

# Singapore Ilm 23.1.1996

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of enduring suffering and seeking wisdom in ministry while preparing for future challenges.*

**Duration:** 45:41

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 6:1

**Topics:** "Missions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of commitment and avoiding imbalance in various areas of life. He specifically mentions the challenge of avoiding misunderstanding with women and shares his personal experience of being impacted by a book on esteeming one's mate. The speaker also addresses the challenges and complexities of implementing a strategic plan, cautioning against blindly following worldly models. He acknowledges the financial difficulties faced in the previous year but also highlights the growth and progress achieved. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the sacrifices and challenges faced by ministers of God.

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## Transcript

I'm reading this as a basis for thoughts in line with it, but for many new people here, allow me to read this, which is part of the core values and the whole foundation of our movement. Even under this present hour, we both hunger and thirst and are naked and buffeted. We have no certain dwelling place.

Labor, working with our own hands, being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we endure it, being defamed, we entreat. You can read it in your own different translation. It will come alive.

They all say the same or similar things. We entreat, we are made as the filth of the world. We're the off scouring of all things into this day.

I write not these things to shame you. Wow. But my beloved sons, I warn you, for though you have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you have not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel, wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. And all tied into all that suffering is verse 12 for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. One of the greatest distortions in the church today is that when we talk of power, we're always talking about blessing, breakthrough, deliverance, and wonderful things happening.

Whereas if you take it in the context of this chapter, chapter, and what I've just mentioned is included. But if you see it in the context here, it's power to endure, to persevere every kind of wild, impossible thing that could ever come upon the soul. And some of you have begun to see some of that in your own life.

And some of our brothers who were here years ago are now already in the glory. They saw their share and the Lord has taken it. Second Corinthians six, let the word of God speak to you.

Maybe you missed your Bible study this morning. Here's a little more to make up. Second Corinthians six, for we're workers together with him, beseech you, you receive not the grace of God in vain.

Forgive me if in speaking about grace, I have miscommunicated and given the idea that I was in favor of some cheap grace that didn't have discipline and holiness in it and around it. And if you read Swindoll's book, *Grace Awakening*, you'll see that his challenge does include that. Though there are certainly some mysteries and he acknowledges that on how it all fits together.

For he said, I have heard thee in a time accepted the day of salvation. I've helped thee behold now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.

Then we have clear instruction, whatever we might put down on, uh, gifts and abilities and skills that field leaders and area leaders and others need to have. They still have to obey everything they find in the new Testament. So there's a much longer list.

Someone felt the list was too long. We'll try this one here. Ways we give no offense, but in all things, here's the list.

Commending ourselves as ministers of God, patience, afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, toolmits, labors, watchings, fastings. We're talking about just one person. It's just one person that's gone through this.

It's in the whole team. You know, putting, if we combine all of our suffering together here, you know, we might get somewhere near the apostle Paul. That's an overstatement, but it's powerful.

Stripes, imprisonments, toolmits, labors, watchings, fastings, pureness by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love, unfeigned or genuine, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil reporting, good report as deceivers and yet true as unknown, yet well known as dying and behold, we live as chastened and not killed as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing as poor, making many rich as having nothing, yet possessing all things. Is that not awesome? Even when we think of Briscoe's definition of awesome and tie it to a couple words in chapter seven, verse four, great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my glorying of you.

I am filled with comfort. I'm exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. Yes, it is.

Whether you like the terminology or not, splashes of joy in the cesspool of life, a book that I believe God has raised up in the day and hour in which we live. When you read that book, you'll discover it's not a superficial book, though it is a book that carries you from page to page through a lot of humor. I'm exceedingly joyful in our tribulation for when we came unto you, for when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest.

We were troubled on every side. Without we're fighting, within were fears. Nevertheless, God, who comforted those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.

I've studied the word of God fairly thoroughly for 40 years. I never saw the point of comfort us by the coming of Titus. You would have thought by the Holy Spirit.

You would have thought by the grace of God. I mean, there's so many tremendous expressions in the New Testament tied in with comfort. But in this particular case, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it was Titus, the human factor.

