

Seven Words for Ex Omers

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of setting goals and experiencing grace awakening to foster personal and communal growth in the Christian faith.

Duration: 56:34

Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 11:1, James 1:22, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Missions", "Goals", "Grace Awakening"

Description

George Verwer shares a heartfelt message titled 'Seven Words for Ex Omers,' emphasizing the importance of setting goals, experiencing grace awakening, and maintaining faith in the face of challenges. He encourages the audience to be proactive in their spiritual lives and to embrace change, reality, and transformation as essential components of their Christian journey. Verwer highlights the need for unity within the church and the significance of being aware of suffering in the world, urging listeners to take action and remain connected to God and each other.

Transcript

Your mercy, connection with the grace of giving. We pray, Lord, even as we give of this finance, it may be multiplied many, many times, just as the loaves and the fishes. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well, I have so many fond memories of Singapore. One of them is when my wife was with me some years ago, and she doesn't always come with me when I'm here. It is, I remember you're celebrating one of our anniversaries.

I guess it was maybe 38 or 37, maybe four or five years ago, but it's a joy that my wife has been with me on this trip. She's always refused to go right around the world. She has enough jet lag problems when we go six or seven time zones.

But this time she agreed to go right around the world. So we started in Nashville where we had some urgent business and preaching, and then we had some time with our grandchildren in a place called Idaho. And then we came via San Francisco to Singapore and Malaysia.

We've been in Malaysia for two weeks at the Great Commission Roundtable, a network of networks, a very strategic thing that God's put together, leaders from all over the world representing major networks. And then we went to the WEF Missions Commission, which is sort of another network in connection with

world missions. And our Mission Mobilization Network, led by Chaco Thomas, which was part of AD2000, not OM, is now part of the WEF Missions Commission.

And Chaco has been named as a new task force leader of that particular ministry. We need a lot of prayer for that, the Acts 13 vision and the desire to mobilize at least 200,000 workers. It seems that Korea is almost the only nation in the world that has reached the target that we set four years ago.

And it's in the back of my new book, which presently is sold out here in Singapore out of the comfort zone. We did have a thousand air freighted into Malaysia just in time to give all the delegates at this event a free copy. After the Missions Commission came the main WEF General Assembly.

They will be changing their to the World Evangelical Alliance. They represent tens of millions of believers in their network. Malaysia is one of the most proactive countries in the world in connection with WEF.

Great Britain is another one. But to meet these leaders has been a really great privilege for my wife and I. 800 were there from perhaps 80 or more nations. What some of these people face in their own countries is quite staggering.

And I think that's something you have to face in Singapore. God has blessed your country as far as church growth, certainly in a phenomenal way, certainly in the top 10 nations, maybe 10, 20 to be top 20 nations in the world. The combination of people coming to Christ and resources.

In Africa, we have countries that have lots of people coming to Christ and almost no resources. And so they're very, very limited in what they can do. They're in a survival mode, trying to get a Bible for themselves.

But here in Singapore, we have the combination of many coming to Christ, many new churches and resources. I'm not thinking of just finance, but also intellectual resources. And more than ever in the world today, people are talking about intelligence.

They're talking about the value of knowledge. And most of you, if not all of you, have a lot of knowledge. You may not have a lot of money at this stage, but you're probably, as God looks at us, a wealthy person.

So we've just come from Malaysia, my longest stay ever in that country. An exciting country, your neighboring country. Love your neighbor as you love yourself, in case any of you have hang-ups about Malaysia.

And we just are so grateful to have this weekend here in Singapore. We fly back tomorrow night to London. God has put a very specific message on my heart for this afternoon.

And he very much put it on my heart because I'm not always as proactive and as cutting-edge as I would like to be at these OM reunions. We know this is not just for former OMers, also prayer partners and friends. But since I speak at so many of these, we had one in Malaysia last weekend, sometimes I just sort of drift in and share a bit, you know, how OM has changed.

And, you know, sort of a low-profile, we hope not too boring kind of presentation. But this afternoon, God has put something very strong on my heart. And the word that I had as I was praying was, I really want this to be a blessing to you.

You've already blessed us by coming. You've given Sunday afternoon in a busy society. Some of you have blessed us through praying, through giving.

And we want to bless you. And I want to share some things that God's given me over these 46 years that I've lived in his kingdom work. I want to just share some things that I think are going to help you.

So if you can get a notebook out, that may be good. I had the awesome privilege of speaking to this whole gathering of WEF in Malaysia last Sunday night. Believe me, for a character like me, if you understand how these things work, to be chosen to speak to this great group was no small privilege.

