

Spiritual Balance (Dutch)

by George Verwer

Spiritual balance is the sharpest position, where a person can accomplish far more for God by not being led into one secondary thing or controversial thing after another.

Duration: 1:16:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 8:25, Acts 20:32, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:17, 2 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Dutch"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of finding balance in various aspects of life. They emphasize the need for discipline and planning, while also allowing room for God to guide and bring something special. The speaker also addresses the balance between zeal and wisdom, highlighting the difference between reckless faith and discernment. They emphasize the importance of using both faith and common sense in decision-making. Additionally, the speaker talks about the balance between intellectual and emotional aspects of Christianity, emphasizing the need for both theology and emotional experiences. They also mention the importance of freedom and allowing room for failure in spiritual development.

Transcript

For this final period together, I would like to speak on the subject of spiritual balance. What it is to really find spiritual balance in our Christian life. Spiritual balance is not a slow sort of position of compromise.

It is the sharpest position. Like a Concorde plane that because of balance can perform the most incredible feats in aeronautics. Like a supersonic plane can reach an incredible speed because it has two wings.

So a spiritually balanced person can accomplish far more for God. Because he is not being constantly led into one secondary thing or controversial thing after another. I think that in Operation Mobilization, maybe about 20 years ago, we could have become an extremist group.

Think what happened to the children of God. That was a Christian Missionary Alliance pastor, David Burke. Many of them were very committed young people.

They had a lot of enthusiasm. They were out in the streets. But slowly they became more and more extreme.

And it's just unbelievable what has happened to that group. And we noticed they were going in this direction many years before it actually happened. We already saw it happening more or less years before it actually happened.

That immorality was invading the movement. And now their women perform the sex act even with total strangers in order to bring them to the love of God. Exposing the love of God.

This is not a rumor or some secret teaching. They openly teach this and openly practice this all over the world. And many have left the movement because of that.

A lot even more sick people have now joined the movement. And that is only one of many extremist groups. And it's amazing how even seemingly intelligent good people can get into extremist sections in the area of religion.

And in England we have many still in the exclusive brethren. That has brought open scandal in the televisions and the newspaper against Christianity. Because many people say, ah well it's all this.

They believe of course they're the only ones. Everybody else is wrong. And they will even refuse to eat with their own wife at the table if she's not in the same church and has been baptized.

Many homes have been split by that movement. And then just a few years ago, the leader of the Taylorite exclusive brethren, committed immorality, blasphemed God and then died. Many came out of that movement at that time.

This is a movement that actually had Watchmen Knee in their grip for several years. And some of the extreme things in Watchmen Knee actually came from the exclusive brethren and a man named Mr. Taylor. And when he began to fellowship with other Christians, they excommunicated him and sent a letter around the entire world excommunicating Watchmen Knee.

Well I don't want to move or speak more in that direction. But I think we're aware of how subtle Satan is. We're told in John to try the spirits to see if they are from God.

We're told to walk in the truth. And this pleases God. That we walk in the truth.

And this is the will of God. That we have a balance of truth. Here are just some areas where we need to seek for balance.

And this will be so important and to keep us from extremism. Or exclusivism. That's something I would very much like to emphasize.

The danger of exclusivism and super-spirituality. That you get involved with groups that exclude and exclude others. And that you get so mentally extreme.

That is the way that Satan uses, especially with people who want to be instructed by the Lord to get involved in groups that exclude others or to get involved in a kind of super-spiritual group. A few years ago, a new group arrived in Europe. The movement is founded by Witness Lee, a close colleague of the former Watchmen Knee.

This group is called Local Church. And they are especially growing in Germany. It seems that the Germans, some of them are attracted to this as they are the total, final church.

Of course, they come into a town, like say, when they come to Amsterdam, and they will be coming soon. And they have a lot of good teaching. About 80% good teaching.

But you see, you don't need much poison in a glass of water to kill a man. It's the last 20% that kills. They are the only true New Testament.

The only true church in Amsterdam. And I tend to think they may not go down so well. I tend to think they may not go down so well here in the Netherlands.