And oh, how I thank God that somehow in OM, despite all of our struggles, we have been able, and we're still in a learning curve, to combine the divine factors and the human factors in our lives, in our families, in our ministries. And I thank God for the maturity I've seen coming to all of you that I've been able to observe over many, many years. I thank God that OM and the leadership of OM is more mature and therefore more biblically committed than it was five years ago or 10 years ago or 30 years ago.

But not in the absence of our frailty and our weaknesses. And of course, by the sheer size of our movement, there will be new brands of the human factor that will literally dazzle the imagination. Try not to overreact to it and end in the deep sea of depression.

In one way, I wouldn't have to say any more than read those scriptures. But I think it's only fair to share with you where I think you're going to be tested and tried as you launch into 96 and as we move on a marathon race toward the year thousand, 2000, with our strategic plan, with all of our ideals and the complexity of now carrying out this plan, which of course will have to be modified as we go along. I've read a lot of books in recent years about strategic plans.

Some are now even throwing out the concept as we live in such a wild world when it comes to business and when it comes to how things are done. And I would just give a little warning not to overly model what you're doing after the people of the world and the companies of the world. We can learn from them.

But I asked myself this question on the plane 10 years from now, will our model be SIM or IBM? Will it be OMF or Microsoft? Will it be Billy Graham or Bill Gates? Will we know? Will we be known for our great strategy and our high-tech communication or will we be known also for our Holy Ghost intercession? We have to somehow always keep anything we receive from the world, and I think you know how open-minded I am, probably too much. Some of my friends are worried, to contextualize it into what we receive from the Lord and from his word. Both extremes are possible.

We've all met many extremists and grace killers who tend to just put down anything that doesn't come from the Bible or that they don't see in the Bible. Therefore, they believed years ago electricity is from the devil, computers are from the devil, and all kinds of things. And then those who go to the other extreme and are so intimidated maybe have found struggle in their effort to try to find true spirituality and at the same time have a healthy, solid organization or fellowship and therefore have been intimidated into just taking on worldly practices and procedures and allowing some basic principles of the word of God to slip by.

We are going to be tested. We are going to be tried. We lost two people and had many injured in Zamboanga, and if we don't think the Lord will allow tests in the future, maybe not to the ship ministry but to other aspects of ministry, then we don't know what's going on in the missionary world today.

And I've always felt that our coming together for these annual meetings are a time of counting the cost. As we have our dreams, we have our visions, we have our plans, we must also count the cost. As you accept a new responsibility, field leadership, area leadership, then you must continue to count the cost as to what will be involved.

And all of you, most of you have heard me speak on the last verses of Luke 14, which is so significant on that biblical principle, which I'll not go into detail about tonight. What are some of the areas where we are going to be tested? And I wrote on the top of my notes, brothers and sisters, we need wisdom. And I believe it is a great mistake when we analyze the early years of OM and give the whole idea that there was very little wisdom and mainly zeal.

I've done it myself for the cause of humor. But if you study the early years of OM, you will discover amazing wisdom was given to the leaders of OM almost before their time. Even in our very name, a name that is more acceptable in 96 than it was in 64.

And I guess ever since I met that dear lady selling books who challenged me to read Proverbs every single day, I have had this very, very strong focus on wisdom. That's why I've tried to pick the minds of over 1000 Christian leaders these 40 years by their books, their tapes and their personal interviews. That's why my whole life has been one long learning curve with generally fair amount of quickness to repent and to change and to learn.

That's why we were able to break free from what almost became in cement in OM that we couldn't ask for money and we didn't say much about money. And I hope this learning curve will continue until we're with the Lord. We need wisdom.

The church is faced with problems that we were never faced with a couple of years ago. Just the Toronto blessing and its complexity. The latest news that that church has been removed from the vineyard denomination.

That was on the BBC morning news or one of the main stations. In fact, I think it was in Toronto media before the church heard about it, which may not be true, but it was interesting. A couple of years ago, this name did not exist.

Today, over 25 books, approximately, have been written on the subject, endless magazine articles, and there are very few that have not been forced to take a stand one way or the other on this thing called the Toronto blessing. Brothers and sisters, we don't just need a forward plan. We don't just need a breakthrough concept.

We don't just need commitment. We need wisdom. And some of the wisdom we need will not come just from reading the Bible.

