

Spiritual Balance

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of spiritual balance in a believer's life, highlighting love, self-acceptance, and the dangers of extremism and cynicism.

Duration: 1:00:24

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Self Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spiritual balance in the life of a believer. He shares a story about riding through the streets of Paris and uses the phrase 'praise God elephants don't fly' to illustrate the need for balance. The speaker then reads from 1 Corinthians 13, highlighting it as a chapter that should be memorized. He discusses the need for honesty and self-acceptance, emphasizing that loving oneself is crucial in order to love others. The speaker also mentions the balance between crisis and growth, cautioning against overemphasizing crisis.

Transcript

Thank God for that challenge to our own hearts, and so on. Well, we know that by now most of you are probably ready for going to sleep, and we promise not to keep you too long, but I have a real burden on my heart that I want to share, and I am more than conscious that this conference is now half over, and our great burden is to see each one of you prepared for that which lies ahead. I want to speak to you tonight about spiritual balance, the importance of spiritual balance in the life of a believer.

I gave a very similar message to this recently on the ship. I gave a similar message several years ago that has been reprinted in a booklet called Revolution of Balance, which will soon be published together with several other booklets I've written by Walter Publishers in a larger book with a similar title. In the beginning of my ministry, when I was about 17, I generally always spoke about dedication, one way or the other.

I still speak on that subject, dedication, commitment, but I have found that Satan has two very subtle strategies. He has many, but I have two in mind right now. First of all, he tries to keep people from becoming dedicated to the Lord, or filled with the Spirit, or committed, or consecrated, or whatever other term you want to use.

But his second strategy, which seems to be even more effective, especially among young people and especially among zealous young people, is when they commit themselves and they dedicate themselves

and they say, Lord, I'll go anywhere, Lord, I'm yours. Then Satan seems to have a much more subtle strategy of getting them off balance, getting them onto a tangent. And this, perhaps, was one of Satan's major attempts upon our whole movement in its early days, to get this whole movement off balance, to get us on a tangent, to get us riding a hobby horse.

We in OM are indebted to many great men and women of God. Not one, not ten, but many. We are indebted to many great Christian writers.

And if you don't spend an hour in that book room just looking at those exciting books, you have missed the best part of this conference. Even Leonard Ravenhill could not resist going in there about every time he got near the building. He couldn't believe some of the books we had.

He mentioned George Mueller's book, said it was hardly in existence in the States. In fact, we just brought 1,500 copies over on the ship. Spiritual violence.

A.W. Tozer is a man who's greatly misunderstood. People think of him as being very negative, being almost cynical. In fact, I've never heard a stronger word against cynicism than by A.W. Tozer.

It was Tozer who also said that the more zealous young person is more easily led astray. Boy, that puts us in the cooking pot, doesn't it? We're the sincere, zealous young people who want to go across to serve Jesus and reach the world for Christ. Mr. Tozer says, and many other men will back him up, we are more easily led astray.

I was mentioning to you how Tozer said something very strong against cynicism. I have a little book called my quotation book, and I write a lot of these quotes down here until I get them memorized, which is a long time with my feeble memory. Listen to what this man said, the man who is misunderstood and often thought of being a cynic.

Here's what he said, and this is really... I tell you, if all I can read tonight was this quote, it would be worth it. He says, in this world of corruption, there's a real danger that the earnest Christian may overreact in his resistance to evil and become a victim of the religious occupational disease, cynicism. The constant need to go counter to popular trends may easily develop in him a sour habit of fault-finding and turn him into a sulky critic of other men's matters, without charity and without love.

What makes this cynical spirit particularly dangerous is that the cynic is usually right. His analyses are accurate, his judgments sound, yet for all that he is, he is wrong, frightfully, pathetically wrong. As a cure for the sour fault-finding attitude, I recommend the cultivation of the habit of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving has a great curative power. A thankful heart cannot be cynical. We can always thank the Lord.

I think it was William Barclay who once said, if you've got a pain in the neck, well then praise God that you're not a giraffe. But there's always something, there's always something to thank God for. I remember riding with Mike Evans, I guess this is an old story, but I, our French director, we were riding through the streets of Paris in a car that had a little open part over the top, it just sort of slid back, not a convertible, but there's an open space right over your head.