And the Holy Spirit seemed to work in that meeting. Before I share that message, I want to encourage you to get some books. The prices on these books are bizarre.

We pay double these prices in other countries. Books like Philip Yancey's *What's So Amazing About Grace*. You're talking about a book that sells for 30 or 40 Singapore dollars.

A hardback book that is certainly equivalent to any three courses you could get at any theological college. God bless all theological colleges. But they are, some of them, attempting to mass-produce men and women of God.

It's not possible. They're only made one at a time. Here's a man of God, Philip Yancey.

You can sit at his feet. *What's So Amazing About Grace*. I think one or two of his other books are also there.

Finding God in Unexpected Places. I haven't read that one. And then there's this awesome *Power of Shared Belief*.

Very basic book. A very OM kind of book. Comes out of the Promise Keepers movement.

Again, it's about 20% of the regular cost. Hardback book. It's just about the basics.

Why we need to be more united. Let us not pretend, brothers and sisters, the church is divided. I'm involved with churches.

I'm involved with thousands of leaders. Even when we go to a WEF event like we were just at, we can see the church is divided. And we need to be more united.

I would never say something like God can't use us until we're united. I don't believe that's true. God of mercy.

God of grace. I've seen him use some of the most, you know, dysfunctional churches you could ever imagine. God keeps working.

But I believe there is more blessing and more reality if we are more united. And a movement like OM, we cannot afford not to be united. Even though we come from so many different backgrounds.

So there's a phenomenal book. We gave a lot of copies of this away to the WEF reps there in KL. By the way, if you ever go to KL, the greatest highlight is that big tall tower, Manara Tower.

How many have been up that tower? Cost you six ringgit. The OM leader, Daniel Ho, said he's never been there. It cost six ringgit.

And then preached me a sermon about the financial problems in Malaysia. Which the chairman of the board, who ended up taking me up there two days later, said, well, we're always in the positive here in Malaysia. So I don't know whether it's Daniel or the chairman or just general Malaysian confusion.

But I had the joy not only of going up to that huge tower, and I saw a documentary on how it was built. But I had the joy of one of the best meals in the year 2001, as they have a revolving restaurant, which really helps your digestion. And as we were revolving around looking at Kuala Lumpur, God, in his beautiful sovereignty, put on a tremendous fireworks display.

There was no extra cost. Lightning bolts coming right down in front of us. Storms.

Just a real exciting experience. And we're looking forward to getting back to Kuala Lumpur. We got a lot of other books.

We don't have the time to talk about them. Grace Awakening should be required reading for all of God's chosen frozen. Norm Lewis, priority one.

Rodney Wee, been there, done that. Any of you that don't have this book, slip your hand up. You don't have it yet.

Boy, they're only putting their fingers up. They're afraid Rodney's got a video camera going. I've been reading this book, and I was just going again through the Turkish bath story.

Rodney Wee in the Turkish bath, you know. 100 totally naked Turks at this little shy Singaporean. That's an exciting part of the book.

Rodney's been loosened up ever since. Praise God he got married. So Rodney Wee, been there, done that.

Special price. Get his autograph. It'll be worth a lot of money someday if Rodney becomes Prime Minister or something else happens to him.

Praise God. What a thrill to be with you. Seven words.

See, I even, people say George Burr doesn't have any notes. It's not true. There's my notes.

And God has put seven words on my heart, really concepts, biblical principles. One of the words, the first word I hardly ever speak about. Well, you know, I touch on it.

But God's been ministering to my own heart. I've sat through probably at least 15 major Bible teaching messages in the past two weeks, and a lot more discussion. I'm not at this event as some great leader.

I'm just there as part of the family, just listening. And, you know, occasionally I might be able to ask a question. I did get that one chance to share.

The first word that God's put on my heart for you this afternoon. This is for your sake, not mine. I'm not primarily here to recruit you.

I'd like to believe most of you are already in God's will. I'd like to encourage you in your own ministry. Some of you are pastors.

You need help, huh? Because being a pastor is one of the jobs you can ever be in. And actually, this job that Lawrence is going into has a strong pastoral side to it. So I don't know, Lawrence, if you ever plan to be a pastor.

You will be one in a few weeks. You can delegate quite a bit off, but people will come to you and will look to you as the pastor of that ship, though they may not use that term. The ship ministry, by the way, is going very, very well at this present time.

I've just been on Lagos 2 in Belgium a month ago. The ship looked beautiful. The engine room looked beautiful.

One of our top chief engineers has just been re-recruited. You will have a privilege of working with this man, a Finnish man with a Swiss wife. It's a phenomenal combination.

You know, it's like almost, it's not quite as good as Singapore American, but, you know, it's up in the top 100. And I just believe God has his hand on these ships. I'll be on Dulos again in Korea, and it's just phenomenal what God is doing in Korea.