Will that help us decide what language we're going to use in our computer system? I think we've already chosen that language, so I hope with this new Java thing launched out that we're not in a major earthquake. I think I've been assured by my friend Clark that we're not. But you can be sure whether the techies have it or not, those of us who lead the movement have endless questions from everybody and his donkey about computers and Petra and all of that kind of thing, which we're going to have a wonderful presentation of later on.

We need wisdom. We need it in the area of transportation. We need it in the area of budget.

We need it in the area of people care. We need it for the work in Rill. We need it in Carlisle.

We need it in every team. And it would be my heart cry that as we continue to pray for power and vision and strength and breakthroughs and souls coming to Jesus and the evangelization of the whole world that we would have a more supreme prayer. Lord, give us wisdom.

A.W. Tozer said the greatest gift he felt needed in the local church was the gift of discernment. Do you realize when you say that, two different kinds of Christians interpreted that completely differently? In one group, when you say discernment, they're incredibly happy you have brought that in. But they believe that largely comes through a miraculous zap experience from the Holy Spirit in the form of a prophecy, a word of knowledge, a picture.

But the other half of the audience believes that that comes through using your head. I'm sure that group wouldn't deny that as well. And to study and prayer and interaction and reading proverbs and reading books and seeing what mistakes people have made before us and just many, many other sources of wisdom and discernment like reading A.W. Tozer.

And here in OM, we attempt this unbelievable marriage of these two kinds of Christians who are sitting in this very room. And it will take an ongoing miracle to keep unity within operation, mobilization. And if we presume that's going to be any easier to maintain in the 90s than it was in the 70s and the 80s, and this movement almost came unglued completely at one point, then we will, I think, be very foolish.

We're going to be tested. We're going to be attacked. We're going to be hit.

And I believe as we just think through these few areas, it'll enable us to develop more wisdom. It'll enable us to be more prepared and we'll be a little more, I hope, ready for what comes at us. What are some of the big things that you probably will have to handle as a field leader, as a country leader, as a major leader? My list may surprise you, but I've listed first on my list.

You're going to have to handle rejection. I've hardly ever spoken on the subject of rejection, and I've spoken on a lot of subjects. And I was speaking at a meeting and business people in North London, and the big thing was they were pushing the tape from the week before.

That's always great to prepare you. The man the week before spoke on rejection. People were buying up the tape as if it were the end days.

Enormous amount of rejection is being felt by God's people. I don't think you can be in ministry without feeling rejection. You may even feel it from your own wife or husband at some point, which isn't so unusual.

And I pray that you will develop a strategy to deal with rejection and not allow that to blow you off course. It would be unusual in the church and in the world to not experience some rejection. There are just so many factors, and we cannot go into details because we're fighting a timeline.

But I know that God can give grace and victory when you're experiencing rejection. It can happen in an OM situation where leaders seem to all know one another, and you hardly know anyone. It could happen right here, even in the first day upon arrival.

Some seem to be so friendly. Some get hugs. Some don't get hugs.

I want to confess that my own hugging is one of the most inconsistent things in my life. Tied in with jet lag, tied in with where I'm sitting, tied in with the angle the person is standing at. But I can assure you I would love to hug all of you, though my wife has now put up a restriction on women.

In Argentina, I kissed more women in 10 days than the previous year because it is a culture, as you meet a woman, to give her just a slight peck on the side of the cheek. It's quite a non-sexual thing, I can assure you, for most people. And if you're tempted to give her a big walloping kiss right on her lips, you should have fellowship first with Daniel Bianchi or some other board member in Argentina.

Rejection. The vibrations of rejection can be so subtle, and sometimes you're feeling them, brother or sister, when they're not even there. It's part of your own ethos.

It's part of the climate and the complexity of the human factor. Try not to go around believing that people are rejecting you. You'll be happier and you'll be healthier.

And especially when you start to get the first vibrations from your own children that they're rejecting you. Quite normal in most households. Secondly, you will have to handle criticism.

They are closely related, though someone who doesn't reject you may criticize you. We've said these things for years in OM, and I think we should still keep saying them. We need to know how to deal with criticism.