At least I pray for that. They fly people over to California when they are trying to proselytize someone. And really roll out the red carpet.

And many come back convinced this is truly the most loving fellowship. Many people are unhappy in their churches. Many people are unhappy in their churches.

They don't find the love and the light. And that makes them richer. Or the extremist groups.

And this is one of the reasons I strongly believe that we must be on this subject of spiritual balance. Tozer said the greatest gift needed in the church today is discernment. I would say that you may have many other gifts functioning in your church, but if you don't have discernment, no matter what, you're going to have sooner or later one big mess.

Here are some of the specific areas. Here are some of the specific areas. Number one.

The balance between crisis. Crisis experiences. Moments of emotional re-commitment to God.

And on the other side, spiritual growth. And on the other side, spiritual growth. In Acts 4.31, where they prayed, the place was shaken, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they went.

There are legitimate times of special blessing. Look at Acts 20.32. Where it says, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified. And then in the book of Peter.

2 Peter 3.18. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So both principles are in the Word of God. I have seen many people become too subjective.

Always, what's the next experience? The next blessing. Or the next revelation. And I've seen them just led into confusion.

And on the other hand, some people are so conservative. Anything special? And they're always afraid of emotion. Tozer said in one of his books, that for most churches, to be worried about too much enthusiasm for Christ, was like sending a squadron of policemen to a cemetery in fear that there would be a demonstration at midnight by the residents.

In other words, that is not the great problem in most churches. There needs to be a little more emotion. There needs to be, at times, a little bit of crisis.

Perhaps a few tears, repentance, and being filled with God's love. Billy Graham says, call it whatever you want. Forget it.

Reality. Spiritual power. And yet, whatever you get in a crisis time of prayer, it will have to be followed by a process, or it will have to be followed by a process, Whatever you get in a crisis time of prayer, if it is not followed by a process, it will be a hopeless failure.

The second area, is the balance between submission and freedom. We have some very, very big things happening in England right now. Especially in the movement known as the charismatic movement.

And in OM, we have people from all these different movements. If they are in any way biblical, we welcome them. But this movement has just split down the middle again.

Partly with some teaching that came from the States. Personally, I, over the years, I decided I must stop everything that crosses the Atlantic. Just forgive me for that.

That's why I never hold it against people who are skeptical about me, because that's the direction I came. My father went over, and I had to come back, and I'm staying here. We need a lot of wisdom.

And this teaching that has split so many churches, is an over-emphasis on submission. And the leader is a very powerful person. And the sheep must find their shepherd, and they must obey their shepherd in all things.

Now, with this incident in Guyana, many people are rethinking some of these ideas. And I am praying that that incident will be used to bring people out of extremism and out of cults. Now, the reason this is so difficult, is because the Word of God does teach submission to leadership.

Look at 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5. Read verses 12 through 13. And compare that with Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 17. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 12.

So, as Christians, we need to learn submission to our leaders. At the same time, there are many instructions for leaders. Like not lording over the sheep, but being an example to the sheep.

That is the kind of leadership. I cannot force them. I cannot tell them who they can marry and who they cannot marry.

Watchman Nee, in his extreme book on submission, says if your leader tells you to plant the tree upside down, then you plant the tree upside down. Not on leadership, on submission. And a lot of crazy things have taken place.

People get extreme on the subject of submission. Because God's Word teaches that we are free. We have to get to know the will of God.

But also teaches we should be submitting one to another. There is a sense in which I, as a leader, must submit to other leaders, and I must be in some degree submissive to the followers. I can learn from them.

And I may make a mistake in giving some kind of instructions, and I must be willing to sit down and to discuss, and to pray over, and to see what God's will is, not my will. I may make a mistake in certain things that I have claimed, that I have said, and then I must be willing to talk about it with someone, and to think about it, and to pray over it. This is an area where a number of people have fallen into extremes, and have even turned their backs on Christ.

They have given everything to a particular group, even their own will, and they were crushed. They were walked on. And then they left.