By the way, if you write down these words, we got a little reward for you. A year from now, if you send these seven words to me, we give you seven free books. It's worth about 150 Singapore dollars.

You can always sell them if you're broke. So you may want to write these words down. The first word is goals.

And I haven't done this. I wish I had done it more in my ministry. I want to ask you, do you have some specific goals in your life? Do you, whatever your work is, have some specific goals in your church life, in your family life, for your children, in your other ministries that God has put you in? One of the reasons that OM has kept going so strong for 44 years approximately, if we go back to Mexico, is because we've always had goals.

I've always had goals. Now, we haven't always been good at defining them. Up till 10 years ago, we did not have a strategic plan.

That strategic plan, though, it did bring some difficulty. It led to some important discussion. It led OM to where it is today, which is, of course, the place where it needs to continue to change and continue to grow.

But brothers and sisters, do not think it's just major leaders or organizations that need goals. You need goals in your life. I don't know why I'm saying this, because I don't say it that much, but I'm saying it this afternoon.

You need goals concerning your own physical health. It means you need to have some kind of physical fitness program, and you need to have some goals. Maybe it's to lose some weight.

Maybe it's to get your cholesterol level down. Some of you are going to have high blood pressure soon, quite a popular sport in Asia, and you can do something about it before it's too late. We need goals in terms of our body.

I was just with a man sitting in front of his pool in Nashville a month ago. He's 78 years of age. I'm not sure.

Maybe he's 73. Let's forget his age. He's over 70.

He started from nothing, selling books door to door in the United States. A Lebanese immigrant with \$600, speaking Arabic in America. Today, his company is public, so I can't say he's the owner, but he's just like the owner.

He has 61% or 51% of the stocks. The largest Bible publisher in the world, and one of the largest book publishers in the world. I'm not afraid to share his name.

I'll send you a copy of his autobiography if you want, free of charge. It's the story of a man named Sam Moore. He had his name changed almost by some kind of a mistake in a church service many years ago.

And this man, of course, his whole life was goals. Maybe he would be considered extreme. And when I was with him, he shared with me his goals in the area of physical fitness.

Here's a man over 70, and he wants to be in the best possible shape for the kingdom work. The pressure he's living under is phenomenal. You know, we sometimes think we have a lot of pressure in OM, but the people who support our ministry, the business people, the professional people, often have more pressure than most OMers.

Not everyone. Do you have some goals in the area of Bible study? Do you have some goals in the area of sharing your faith? Do you have some goals in the area where you maybe have your most besetting sin? Christianity Today, the most famous Christian magazine in the world, has featured this past week or the week before, headline article, Pornography in the Pulpit, or Pornography in the Church Study. Forget the exact title.

Their leadership magazine, which is like a brother-sister magazine, is featuring the same thing. And it has a full-blown feature article of my own story of my struggle with pornography. The first time this has gone out as a feature article.

I mentioned it, but part of me didn't want to do that. But so few are willing to tell the story that especially ends on a most, you know, not only ends on a victorious note, it was a victorious note from almost the moment of my conversion, which isn't always true. But I just know this.

If you have a trouble, a difficulty in the area of pornography, or whatever other sin is besetting you, maybe worry, maybe insecurity, maybe excessive shyness, it may be a phobia. I've been reading another article in a secular magazine about hundreds of phobias that people can have. And I met Christians with phobias.

I'm dealing with one on the phone right now, one of my closest friends, with a phenomenal total out-of-control phobia about the police. Need to have goals and aims. And if you feel in aiming and moving for particular goals, it's all getting impossible, and you're getting stressed out, and whatever else, you need to get some help.

You're not called to live for Jesus on your own. We're called into fellowship. Why is the self-church movement grown so fast across the world? With many different forms of self-churches in small groups, whether it's the Alpha Chorus, or Paul Young-I-Cho's model, or the famous Singapore model that's gone

all over the world from one of your churches, because in the self-church people are getting to know one another.

It's not just parading in and out of a church service. They're sharing their struggles. They're praying together.

It's a high-touch kind of ministry in a high-tech world where people are hurting, where people are screaming, often on the inside. So have specific goals and aims. If it will help you, write them down, and it will help you in more ways than you can know.

You can do your own sort of strategic plan. You can do your family's strategic plan, and discuss these things with your children. Bring your children into your decision-making, into your planning, into your dreams, and it's good to have dreams.

I hope you all have some dreams. Rena and I have some dreams. Hers is mainly survival with me.