I remember a major field leader who was going through criticism, producing a fantastic paper on the subject. If you're experiencing difficulty because of criticism from co-workers or some other source, make a study on it. I heard of one famous pastor who had three nervous breakdowns largely because the inability to handle heavy criticism was coming his way.

Brothers and sisters, you can't do anything in the kingdom without getting criticized. And sometimes it will be your close friends. If God hadn't taught me, and I'm still in a learning curve, I would not be here today.

I would not be here today. And I thank God for those criticisms and my critics. I may have had to struggle through it, sometimes with tears.

At the end of the day, the grace and the victory was there. Of course, when speaking about this, I would just urge you to turn the shoe around or turn the coin over and try to deal with yourself if you find, as you wait upon the Lord, that you're a little bit too critical. I've often tried to tell leaders that I was involved in training that if you haven't affirmed someone five or six times, you've not earned credentials yet to criticize them.

We've made an enormous number of mistakes in OM over the years by coming down too quickly on a new recruit. Maybe it was a serious blunder before we could ever give him any affirmation. If we're going to find a new generation of people that will sit where you're sitting 10 and 20 years from now, we are going to have to become more gifted at affirming people.

And I look back at my life and see some of my greatest victories were affirming people, and some of my greatest disasters, the failure to affirm. If you study in the new Westwatch 90s Leadership Training School, you will definitely get affirmed. I had the greatest dose of affirmation of the entire year as I sat in this circle.

And Christiana Boning, knowing George very well, and I'm so glad she did, said, now when this happens, you're not allowed to speak back. So anyway, I'm still grappling with these things. And I just believe we must learn greater control of our tongue and have a greater discipline over all forms of gossip and judgmentalism and all that kind of thing, which is still causing a lot of grief in the body.

Thirdly, you're going to have to handle financial pressure. I have a number of messages on this subject, but I am convinced it's not OM that's under financial pressure. It is to a large degree the entire body of Christ.

Let us stop flattering ourselves, thinking that because we're so cutting edge, the devil is hitting us and we're under this phenomenal financial pressure. I would like Ajit Fernando to share something of your financial pressure that I read in your prayer letter. I don't know if you'd be willing to do that.

It's not for me to tell you what to speak, but the reality of your prayer letters has been a ministry to me. And when you spoke in Manila, you know your message brought me to tears because it was so real and it was so where we really are. In attempting to be relational, things just get so messy.

And when the financial pressure comes on and we're relationship oriented, it can get even more messy. Hasn't that been the history of missions even since the day of Hudson Taylor? Do you think Hudson Taylor's particular teaching was a cure-all for everything? If so, you've never read missionary history. In fact, I believe one of the weaknesses in OM leadership is we've not studied his missionary history.

I had to take a course in foreign missions at Moody Bible Institute. Maybe it wasn't much, but it grieves me today that we have people going to the field that have not had clear teaching on missionary history because we don't want to repeat the same thing over again. Praise God for what is being done.

Yes, 1995 in some ways was one of the toughest years financially with mega heartbreaks, and yet it was one of the greatest years as income has generally increased, though we know that's hard to measure in some fields with inflation, with the change in the dollar, with increased costs. I know there has been a lot of pain and many of you have endured it as a field leader as well as the international leader of OM. I can say the field leader's pain is greater than the international leader's pain.

There'll be no gain without pain, and many unconverted people, like 40,000 about to be fired by AT&T, I believe are often suffering more than we are in God's work where we have one another, where the end of the day most people get their food money and their allowances, where we could hardly look at all of OM's assets and the way we live and exactly classify as suffering and poverty stricken. It's a hard thing, isn't it? And we'll never all agree on how it all should be worked out, so unless there's the oil of the Holy Spirit and a lot of wisdom and patience, we might be in for even a more difficult year. And then the great testings that come when there are misunderstandings.

Misunderstandings can be more difficult and uncanny and subtle than even rejection or criticism, because they seem so unnecessary. They seem so unnecessary. If you had said this and done that, maybe you wouldn't have this misunderstanding that you're dealing with.

And I want to personally apologize if anything I've said or done this year has created misunderstanding. It is not possible to be a committed disciple in the fast lane attempting to reach the world with the gospel and not create some misunderstanding. If we become intimidated by the misunderstandings we sometimes create, we will not be useful very long in the work of God.