We were going through the area, an area in Paris with a lot of pigeons, and I was a bit worried. And he just looked at me, he said, well, praise God elephants don't fly. Spiritual balance, this is our topic for tonight.

This is our burden for the summer. We're more concerned about you becoming a balanced, committed Christian than we are that you reach a certain target this summer in homes reached, people contacted, tracts given out, or whatever else you may be doing. I want to read 1 Corinthians 13, the great balancing book or chapter in the Word of God.

It's a chapter we should all be memorizing. I'd like a little honesty survey. How many among those who are going on OM, not our visitors, how many have not yet read the discipleship manual? Raise your hand.

You've not read the discipleship manual. Not true discipleship, but the little book with a navigator's wheel on it. You've not yet read it.

Well, that's pretty good. I hope that few of you who have not read it will read it. And in that book we recommend that you study certain chapters in the Scriptures.

That's even more important than reading the discipleship manual, I can assure you. 1 Corinthians 13. The one thing that will bring balance more than anything else is love.

And whatever we're doing without love, it goes off balance. Evangelism without love, off balance. Whatever we do without love, it's off balance.

Unloving attitudes lead to extremism, fanaticism, perhaps quicker than anything else. Let's read the chapter. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become a sounding bronze or a tingling cymbal.

Though I have the gifts of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long and is kind.

Love envieth not. Love vaunteth not itself and is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemingly.

Seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth. Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.

Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away, for we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child.

I understood as a child, I thought as a child. When I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. Can we pray together? Lord, we want to know what it is to have true spirituality.

We believe this will include spiritual balance, and we ask that you would teach us about this from your word, from history, from experience, today and in the days to come. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen. I have

seen more religious extremes than I could ever tell you in many, many, many nights.

Never forget reading in the paper some years ago about a girl in Switzerland that thought she had a demon. They started praying for her, that didn't work. So they decided to beat the demon out of her.

These are sophisticated Swiss people, supposedly. So they started beating her and challenging the demon, screaming, yelling, kicking, until the girl was dead. When that kind of thing hits the newspaper, it isn't very pleasant.

Two more members of the Children of God cult, one of the most subtle false cults in our decade, were just killed in a hug-in in Belgium. They were hugged to death. David Moses Berg, who started as a missionary or a pastor in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church in California, somewhere along the road became bitter, started the Children of God.

He now teaches that young girls, in the final act of total dedication, give their bodies in sex to any man on the street to win him to God. Their pornography is worse than what any of our newsstands carry. In one of their pornographic mo-letters, these are penned by David Moses Berg, the leader of this false cult, has a picture of a naked girl being nailed to her most private part to a cross next to Jesus Christ on a cross.

The girl completely naked. As a symbol that the highest calling of a young girl is to give herself in sex for the sake of the gospel, the David Moses Berg gospel, to win men. Would you say that's a bit extreme? I've seen worse than that.

Religion can become so wild, so hideous, that I can honestly say it has been the most ugly sight I've seen in my life. Worse than anything I've seen in Wall Street, Madison Avenue, the Soho, the West End, and a lot of other gutters that I have done gospel work in. I have seen worse things within religious circles than I ever saw in the jails I preached in for a couple of years as a student, right here in Tennessee.

Including the Nashville State Penitentiary, where I went 19 years of knowledge, to speak to 23 murderesses, all who had murdered one each. I'll tell you, most of those girls were rather calm compared to what I have seen and read about within the church, in the name of Jesus. Extremism, religious confusion, getting people off balance, is one of Satan's most subtle tactics in our generation.

So being dedicated, committing your life to Christ, saying you'll go anywhere and you'll do anything for God, is not the whole story, you can be sure. Nor spending nights in prayer, nor any other thing that you can do at a religious meeting. There's got to be the whole counsel of God, there's got to be love, there's got to be discipline, there's got to be spiritual balance.

Or as Dr. Schaefer brings it out in his tremendous book, True Spirituality. I personally believe that Dr. Schaefer is one of God's prophets for our day. If you like that term, if you don't like it, use some other term.

I don't like to get in the terminology jungles. But I believe that Dr. Schaefer is a man that presents balanced Christianity. I believe that John Stott is another man that presents balanced Christianity and it's thrilling to know he's just put a book out on this subject.

Tremendous little book. I was greatly impressed this year listening to some tapes by Dr. Siemens, the pastor of the church in Asbury, where some of you come from. That is the kind of man I think we need to listen to in our generation as young people.