We have some dreams for when I turn the the coordinatorship of OM over to others in about two years from now. We have some dreams for things that we wanted to do and have not been able to do, and I'm longing that the latter part of my life. I have a granddaughter now of 12 years of age.

If you want to know how old I am, I'm thinking we'd really like to live in Asia now because you've got a lot more respect for us older people, but I'm not sure with grandchildren back there how that will all work out. I'm trying to get my wife to go to Japan with me. She hasn't been to Japan, which is a nation very much on my heart at present.

She's been to Korea, been to many other Asian countries. Goals, aims, dreams, vision. It's for all of us.

It doesn't have to be huge. Start small. I didn't start with ships.

I didn't start with, you know, giant publishing houses. I started small, selling books door-to-door in my hometown, evangelizing my high school, going to Mexico with, you know, one little old truck and 10-20,000 pieces of literature. I encourage you to have goals.

The second word is two words and it's from the title of this book, The Grace Awakening. The Grace Awakening. And I just share that word.

You already have the word grace. Your churches preach grace, but I find a lot of churches don't preach grace awakening. In fact, they say to me, what do you actually mean by that, grace awakening? Swindoll talks about it.

If you're in a hurry, like many Singaporeans, don't even bother with the first four chapters unless you're not a Christian. Start around chapter five or six. I will tell you, this book has made a huge impact in OM.

I believe even though OM is bigger, and when you're big, you will hurt people. People get hurt because of circumstances, because of our sins and human weaknesses. But I believe with The Grace Awakening, the increased pastoral care of our people and other aspects of grace awakening, that we are being more effective in training people.

I've written down four aspects of this grace awakening so you know exactly what I'm talking about. It's actually the work of the Holy Spirit in your life on the basis of 1 Corinthians 13. I repeat, it's a result of the

work of the Holy Spirit in your life on the basis of 1 Corinthians 13.

If you don't know 1 Corinthians 13, then you'll not understand what I'm talking about. I'm not going to take time to read it. Grace awakening means you're going to be a more forgiving person.

You're going to be a more forgiving person. Now, I've never had a huge problem in my life with forgiveness, but I know many who have. But I'm, through this book, through this message, more forgiving.

I did have a greater problem with being critical. The grace awakened person will be a less critical person. A grace awakened leader, and many leaders are not grace awakened, will be less critical of other leaders, less critical of other ministries, less critical of the guy who does it differently, less critical even of the person who totally disagrees with him.

I tell you, you're talking, you're talking spiritual t-bone steak when you get into this kind of thing, and we need that. Grace awakening in our lives will also make us more big-hearted. You know that word? Well, it's tied in with forgiveness.

It's tied in with love. It's tied in with the fruit of the Spirit. We'll just be more big-hearted.

And I know in my own marriage, things that really used to bother me, that my dear wife is a witness to this, sitting on the front row. Can you imagine how many times she's had to even listen to me? I've preached about 20,000 times since my conversion. She, of course, has not been in all of those, but she's been in many, many meetings.

And I just know that through this work of grace in my heart, things that she used to do or did that bothered me, it's no big deal anymore. Let her do it. It's her thing.

I won't get into the details because it's rather humorous and both of us look a little funny, but if there's any area in marriage where we need to be big-hearted, less finicky. Do you know that word in your Singaporean English? Finicky. A lot of God's people are finicky.

And if you marry one, may the Lord have mercy on you. Picking, picking, picking. The Word of God in the Book of Proverbs talks about such women.

Pick, pick, pick, pick. And I, at times, have been picking on my wife. Why do you do this? Why do you do that? Always in the name of the vision, the work.

Don't ever let the work get ahead of your family. God first. Your family, given to you by God, has to be second, and the work needs to fit in under that.

I know it's not that simple, and I'm not a big formula person myself, but I believe it's true. Grace Awakening means you'll learn how to believe the best. You'll be very slow to listen to negative gossip about people.

I'm in Malaysia, just, you know, a few hours, and the negative gossip is coming. Wherever I go, it seems the negative gossip can come out, and I've been guilty of it myself. And I'm trying, by God's grace, to continue to change, to believe the best, to let love cover.

We all know that verse. Let love cover. And I believe it's a work of grace in our hearts.

And then the Grace Awakening will enable us to have the right attitude. Now this, this, in my life, this is as high as I can aim, you know. For me to have the right attitude, you're talking about heaven on earth, because I can get a wrong attitude very quickly.

And guess who I get a wrong attitude about? Myself. I get really fed up with myself. And I sometimes go privately and say to God, this guy in this body is a real pain in the neck.

How in the world did you love me and die for me on the cross? Most of us have things about ourself that really upset us at times, and we may be trying to change. I don't know how many of you are married. Some of you, you know, you got that married look.