Yes, we do have to develop sensitivity, but we also must develop spiritual toughness. Otherwise, our unconverted cousins down the road will prove to be more committed and more realistic and even more dedicated than we are in the body of Christ, and that must not be. We know we don't measure them and measure things in the exact same way.

But I have come to respect unconverted people throughout the world. My heart breaks that they're lost and they're because of sin on the way to eternity without Christ. But in their particular sphere or arena, whether it's sports or politics, whether it's computers or business or whatever, there are people who seem so incredibly committed and often their commitment leads to imbalance that brings confusion, which is what we don't want.

And that's why ours is a message of grace, dealing with misunderstanding. One of the hardest things for us men is to avoid misunderstanding with women. Let us be honest.

God has broken me two weeks ago as I read *How to Esteem Your Mate*. Why didn't anybody give me that book 30 years ago? A brilliant book. It was interesting.

I was in a missionary home and I was talking to the husband. He didn't even know the book was in the house. His wife obviously did because the book was underlined in every single chapter.

And I had a wonderful time of fellowship with those missionaries before I left. And it's beautiful to see their relationship. And I can imagine some of the obstacles they've had to overcome.

And I'm sure God used that book through that wife to help make that marriage tick. Don't ever arrive to a point of arrogance, men, about how to treat your wife, how to have more understanding and less misunderstanding, how to listen a little better, how to esteem her. But women, be patient with us men because we are, we are so easily, we stumble in this area.

Keep in mind that many of us never had in-depth fellowship with any woman except our girlfriend. And the in-depth fellowship I had with my girlfriends was not exactly a super learning curve. Though I thank God that one or two women, especially a girl I went with before my conversion for three years, was definitely in God's providence a mentor in my life.

And I know some of my failure has been the inability to relate in-depth to the opposite sex. We just naturally end up living, you know, in the men's dorm. What happens if some poor guy wanting to relate more to women, you know, moves into the women's dorm? Of course, this isn't exactly a dormitory situation here.

I don't know if you understand what I'm saying, but many of us as men, a high percentage of all our in-depth fellowship and contact and bonding has been with other men. Therefore, we are, I'm not excusing it, we are going to be weak on trying to relate and have in-depth fellowship with other women without going across the board that our sister Lois Mowdy so warned us about so relevantly with such wisdom in her book. Therefore, patience, grace, forgiveness, believing the best is one of the keys that is going to keep men and women together in OM.

I believe it is a grievous thing to the Spirit of God that there are still women's jokes among men in OM. There's men's jokes among women in OM. I'm not talking about innocent, harmless jokes, but we've already discovered that in cross-cultural situation, what seems harmless becomes hurtful.

And I feel we as men must make an extra effort to esteem all women. And women, I know we cannot do it without you. If you don't make an effort to esteem us, to understand us as we attempt to understand you, then we will not make it.

And if you don't think there's misunderstanding between men and women in this movement, you must really be naive. I'm not saying it's some huge problem. I'm not interested in dealing with huge problems.

I don't want any huge problems. I like to deal with small problems. I don't want a huge problem in my marriage where I'm standing in a divorce court trying to figure out what to do.

I want to handle little small problems as my wife and I will celebrate next week 36 years of misunderstandings, 36 years of marriage with some misunderstandings. Just very quickly, three other points, and you're free like birds. As you face tests and difficulties, you're going to face the struggle of people leaving.

We cannot pretend that it's easy to see a major leader leave. But we know this is a commitment of the movement to train people and send them into other agencies. It's an area where we'll wrestle endlessly for balance.

But there's a great difference when someone leaves with our blessing and peace, a sense of oneness. And when someone leaves hurt, bitter, walked on, and then for weeks doesn't get a phone call, doesn't get a letter, doesn't get enough money, somehow we've got to find that balance. We want to learn more how to win that loyalty, how to bond with people.

Some leaders seem to have the idea that Peter Maiden and a few others have a box full of potential leaders. And when you have a slot in your country, call us up and tell us who we're going to send. It's going to become more difficult to find the men and women to step into your shoes.

Every movement has proven that. Let's not get into some kind of inferiority complex about it. Most missions and agencies look at OM and speak more highly of it than I do.