If we want spiritual balance, you'll find quite a balance of books as you go into that library. And to get a balance, you have to be willing to listen to men of extremes. The truth doesn't lie in the center.

The truth lies at both extremes. One balancing off the other. I don't mean extremism.

Let's list some of the areas where we need spiritual balance, where we need to understand. Perhaps before I give you this list, I'll just give you this one favorite quote. This is the quote of the night.

I feel we're overdoing Tozer a little bit, but with what Brother Ravenhill gave you from Tozer, I thought you may want this one quote. And I'm sure if Len were with us tonight, he'd want me to read it. Because it will really help some of you.

It has helped me so many times. The title of the quote is, God is easy to live with. I wonder if you've ever got that into the center of your emotional life.

Well, if you tell me you have, I may not believe you. Because personally, I feel it is the missing reality zone in many of our lives. We have never come to the place where we realize God is easy to live with.

And there's too many who have the God of a big stick. And some of you may even be coming on OM because somewhere built within your spiritual ego reflexes, you have a desire to sort of punish yourself, to sort of go through some kind of purgatory because of past sins or failures, or because you feel you've made enough of your life up to now, and so you've looked around and found the worst thing going, and you've joined it. It won't work.

You'll come back just as mixed up as you went. God is easy to live with. Here's what he says.

It's from the book Root of the Righteous. Read the whole book. The fellowship of God is delightful.

I want to read this slowly because I think some of you want to copy this down. The fellowship of God is delightful. You may have to write shorthand.

Beyond all telling, beyond all telling, he communes with his redeemed ones in an easy, uninhibited fellowship. He communes with his redeemed ones in an easy, uninhibited fellowship that is restful and healing to the soul. That is restful, restful, restful, restful.

Did you get that? And healing to the soul. He is not sensitive, nor selfish, nor temperamental. This is God we're talking about, not you.

He is not sensitive, nor selfish, nor temperamental. What he is today, we shall find him tomorrow. What he is today, we shall find him tomorrow.

And the next day, and the next year. And the next day, and the next year. He is not hard to please.

He is not hard to please. Though, he may be hard to satisfy. He may be hard to satisfy.

He is quick to mark every simple effort to please him. He is quick to mark every simple effort to please him. And just as quick to overlook imperfections.

Wow, that's heavy, isn't it? Just as quick to overlook imperfections when he knows we meant to do his will. When he knows we meant to do his will. He loves us for ourselves.

He loves us for ourselves. And values our love, and values our love more than galaxies of new created worlds. More than galaxies of new created worlds.

He goes on to say, Some of us, this is many on OM, especially in their first summer. Some of us are religiously jumpy. Some of us are religiously jumpy and self-conscious because we know that God sees our every thought and is acquainted with all of our ways.

Because we know that God sees our every thought and is acquainted with all of our ways. We need not be. We need not be.

God is the sum of all patience and the essence of kindly goodwill. God is the sum of all patience and the essence of kindly goodwill. We please him most.

We please him most. Not by frantically trying to make ourselves good. Some of you have been trying that since the day you got in the door.

Some of you have been trying it for five years. Not by frantically trying to make ourselves good, but by throwing ourselves into his arms with all our imperfections and believing that he understands everything and loves us still. But by throwing ourselves into his arms and with all our imperfections and believing that he understands everything and he loves us still.

That's the message right there. I want to tell you if you can get that into your spiritual bloodstream, if you can get that into your meditation gallery, if you can get that into your heart, you will never be the same again. Instead of being religiously jumpy, you will become relaxed.

Instead of carrying the burden and frantically trying to improve your spiritual life, you will know something of true spiritual growth. Instead of having a concept of a God with a big stick, you will get to know the merciful, loving, everlasting God whose grace is sufficient and who has specialized in picking up sinners from the beginning of time. Those of you who are from more strict homes will have greater problems.

It may take you ten years to get that into your life. You were taught since the time you were a child that you could have always been better. No matter what grade you had, your father said it could have been better.

No matter what you did, your mother said it could have been better. You lived under a constant cloud that you've always been better. You never quite made it.

You were really down when it comes right down to it, basically a failure. I hope my wife doesn't mind me telling a little secret about her life. She says I'm to do the speaking, so I'll speak for her.