Tired. But some of you are thinking about marriage. Marriage, and Paul Bilheimer writes about this in his book, *Don't Waste Your Sorrow*, is part of God's great sanctification program to prepare you for heaven.

It's not a mutual admiration club for a few kicks and to feel nice and a bunch of kids. It's, that's part of it. It's much bigger than that.

And I know that it's marriage that has really been used of God to bring me a closer relationship to Jesus Christ, to expose my wrong attitudes, to expose my impatience, to expose the ego, the verbal ego, which is incredibly strong, and to bring it under the crucifying power of Jesus. Charles Swindoll has written something on attitude. I've often read it.

I don't have it here now. If you get a hold of that, put it in your Bible. Because he teaches that attitude is such an important part, such an important part of our Christian life.

Many of us experience rejection, even among God's people. If you've gone through rejection and can develop a good attitude for the one who has rejected you, I tell you, you are on the highway of holiness. You are moving beyond the average mortal, and somehow there will be great reward.

It's so easy to feel hurt and rejection in our society. I'm reading a new book right now called *Firestorm* by Baker Bookhouse. *Firestorm* is about division in the church.

It's about how many people get hurt when division hits the church. It's about pastors who end up with nervous breakdowns and having to go for psychiatric help after they go through a division. It's not an easy book to find right now, but I believe someday it will be.

I'm trying to buy a thousand copies. I've read almost the entire book, and with the number of books I always have staring at me, believe me, it has to be a priority. And then my third word, I'd love to talk to you more about Grace Awakening, but we're battling the clock.

We know some of you have to do other things. But my third word is the word faith. Again, I don't speak about faith that much.

Those of you who don't know me, you think, George Burr must always go around speaking about faith. I don't think of myself as a great person of faith. I'm a struggler.

I'm a doubting Thomas. You know, I meet some of these Christian leaders that seem to have it all together. You know, I don't even hardly know how to talk to them.

I relate more to people who don't have it together. You know, my wife has to check as I'm walking out of the house in the morning, make sure my fly is zipped. I have always tried to stay involved in prayer ministry.

Prayer and faith are inseparable. Sometimes I'm struggling in the prayer meeting. I don't want to pray.

I don't want to go. Then I'm feeling guilty because in my mind I'd rather go watch a good film, see Matrix for the fourth time, than go to a prayer meeting. I mean, what kind of a person is this to lead operation mobilization? By the way, Stuart McAllister was one of the main speakers in Malaysia and he gave this presentation on postmodern thinking, globalization.

He had clips from The Matrix, clips from Dead Poets Society. I had one of my Singaporean friends, Mr. Gwee, sitting next to me. Google live watching this presentation by Stuart McAllister, which was brilliant.

Stuart McAllister is now the international director for the Rabi Zacharias ministry, a man of tremendous spirit and intellect that's not afraid to go to places like Oxford University and call them to repentance in Jesus Christ. So we need to exercise faith. It may be in a small way and we must determine not to get discouraged when it doesn't immediately happen.

One of my great goals in life was Afghanistan, reaching Afghanistan for Christ, seeing the Afghan church planted. I started on this 42 years ago. So far we have not got very far.

I had a friend who went there. He and his wife were stabbed to death in their home and died in front of their children. I had another friend who went.

He was kidnapped and never seen again. I now have a nephew uh living in in Afghanistan, who I'm my sister especially is extremely worried about. But I have decided I will not move from this Afghan vision.

Though my heart be broken 100 times, I will not move from this vision to reach Afghanistan. And I'm still challenging people to go, challenging people to give. It is absolutely amazing how few anywhere in the world are volunteering to work among Afghans.

You don't have to go into the country. You can work right in Pakistan in a fairly safe situation among the refugees. And then my fourth word is the word change.

If you're not changing, you're not growing the way God would want you to grow. We all have to change. One of the things I wanted to ask some of you, because all of you are trying to be successful in what you're doing.

There's nothing wrong with success if it's under the umbrella of God's will and if self is being crucified in the process. But I believe if you want to be successful, especially in a place like Singapore, but also anywhere else, you've got to increase your communication skills. I'm considered a person who knows how to communicate.

I'm invited to some of the most incredible communication situations you want to imagine. I've just finished another series of six major television interviews to go out over the main television satellite link of Europe. I hope you don't misunderstand that.

Stick with me. I have constantly, all these years, right to this day, tried to improve my communication skills. Not just public speaking, which I've been doing since I was in high school, but relating to people

individually.

And I realized I was at times not a good listener. I realized at times that I offended people because I would look away. I would be distracted and they think, does this guy even listen to me? He's probably wanting me to close down as quick as possible.