We know our warts, we know our failures, but I'm convinced that it's going to be harder in the 90s to win the loyalty of people on a long-term basis. The ship has gone through agonizing struggles in this area and deserve great credit for the victories. And I just hope and pray that you will not be discouraged if some key person leaves you.

That is completely normal. I know great men of God. They may have considerable weaknesses in certain areas, but God is still using them.

They have no one that has stood with them for 30 years on a long-term basis. Now it's easy to criticize and point out his mistakes. Now, those of you sitting in this room will have to find them, love them, bond with them, mentor them, and train them.

It can be small group, it can be one-on-one. I'm not that concerned about what mentoring, training, discipling method you use. I'd like to quote out of context Billy Graham, who when he spoke about the Holy Spirit and the reality of it, said, I don't care how you get it, just get it.

I don't care in one way how you get those right leaders to carry on the vision, just get them. And if I can be any help, Peter and ICT, we certainly want to. And then, second before last, you're going to have to cope,

and this is the toughest, isn't it, with your own sins and failures.

Please, please do not harden your heart against confession just because you tried it and it didn't work. Maybe you were about to confess something to a leader and he got distracted, and he didn't realize it, but he snubbed you. I'm sure I've done that.

I find myself sometimes, I'm a person with lots of questions, and I like to hear the answers, but my mind goes so fast, I've had cases where I've asked people a question, did not wait for the answer, went on to the next question. I thought, imagine being married to someone like that. Let us not be afraid to confess our sins.

The pastor in the church in London, where I preached Sunday morning two days ago, before I preached, he put up a little chalkboard and asked people to list some of the sins they wanted to confess that morning, right in the church. And he's just new there, he's a new pastor. The church has been through quite a few difficulties, and not many were responding.

So I, you know, the visiting preacher, I raised my hand and I said, you know, impatience, and they wrote it down and had prayer for me. Others did follow. Dealing with our own sins and our own failures can be such a struggle, especially when the same things pop up and punch us in the nose.

I wanted to read that tremendous accountability list that some men in the United States are reading to each other. I think many of you have seen that circulated, in which you actually ask someone whether they've ever watched anything that particular week that they felt was really inappropriate for a Christian leader to watch. That's a good one.

Maybe you're blessed because I can't find the list and there's not time to anyway. Praise God for the blood of Christ. Praise God for 1 John chapter 2. That way he forgives, he cleanses, he renews.

And I hope that some of you, if something is really bothering you, that you'll not be afraid to confess it. Of course, before God is the bottom line and he forgives and cleanses. But sometimes for the sake of your ongoing growth and health, it's good to confess it to someone else.

In the middle of my time in Argentina, my helper, Graham Jack, who surely is one of the best helpers I've ever had in all these years. It's always hard to remember so many years, but what a blessing he has been to me. He asked for so little of my time.

He's the most undemanding person I think I've ever worked with, which is helpful in the particular day and age in which we in OM find ourselves. But he came in and said he wanted to talk and I said, sure, sit down on the bed. And he just confessed some things that he felt were wrong in his walk with the Lord.

And we just had some prayer and he'd been wrestling with us for a couple of days and it was gone. The Word of God says, confess your faults one to another. Pray for one another that you may be healed.

Confession is not for forgiveness. That's between you and God. We don't go to the confessional.

But sometimes some confession, which brings things into the light, can be a healing experience. Again, we may not all agree on the fine tuning of this. No problem.

I'm not giving a full message on confession. But I know that brokenness, humility, walking in the light generally within the body of Christ involves some confession, some putting things right. Of course it's

risky.

Sometimes when you attempt to do it, it gets worse. That's part of life. Don't give up at that point or you'll be dumber than your unconverted neighbor.

Learn from it. Try it maybe a different way the next time and stand on God's promises and his forgiveness. And then lastly, you're going to be tested in the area of marriage or singleness.

My heart just breaks as I see missionary couples' marriages come apart across the world. Keep in mind that we in OM are involved, many of us, as much outside of OM as we are inside. That's why I guess this strategy of bringing the missionary sending challenge more wholeheartedly back to the local church is such a challenge to me because I just feel so strongly that Satan is trying to destroy local churches.