If she wants to come up at this time and speak, that's all right. But my wife was so brainwashed as a child that she was a failure, that she was no good by her stepfather. Though I've had a crusade for 16 years to try to convince her that she's good, wonderful, beautiful, kind, and everything else, she still doesn't believe me, except on alternate Tuesdays or once or twice a week.

Her father drummed into her that basically she was no good. She was no good. And though in her mind she knows something of the acceptance of God, though she had a very deep crisis experience at a Keswick convention and also later in her own room, in which a great degree of grace was appropriated that revolutionized her life, still there is the deep cesspool of lack of self-acceptance that she and probably

80% of the rest of the people in this room are fighting.

What is your self-image? Maybe you don't like that term. You can use whatever term you want. Do you love yourself? The Bible says love your neighbor as yourself more than nine times.

If you don't love yourself, how are you going to love your neighbor? If you don't have some healthy respect for yourself, if you don't have some kind of proper sense of image of yourself, you will be so emotionally mixed up you never will communicate any love to your neighbor. And I believe with all my heart it always comes back to this thing of balance, spiritual balance. Let's give some of the areas, keeping these quotes in mind, let's give some of the areas we need to work on.

First is the balance between the crisis and the growth, the crisis and the process. Many people go off balance when they overemphasize crisis experiences. Some of you old-timers have heard me tell the story of the lady who got the leap experience.

It's true, you know. This lady was seeking a special blessing and somehow she felt something, she thought it was from the Lord. It's amazing all the kind of things we feel are from the Lord.

And she leaped, took a tremendous leap, this dear woman. I don't know if anyone photographed it. And when she came down she just felt so blessed.

And she went around cooing and hooing and talking about this great experience and she decided to start ministering the Word. I tell you, when these women start ministering the Word my legs begin to shake a bit. Forgive me if I'm not quite with that.

But I believe there are exceptions. Certainly the Marashal was one of them. That's an interesting book to read if you want a little excitement.

The daughter of William Booth. She only won a few hundred thousand souls to Christ. And reared... How many children was that, Drina? Do you remember? Nine? My wife knows one of the daughters.

She was born and put in a dresser drawer. The Marashal. But... Now I lost my train of thought.

Someone will have to remind me. Oh, the lady with the leap experience, yes. Anyway, she got ministering the Word and she was ministering about the leap experience.

She developed the theology of the leap. Maybe the Lord gave her a blessing but the blessing was not a new theology. Taking someone's personal intimate experience and turning it into a theological doctrine is what leads to many of the extremes we have today.

And so she took a meeting and at the end of the meeting she gave an invitation. She asked everybody who wanted to know the Lord and wanted a deeper experience to leap. Now God's people are very cooperative.

You know, the average person if you tell them to stand up, they'll stand up. If you tell them to come forward, they'll come forward. Especially young people if you guarantee something, a blessing.

So people were leaping all over the auditorium. Hundreds of people were leaping. Most of them didn't get any special experience.

They sat down and decided this wasn't for them. I believe God can meet us in a crisis experience. I've had crisis experiences in my own life of a very intimate and deep nature.

But as I have said again and again, a crisis that's not followed by a process will be an abscess. And we've got to find the balance in this. I would say that a high percentage of us have had various crisis experiences.

I've talked to young people who've had no less than 20 crisis experiences. Every new preacher that comes along with a new message of victory, sanctification, the overcoming life, the spirit-filled life, they've responded. Some of the way back from the age of seven.

They've had the spirit-filled life experience, the crucified life experience. They've had the rest of faith experience. They've had the overcoming life experience.

They've had the die to self experience. They've had resurrection in Christ experience. Now I am convinced that all these different experiences with different vocabularies can be very, very meaningful to certain people if God is really working in them at that time.

But if someone is just trying to copy somebody else's experience, it can go flatter than a pancake on the floor. Crisis process. Spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth. I believe it is God's will for OM to major more in the process. I'm not saying you won't have any crisis.

I'm not saying you won't be exposed to preachers who will call you to crisis action. But I believe God has called us in the movement to a movement of training men and women who have already had crisis experience. First of all, if you've been converted, that's a crisis.

And that's a great, important crisis. Now we know we're divided down the middle in OM on the subject of the second blessing, what it is and whether it exists at all theologically. We've got some people here who are very strong on that.

We've got some who are very strong. Theologically it doesn't exist. It's a tough area.