He's too busy for me. I didn't understand body language. I offended a man in Malaysia, quite an important man, because after a meeting he came and touched my cheek.

Now I've been coming to Singapore and Malaysia for 37 years. I have not had a cheek toucher. The story is around Malaysia that I sort of offended this man.

Remembering back, I thought I was handling it okay, but obviously I didn't. And one of the ways you learn about your communication is by getting feedback. Now as you get feedback, it's not going to be 100% accurate.

You might get accused falsely at times. That's normal. But you will learn from the feedback you get from those who listen to you.

The world is very much into a system of appraisals. If you have a job probably in Singapore, you get appraised. In OM, some years ago, we started this system of appraising people.

We're still floundering a bit, but it's helped. It's helped me. And I believe we need to be willing for change.

Have you ever thought of signing up, some of you, for a Dale Carnegie course on how to speak in public? Now if your job doesn't demand that at all, okay. What about his course on how to win friends and influence people? You can get that in the church even better, hopefully. Why is it that quite a few Christians that we meet seem to be downright obnoxious? Have you ever met any of those? Bible thumpers that are, the moment you get talking to them, they've got some heavy agenda and usually have a little bad breath with it.

And you just think, is this God's child? And then, you know, you start feeling guilty. You don't love the guy. You don't even want to talk to him another minute.

You're certainly not going to go to any church where he belongs. And it all gets quite messy. I believe it's because Christians think they've arrived.

I'm saved. I'm filled with the Holy Ghost. I've been through dingo bungo seminar.

I'm trained. Nonsense. Training is a lifetime pilgrimage.

Lawrence is trained. We've chosen him to be the director of this ship. I was the first director.

Isn't that funny that we're both here? It doesn't happen often, does it? And I will tell you, it was the most challenging, stretching time in our whole life. We lived on Lagos 1 with three kids. Ah, small space.

And I did some of the dumbest things in the history of my ministry. I would get so wound up listening to people's problems, you know, from the bow to the stern. Everybody, the engineers had problems.

Of course, we were just starting this project. We, you know, it's a lot better nowadays, we hope, for your sake. And I'll never forget, coming back to the cabin, this little tiny cabin, the carpenters had just built an

extension on our bed.

It was a little beautiful piece of wood that you pulled out. And when they pulled out, and the mattress there in the bed was a little wider so you could sleep. I came back from listening to different grievances.

I was uptight. And then my wife went on about something. I don't remember, honey, what it was, but I just, I just flipped out.

And I, you know, I knew I, you know, I don't want to hit her and end up in a court case, you know. So I just kicked that bed, and that beautiful piece of wood there, it just snapped, and the guilt rolled over my soul as I thought of trying to tell the carpenter about this experience in his, in this new bed that he had just built. So a life on the ship is a challenge.

And one of the things that God is going to bring through Lawrence and to Susan are steps of faith. Change. Change.

Don't get stuck. Don't think this is the only way to do it. Why are so many churches not growing? They're unwilling to change.

You cannot possibly evangelize the world today. Stuck in the paradigm of the 60s. Sure, you may see a few saved.

God is merciful. But if we're going to impact society, if we're going to build the kingdom, if we're going to have the kind of ministry surely the New Testament talks about, we have to be willing for change. That takes humility.

It takes, it takes a lot. Some of you have difficulties in your marriage. If you are willing to change, your marriage can experience revitalization.

It happens all the time. Your marriage does not have to go down the tube. And you and I know the divorce rate in Singapore and Malaysia is going up, up, up, up.

We need to be willing to change, to be the husbands that we should be, to be the wives that we should be. And then my fifth word is the word reality. Some of you know I have a book, Hunger for Reality.

I think it's there on the book table. It's one of my favorite words. Let me try to say this short and sweet.

But this is one of my passions. And I'd love to have an email from some of you. I'd love some of you to go into my website, georgeburwood.com. I want to thank any of you who have written me.

Forgive me if I've not answered you. I sometimes get to your letters months after they come because they pile up. But they're all meaningful.

The main thing I'll do when I fly to London tomorrow night is just go through letters and go through my computer praying for everybody that corresponds with us. It takes a long time. But one of my passions is summed up in this word reality.

This is your fifth word for those of you keeping track. I want to be real. Every once in a while somebody comes to me.

They look me in the face after meeting me and they say you're real. It's one of the greatest compliments anyone can ever give me. I want to be real.

I want to be a person of integrity. I don't want to wear a mask. I don't, I don't want to pretend.

I don't want to take myself too seriously. Many Christian leaders get knocked out of the battle. They take themselves too seriously.

