pure, simple, biblical set of exhortations and spend time searching our soul. Help us, Lord, in this ship where we're living in a crowded environment, to be able to find those little corners where we can get alone with you, or out even walking along the side of the ship and getting alone with you, so that we can see and hear what you are attempting to say to us about our lives.

Help those who are just new on the ship, even from any discouragement, if they make mistakes, enable them to bounce back, and enable them to also be seriously committed to this ministry, and to you, and to the relationships, and all that's expected of us, even in the practical realm, from learning how to operate a lifeboat, to what to do in a fire drill, and to how to handle our particular job, whether it's in the exhibit, or the laundry, or the galley, or the engine room, or the bridge, or wherever. In Jesus' name, Amen. God bless you.

Hallelujah.

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