I know one group alone, one church that went this way. Eighty people have left the church. I have terrible letters from some of these people, how they were manipulated by leaders, and how they were destroyed in their spiritual life.

I have terrible letters from some of these people, how they were manipulated by leaders, and how they were destroyed in their spiritual life. This is linked to the third area, of balance between discipline and liberty. This is linked to the third area, of balance between discipline and liberty.

That's another difficult area. That's another difficult area. Some people never came on OM, Some people never came on OM, because they thought it was all discipline.

because they thought it was all discipline. They thought you're like joining the army. They thought you're like joining the army.

And you have to eat certain food, And you have to eat certain food, and you get up a certain time in the morning, and you get up a certain time in the morning, and they get this often very wrong impression of what OM is. And God has shown us something of balance. There needs to be discipline and organization, but there needs to be liberty and freedom.

We do try to get everybody to do a little bit of physical exercise. But ultimately on most teams it's eventually left up to the person. If they're not going to get up early, somebody may knock on the door.

If they want they can say thank you very much, roll over and go back to sleep. So we try to keep a strong message, a strong challenge. But we believe that true spirituality will only develop when there is freedom, and that must include freedom to fail.

Now we do have a few special programs. We have a program on the ship called Intensive Training. And for five months you give up your freedom and submit to a very hard, rigorous program.

Where you don't have any more choice about exercise. And nights of prayer. And about twenty other areas.

Only a small group of twelve people on a volunteer basis are allowed into that program. These are usually people who are desperate about getting some discipline in their life. They've got plenty of liberty, they've got a lot of liberty.

And they want to learn some discipline. The same area, the same thing is true when we speak about organization, organizing things. And you know, freedom of the spirit.

Let the Lord guide us as we go along. Where we already find the balance. Some groups, when they have a conference, they plan it a year in advance.

They use computers. And everything is outlined right down to the last to organize. Every speaker, every singer, every minute.

If the Apostle Paul arrived, there'd be no room in the schedule. Everything is already arranged. But we have tried to find the balance.

Yes, let's plan ahead. Let's get some definite programs. Let's get some materials printed.

Let's leave some open time so God can guide and bring maybe something special at that time. Then the next area is the balance between zeal and wisdom. Or to put it in other terms, reckless faith compared with discernment.

Daring faith, great steps of faith. Faith. How do you find the balance in these areas? Some people talk about the ship, even some of my own people.

Who's a miracle ship? Answer the prayer. Yes, that's true. But there's also 24 engineers.

And some of them have a lot upstairs. And they didn't get it from the book of Revelation. And they've got to use their minds.

And when they go down to the engine room, if they see a broken piece of equipment, they don't lay hands on the equipment. They lay hands on the repairing machine. It's an area where great balance is needed.

And I believe without this balance, OM would have gone into a crazy, a crazy movement. I believe without this balance, OM would have gone into a crazy, a crazy movement. Young people are ready to do anything.

They're full of zeal. They believe God can do anything. Well, if you say that, that sounds nice.

But if you start just living that way, God can do anything. I was stuck in an airport in Calcutta. And I couldn't get to Nepal.

And I met this funny little extremist lady in the airport. I don't know if you've ever met these types. I don't know if you've ever met these types of people.

They're very spiritual. I'm sure of it. But I thought, maybe the Lord doesn't want me to go to Nepal.

And I took a plane to Indonesia, where I had to go. And I was always believing that God was going to... Nothing for God. He can fill the gas tank.

He can miraculously supply it. But you see, God doesn't generally work that way. He can.

But he doesn't. And if he did, there would be even more crazy people. God doesn't just break the laws of the universe, just helter-skelter, every time someone prays some silly little prayer.

God's greater burden is not to break the laws of gravity, but to break the hearts of his people, that they become humble and loving, and they get their priorities right about God. At the same time, God does answer prayers. He did supply those ships.

He supplies money to buy fuel. Because God's method is to use his people. And it is a miracle.