And pretty soon they got to have a bodyguard around them. Pretty soon they got to fly around in their own private jet. And pretty soon they no longer can even associate with ordinary people.

And I'm not standing in judgment of somebody who may be doing that. It's not that simple. But I want reality.

I don't want us in OM to say that 10 people got saved when 10 people maybe raised their hand in some kind of a meeting. That is unreality to me. Because anybody who's been in this ministry knows that people who raise their hands so oftentimes nothing happens.

There is no conversion. I talk about this a little bit in my new book, which we'd be happy to give you as a gift. If you send an email to our office and say, when the Filipino edition comes in, could you give me a copy free? If you put a Singapore dollar in for the postage, it might help our dynamic office here.

But I'm hungry still. 40 years after or 35 years after writing that book, I'm hungry for reality. Knowing God, being realistic about what life is all about.

This immediately leads me all the time to speak about suffering. There is so much suffering. How many of us feel for the loved ones and relatives of those people in Ghana whose sons and daughters and moms and dads were just crushed? Was it over 140? Crushed to death in a football stadium.

I'm still trying to recover from the ones in South Africa a month or so ago. Part of me is still trying to recover from the one in England many years ago that all got replayed on television again. How can that be? People go to enjoy a football game and they're crushed to death.

One of my closest friends in Australia, his best friend's son was just almost eaten completely by a dingo. He's dead. A little eight-year-old boy.

It's all been on television. The last time I talked to my friend, he was on the way to the funeral of this father whose eight-year-old was murdered. Murdered, killed and eaten by a dingo.

He carried what was left of the body out of the woods in one arm. And his other child that had been attacked by the dingo, I think was his child, it may have been another child, carried them out of the woods there in Fraser Island. That's just last week.

That's reality. That's reality. This is a world of suffering.

We as God's people must have a theology of suffering. And my theology of suffering includes much mystery. I will neither accept the extreme Arminian talk about this and I will not accept extreme Calvinistic talk about it.

I guess I'm more in the camp of John Stott who says free will and God's sovereignty are both in the Word of God and you cannot easily put them together. There's been new renewed controversy among theologians on many of these subjects because suffering is so hard, so hard to grasp. The holocaust, the things that happen to good people, to believers.

We've got to be real. God does heal. God does deliver.

God does intervene. But more often he doesn't. And until you get that into your theology, you will be one more limping person and probably eventually a casualty.

And there are too many of those. And then my sixth word is the word transformation. I tie the word transformation to the word holistic ministry, which has been our big emphasis there in KL with WEF.

And I think you need to know OM has radically changed in the past 10 years. OM is now on the road to being a full-scale holistic ministry. What does that mean? We're concerned for the whole person.

I believe historically we always have been, but we felt someone else had to take care of the physical needs and that we should only target spiritual needs. That day in OM is finishing. It'll take 10 years, but it's finishing.

And that's why one of the main things I'm doing right now, together with others, is leading a worldwide endeavor for the prevention of HIV and AIDS. I have the joy of speaking about this to the whole gathering. I've just done a radio broadcast into London.

I feel I'm only a follower. I've had to confess failure. I've had to confess blindness that I haven't seen this before.

25 million in Africa alone infected with AIDS. Thailand, you don't even want to begin to think of what's happening to Thailand. And let me tell you, HIV and AIDS will hit Singapore big time.

It may be a lot slower than in other countries, but with the global village we live in, the massive tourist trade here, it's going to happen. We have a whole load of Africans arriving in London. They are infecting people all over the British Isles.

We even just had nurses flown in. Britain needs nurses. They've flown in nurses from various places.

Quite a number of these nurses brought AIDS and HIV with them. It's a worldwide epidemic. In the next 10 or 20 years, it will take more people's lives than all the wars of the last century.

So one sociologist predicted. So we in the future in our fellowship want to be concerned and active concerning the whole person. We want to be concerned about the environment.

God does not want us to destroy the environment. We had a tremendous ministry about that in Kuala Lumpur. I know these things can go to extreme and we're still going to always preach against extremism, but we've got to become holistic in our ministry.

That can lead to varying degrees of transformation. Transformation in our own lives, right? Then transformation in our churches. And then, incredibly complex in some societies, but it can lead to transformation in the community and even national level.

Maybe not to the degree some people are talking about, but at least to some degree, as we are the salt and light in our society. And then my seventh and final word, which is a word I use quite often. It's this word, proactive.

The Bible says, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. You ever get discouraged? You know, you're looking at someone that faces discouragement almost every day. I so easily find myself not only discouraged, confused.

Did any of you get in a state where you're just generally confused? You're just not sure what, how, and I hope you have some kind of mechanism to battle it. And the mechanism to battle some of these things are not always the standard spiritual mechanism. Prayer, the word, confession, repentance.