And one of the methods of Satan is to destroy the marriage. I believe somehow in OM, one way or the other, all of our couples need to get into some kind of marriage enrichment course, study, at least minimum into books. We tend, when we're fast movers, shakers and movers, we got a lot to do.

Some of us are borderline workaholics, whatever that means. There is a natural tendency to neglect your marriage, to neglect your wife and neglect your children. It's like some of the bad particles you have in the air in London that causes a lot of asthma.

It's just there. Therefore, unless we make an extra effort with our marriage partners, with our children, the problems will increase. They will increase.

And in some cases, they will explode. And if you tend to justify your own problems by quoting someone else who seems to have similar problems, be careful because you may not have the same wife or the same husband. So the tearing and comparing is always a little bit dangerous because your marriage and your personality and your situation is unique.

You can learn from all those things, including the books, but you've got to contextualize it into where you are, what you're faced with, your children, one, two, or five, where you're living, your financial pressures. Somehow, it's a very personal thing, isn't it? That's why I'm very hesitant to stand in judgment over people's marriages. It is a very personal area, and I stand very cautious also to stand in judgment over single people.

Why is he or she single or what or what? Because it's also very, very delicate at times and very sensitive. Let us pray for one another in our marriages. Some of us who've been in this a long time are involved more than we want to with broken marriages of ex-OMers and ex-OM leaders.

Not many. Hallelujah. And some of them, of course, when it happens, they drift almost totally out of sight.

They don't want to even have contact. But I believe somehow God did give us some wisdom, and we started emphasizing this about 30-some years ago. Though our failures are there, I believe our successes have been much, much greater.

Don't hesitate to get some help if your marriage is in difficulty. Don't hesitate to read a few books. Arrogance is so subtle, especially among us men.

Let's face it. Women are generally much quicker to read a new book on marriage. There are plenty of exceptions, because some may not read that much in the age of video.

But there's a subtle arrogance that causes men to think they're beyond books on marriage. Well, I'll tell you, when a few months ago or a year ago I picked up a secular book called, Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus, I was into pretty heavy repentance and great blessing from the Lord. And my marriage, by the grace of God, has continued to experience renewal and blessing, without which I cannot function in my position in this movement.

Thank you very much for your patience. Let us pray. Lord, we know our testings and trials in the 90s may not be the same as the Apostle Paul 2,000 years ago, but they can be just as real, just as vicious, just as fiery.

And we know this is a very short list of what you and your sovereignty may allow into our lives as we attempt to carry out your will here in this lost and needy planet. And God, we would come to you in surrender. We would come to you in renewed commitment to be the kind of men and women you want us to be, and to somehow hold up the shield of faith which can stop the fiery darts of the evil one.

And yet, when those darts get through, somehow that we may be able to counterattack and bounce back and receive the help and the grace to go one more mile and one more step. We thank you, Lord, that we can come. Even now, as we contend to get our minds overfilled with all this, we can come and cast every care upon you and deal with these things one at a time, as your Holy Spirit brings them to us in the days, weeks, and even months to come.

We thank you, God, you're not putting us into the vice grip of some quick fix, because we know that crisis that may happen must be followed by the process which all of us, probably all of us in this room, are already in. We thank you for your Word. We thank you for the model of the Apostle Paul.

We thank you for what he has written, and we long to contextualize that into the everyday aspect of our lives, from marriage to missions, from preaching to picking flowers, from loving an unconverted person across the street to being in love and maintaining a deep love relationship with our own marriage partner. Oh, God, do a new thing in our midst these days. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Ford, is there something we can respond with in the way of a song? I'd appreciate that. Maybe Ford had to slip out.

Let's just sing our favorite, He is Lord. He is Lord, He is Lord. Let's stand.

He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Once again, He's my Lord.

And make it true of your marriage, your singleness, your relationships, your team, your field. He's my Lord. Let's sing it.

He's my Lord. He's my Lord. He is risen from the dead, and He's my Lord.

Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Let's just pray in twos or triplets. I really feel some of you felt we didn't give you enough time to pray last time, so we'll give you a second blessing.

Let's just take this to the Lord in prayer in triplets or in twos. Please just do that for a few moments. Short prayers, esteeming the other, but make it from the heart.

Make it from the heart. Amen.

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