When last Sunday we were in prayer and fasting on Lagos, for financial needs, and within two days, we had one of the largest gifts in the last year or two. For the ministry of the ship. Now, as we receive that money, we have to use wisdom in spending it carefully, in getting the right spare parts, in repairing our lifeboats.

We need two new lifeboats. So what should we say? This lifeboat has a hole in it. But we will pray.

When it goes into the water, God will miraculously fill the hole and the boat will float. But you see, in a shipping company that won't work. Right now we are passing our special survey.

At the moment, the ship is being surveyed in a special way. A very strict inspection. So what do you think about when a man comes? And who says, Captain Porter, there is a hole in your lifeboat.

And the captain says to the inspector, Well, don't worry. Well, don't worry. Because if this lifeboat goes into the water, God will hold his hand under the lifeboat.

This is how the inspector will look. God will hold his hand under the lifeboat. And we will have to submit our documents immediately.

And we will never be able to sail this ship again. I am glad that God did not give us this ship in the beginning of our work. The Lord had to teach us a lot.

About using our heads. And about His Word. And about spiritual balance.

Yet we don't want to make mistakes. On that one side. We want to know how to trust God for the impossible.

Especially in changing people's lives. That's the greatest area where we want to exercise really wild, great faith. In seeing people change.

Then we have to find balance. Between the intellectual and the emotional. Now in England we have these two types of Christians.

We have some who are very emotional. Some of their meetings are very emotional. They don't understand much theology.

Sometimes they are suspicious of theologians. They want a blessing. They are the loathing and praising types.

Is that how you say it? Praise God for that. We need those people in the church. Those who have some emotional reality in their lives.

But at the same time we need people who have intellectual talents. We need people like John Stott and Dr. Schaefer. What an influence Dr. Schaefer has had on many of God's people.

I spent a long time with him on the phone just about three weeks ago. He is very, very ill with cancer at this time. And is being treated in the Mayo Clinic in the United States.

But he was able to finish his second series of films. And if the Lord takes him. We know that his ministry through books and films will go on for many years.

We need the balance. We need those who perhaps have a greater emotional capacity for God. We need those who have an intellectual capacity.

And most people should have some of both. So that they can be balanced. Then there is another area of balance.

Between work. The work of the church. And worship.

Again you get both extremes. And often balance is not found in the middle. It's found when both extremes come together.

We now have some groups. They don't believe in evangelism. I'm not talking about the liberals.

I'm talking about Bible believing people. They feel they should not evangelize. They feel this would be rushing ahead of God.

That's very strange. God has told us to go. But we don't know we're going to stay.

And they are very quick to judge others as being activists. Or they may use some other terminology. Like, oh this is all youthful zeal or soulish activity.

God is teaching us just to become a nice fellowship and to praise Him and to just worship. And off balance they go. It's a great mistake.

We see throughout the New Testament. The emphasis on work. The emphasis on evangelism.

And worship. Real worship should lead to more evangelism. Now those who are very activists.

They can learn something. From those who know more about waiting upon God. We need both.

And there's a lot to learn from each other. And then the balance between the work and the family. How many of you are married? Raise your hand.

Quite a few. You're going to have this interesting struggle. Especially if you're in the work of God.

There's always so much to do. So many people to speak to. So many places to go to.

It is easy for the Christians to neglect his family. And his children. And that is the reason some of these children grow up to become little reprobates and little atheists.

Now I'm not saying that's always the case. And I don't point my finger. I don't point my finger at a man of God because one or two of his children have gone temporarily astray.

That also is extreme. See the emphasis in Ephesians 5 on the family. And in 1 Corinthians 4, 7 and 16.

We can't read all these verses. But I know you see these things in God's Word. This is what we believe.

God is first. The family second. The work is third.

Me, God, family, O.M. God, family, shit. Not God, shit, family. And if we keep that priority it will make a big difference in our family and in our children.

And during these days I've had less time with some of you because I've been spending some time with my own wife. And sometimes she has been very much left out of my practical life because of other people always haunting, haunting, haunting. And this Dutch weekend has turned out to be a very special and wonderful time for the three kids tomorrow.