Sometimes it's a nice meal. Sometimes it's make love with your wife. Sometimes it's a walk in the park.

Sometimes it's go out dancing. Sometimes it's go see a movie or a concert. Music, even non-Christian music, has been one of the greatest sources of blessings in my life.

And I would urge you to beware of super spirituality. I've seen super spirituality in Singapore since the first time I ever came here. And I tell you, some of them who got into it today are not even walking with God at all.

We need to find that balance. But my final word, proactive, means no matter what comes at you and what level of failure and difficulty, it may even be divorce or something more horrendous, keep on keeping on. We have a God who gives a second chance and a third chance.

We have a God who can make plan B better than plan A because He's sovereign and He's merciful and He loves you and loves me. You may have had a lot of failure in your life. Maybe you're at plan F. You know when I say, you've heard this before from me, praise God for a big alphabet, press on and accomplish God's purpose.

Would you take these seven words and think about them this week? More than that, would you do something? Would you do something specific? Our burden for our former OMers, 100,000 of them, is not firstly to get their money. We can use money, that is for sure. It's not firstly to get them back on OM.

We don't want them, the Holy Spirit doesn't send them. But our burden, we want to have ongoing input into your life. We want to give you books that will bless you.

We want, we want to have seminars like this little micro seminar that hopefully will help you. People in the world go to these kind of seminars. They pay sometimes four or five hundred dollars for a half-day seminar and much more.

They pay these motivational speakers six thousand dollars a day. I read an article recently showing how some of this that the world is giving out at these seminars, it's just, it's not even working in some cases. I tell you, those of us indwelt by the Holy Spirit, those of us who know Jesus, those of us who have God's Word, we can do so much better.

We can do so much better. We can be more motivated. We can be proactive.

But it takes work. But Singapore, hey, you're a hard-working people here. This is, this, this is, this nation is known by some people in other parts of the world as a miracle nation.

This is Singapore. So how about it? You take my seven words, make it happen for God's glory and keep in touch with us. Let us know how we can maybe bless you in some other way.

We're linking people up all over the world. We're putting tens of thousands of dollars through the Ministry of Special Projects and others into movements started by other former OMers. Not OM.

We have the joy of providing the YWAM ships with tens of thousands of dollars of Bibles and books. And so we want to be networking. We want to be helping you.

We feel in ourselves our resources are limited. But with God, well, a lot of potential. I wish I could spend an hour with every one of you.

For every hour I speak, I spend several hours with individuals and a couple hours on top with Jesus. But somehow OM got a little bit big. And so we don't always get that personal time.

Maybe in God's providence it will happen. I get stuck in an airport. You just happen to roll up in your Lexus.

Hey, I'll be happy to get a ride. No, even in a Ford. I've got difficulty getting in our luggage, the Verwerf freight service.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you that you brought us together here this afternoon. Perhaps it isn't what some people expected to hear more about OM and ships and what we're doing.

But Lord, this is the word you put on my heart. I know, Lord, whatever I share, there's always the straw factor. I pray that people will have the wisdom and discernment to separate the straw from the wheat.

I pray that people have the wisdom and discernment to know what is for them and what is not for them. And that we will be better Christians. We will be more focused, grace-awakened Christians, believers, because we have been here this afternoon.

That we'll be in touch with you more. We'll be in touch with one another more. That our families will be blessed.

Our children will be blessed. And that especially Lawrence and Susan will be blessed as they take on a special ministry of the directorship of Lagos too. We're cast upon you concerning all the suffering around the globe.

Sudan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Angola, Sierra Leone, Central Africa, Chechnya, Kosovo, Palestine, and Israel. Suffering zones that are beyond imagination. Lord, teach us more about prayer.

Teach us more about moving mountains through faith and prayer. And enable us to stay proactive until that day, when one way or the other, we are with you. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Pray for the international leaders meeting of OM 200 leaders, which is coming back again to this part of the world. It was in Singapore some years ago.

It's coming back this time to Malaysia. It means if the Singapore people get their act together, they can get a lot of these speakers to speak in Singapore first, before they go up to Malaysia. I'd like to speak in Singapore one weekend, and then Malaysia the next weekend.

But pray for this gathering. It's next February. Got a lot of extra work for people like Rodney and his huge staff in the Asia-Pacific regional office, like his two sons.

But let's cry out to God for a special blessing through this conference in February, coming back to your part of the world. Thank you very much. Maybe I went over time.

Nobody gave me any time. They're all so gracious. But if it's too

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19936.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/seven-words-for-ex-omers/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net