I made some real mistakes in this area. And I don't think other women would have even stayed with me and gone through what my wife had to go through. For many, many years I was six months a year on the road away from home.

Now maybe God in His mercy because tens of thousands of people are praying for me He kept us from disaster. But I don't believe that is the normal way and hardly any O.N. family functions that way. Of course, just being with your family is not enough.

I learned that. It's not just the amount of time. It's the quality of that time.

Is there communication? Is there freedom? Is it a healthy, balanced home? And that's another whole area another whole message on spiritual balance is balance in the home. Not too rigid and strict and yet not too just liberty and do everything you want but balanced in the area of discipline of children. And on we could go in almost every basic area of life.

There is a need for balance. There is a need to find the opposing truth. That will bring this truth into balance.

In our work we have to find the balance between church planting and basic evangelism. We need both. Some people they say giving out literature just preaching we were doing in depth work church work.

But we have found that a lot of this evangelism has brought the birth of church. Or it has brought revival to church. And these young people who are trained in OM went back to a church and later helped bring a training and renewal program into their church.

Compare Acts 8.25 Let's just look at that together. Acts 8.25 Preaching the gospel in many villages. And notice Acts 8.4 Went everywhere preaching the word.

But in other verses we find Paul revisiting the churches. In much exhortation. And staying in one place for quite a few months.

And I'm sure you know that if you have ever studied the book of Acts. And then the balance between prosperity and poverty. Some in the United States are teaching now that if you're walking with God he will always prosper you financially.

This is the way to be as materialistic as you want and have a nice free conscience because you say God gave us all this. He's just blessing me. I didn't really want this big new car but the Lord gave it to me.

Others of course believe this is from the devil. And they feel that to be a dedicated Christian you should be living on the barest essentials and not be caught up with all this. In 2 Corinthians 6.10 it says we are poor yet making many rich.

Today I believe it's the opposite. We are rich making many poor. At the same time I believe to find the balance.

We have to acknowledge God does prosper some people by action. It's not a theology. It's what God is doing in his purposes in an individual life.

He prospers some. 2,000 years of church history show that God more often allows his people to remain somewhat poor but to know the riches of his grace. And this causes me to warn people not to take a personal experience and turn it into a theological doctrine.

God is working in different ways in different people. You probably heard the story of this lady. And she was in a very big meeting.

And she felt the Lord. And so she leaped in the air. And as she came down she sensed the Lord.

And this was her leap experience. In her quiet time the Lord came up again. This was so wonderful.

I knew her husband was a little concerned. So then she began to teach the leap experience. And she was preaching to some believers.

She found in her concordance the word leap. And she began to develop the theology of the leap. And at the end of her message she would say if you want the blessing you must leap.

And so the people got up and leaping. Now if we do this on the Zulah our head goes right to the deck. The perfect example.

Whether the story is true I don't know. But I think it is. But it's the perfect example.

Of a personal experience. It may have been a valid experience. In special ways.

But it's the perfect example. But then turning that into a doctrine into a theology which would lead people astray. I often get a blessing in the bathtub.

I love to just sit in the hot water. And I often listen to tapes. In fact I recently had brother Andrew in the bathtub.

No, no, I mean I was listening to his tape when I was in the bathtub. And yet in my meetings I wouldn't want to put bathtubs around to meet someone who came to get the blessing. But what I will do now is that if I get one concept that I will play in the bathtub and I will get the blessing so that people can sit in it and get the blessing.

Well, it's good that you can laugh about that. Because if you want to survive the present evangelical life you need humour. I experience that the older serious types everything in life is so serious they get caught into extremes.

And often really it's not doctrinal it's an emotional problem that they have. So in closing I bring together this morning's message and this afternoon's message. We need that total commitment.

And yet there must be the spiritual balance. Let me mention just one other area. The balance between fellowship and worship.

I said I was going to speak about fellowship but I almost forgot. But I feel that fellowship is such a vital part of our Christian life. Really learning to walk in the light.

Now there are different kinds of fellowship. We're not going to have in-depth sharing times and opening our hearts with everybody we meet. But we need something.

At least that we can really share our deepest struggles with. I don't know much about the Dutch how it is here in the United States. But in some countries this is very much in opposition to the natural cultural.

For example in Finland I've had many Finnish people tell me the idea of sharing your problems of being open about your struggles is just almost unheard of in a normal Finnish cultural setting. In Germany when I preach about fellowship and sharing and share some of my own problems even in a public meeting people laugh and yet many have come to me. Actually Germany is the most responsive ON country in

Europe together with Britain.

And our work in that country has just grown beyond expectations. Many times I appreciate this message about fellowship honesty let's take on the world let's be real let's talk about the real problems and learn the way of fellowship and many have come into a new free liberated walk in the Lord Jesus Christ. There are times when it's better and we don't believe it's wise to get up in a public meeting and tell all the details about some sin that you have just done.

And there are times when we just can't fellowship anymore we must just stop speaking to one another and that has to be kept in mind. And then there is I've found many times I never get friendship with a person at least in a sort of in-depth situation but there are many other general friendships in which we may not know a person very well and yet we know that if we did get in trouble that person would be there ready to help. And this leads us to pray for one another to write letters to one another and to learn what it is to really share as the body of Christ.

So and is still preaching total connection worship of Christ let's reach the world as we give ourselves to the work and to the Lord but there must be the balance the whole council of God this truth being balanced by that truth other factors are there understanding history how God has worked in the past some people criticize all the denominations so they can build up their own little group and soon I've seen this in 24 years theirs is already a denomination and now they're making the same mistakes and the same sins of the denominations they condemned 20 years ago I feel it is better to see how God has worked in different groups in a different way and many of the denominations today within the denominations so there are many many dead churches there are the live churches and we try to judge

each church individually and fellowship with God people that way and not have a critical spirit especially when we don't know all the facts I may be convinced about a particular way of working I may not agree with something in another group but I need to respect I need to maintain humility God may want to teach me through some of them so they say it's good to have a little reverent skepticism a little healthy unbelief about some of the things people may say but then he warns us that we must not become cynical that's one of my things so much nonsense the danger of becoming cynical the man with too many answers and not enough humility and not a spirit of thanksgiving he says thanksgiving is a great cure for cynicism thanksgiving is a great cure for cynicism even when it's a big mess in the

church if you look better you think God is working there God breaks inside I know for sure it's the same with your life maybe you feel weak maybe you're scared maybe you're not much of a disciple but I'm sure you're here in this group and he will continue that work in you that he has begun and if at any time I can be of any help write to me send me a photo say pray for me another sinner let's just have a few moments of silent prayer of thanksgiving to simply believe that God over the coming months and years if you're in that category or your own prayer say Lord I present myself holy acceptable to you Lord take my life use me here or overseas whatever the cost I will be your disciple fill me with your love and your holy spirit keep me from extremes and off balance limits that I can be a

man or a woman to your heart maybe there is someone that would be helpful for you often Jesus when he was dealing with someone he asked him if you want to take a new step forward of faith in your Christian life you're really serious you don't care what people say you want God you want to know him in love and power even though it can only be the beginning or the new beginning if you've prayed that prayer and you've thanked him believe God and his providence has brought us together here me from Bombay and

you many parts of Holland never so much teaching will you say yes to the Lord in different things and different people and God and believe that God is going to make some big changes in the days to come you want that rest of faith and yet from this teaching you know that a big part will be

yours tomorrow tonight anyone else Lord you see each person you know our hearts you know our needs we're all different but you love each one of us and you hear our hearts crying out to you we want to be more mature we want to be disciples we want to do your will whether it's here or it's overseas we present our lives to you take us fill us with your Holy Spirit and use us for your glory we're just so weak we feel so inadequate but your grace is sufficient and we stand upon your word in Jesus name we ask let us all stand let us just sing his name is wonderful as we just worship the Lord and thank the Lord his name is wonderful and to the like of that I'm begging to die in the name of the Lord

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