And we have speakers who come into OM who believe very strongly in this. We have others who are absolutely on the other side. But one thing I say for sure, Tozer is one of those who believed certainly in a second blessing experience very, very strongly, being from the Christian Missionary Alliance.

He's one of their doctors. But you know what Tozer said? Tozer said one of our great dangers, this is not a literal quote, but one of our great dangers is we belittle salvation in order to sell our second blessing package. Watch out for that.

Don't belittle salvation. Whether you believe in a second blessing or not, or whether you believe, as a number of men of God I know, and perhaps I'm in that school, in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and echisan number of blessings, depending on what you mean by blessings. But never belittle salvation.

I'm convinced that some people who think they were just filled with the Spirit or something else, they're only being converted. They've never been born again. I'm convinced many of the people in the Roman Catholic Church who feel they're coming into some kind of crisis experience, I'm convinced at that time they are being converted.

You know, it's good that God doesn't demand perfect vocabulary to save us. Quite a few of you would be going downhill. Crisis process.

Keep it in balance. One takes a very short time, doesn't it? It can happen just like that. The other takes a lifetime.

Obviously, that's the one that's going to need more attention. Very, very important. This covers many, many areas.

When a man comes to preach, how much is anointing and how much is training and the Word and learning? You say, well, Billy Graham, it's obvious. He's just got a mighty anointing from God, yeah? He learned to preach in the Florida swamps, speaking into the woods. He learned to communicate to people selling brushes.

What carnality? Door to door, Billy Graham, selling brushes. I believe that when a man is filled with the Spirit, he becomes a learner. When a man is anointed with the Holy Spirit, it humbles him and then he can really begin to learn.

I believe that in filling and the anointing is not the end, it is the beginning. And after that, in humility, you begin to learn. And I believe there is a place for learning how to speak in public.

If we lean on that, if we depend on that, we're finished. In all these things, it's balanced. Out in India, we get a lot of people who try to copy Bhaktsingh.

Quite a few of us there have actually worked with Bhaktsingh for quite a long period of time, Burke campus for two or three years. If you want to know the truth about that movement, you can talk to Burke. They've got tremendous strengths and they have incredible weaknesses.

One of the weaknesses is that they try to be little Bhaktsinghs. Bhaktsingh has a memory like a computer. He's also 70 plus years of age.

He's a walking concordance. He's got illustrations and stories that will turn anybody upside down in a chair. He's got personality, he's got charisma.

If you know what charisma is, and I tell you when he preaches, of course people will listen to him, especially Indians for an hour or two hours or three. And he doesn't use any notes, he doesn't believe in notes. He believes in getting it hot on the spot.

It's all right when you've got the whole Bible almost memorized. But the most pathetic sight I've seen is some little five-year-old converted follower of Bhaktsingh who's got Bhaktsingh ahead of Jesus trying to stand up and do the same thing. Nothing is quite as pathetic as that.

I was just listening to Pastor Siemens the other day when he was defending his method of getting messages. And he had a very good explanation. He gets his topics sometimes six months in advance.

And he mentioned how six months in advance, he put in a bulletin that he was going to preach on something about heart surgery. And lo and behold, on the very day he was going to give that sermon, though he had written that six months in advance, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is able to guide us in advance as well as guide us on the spot.

Not limited. But on the day that he was to preach on that, the first open-heart surgery took place in that county in Kentucky. I think that's the state, isn't it? Kentucky? In England we get it all confused with a chicken.

But there on that particular Sunday, if you do not get a balanced understanding of God's working through men of His choice, His instruments, you will get totally confused. You will read something about Singh, you will read something about Dr. Schaefer, and you will think these two men are arch enemies. They are diametrically opposed.

You will read something of John Stott, and you will read something of Martin Lloyd-Jones, and you will think these two men must be fighting in the streets of London. Do you want to know something about those two very mature saints of God? Is that once they were speaking on the same platform in London, and Martin Lloyd-Jones gave a tremendous powerful message on come out from the dead church. He's very strong on that side of things.

Come out from the dead churches, start new living churches. He finished his sermon, and John Stott, right into the pulpit. This quiet little Anglican vicar.

And he refuted Martin Lloyd-Jones, said he disagreed. Martin Lloyd-Jones was moving on unscriptural ground. That was a meeting in the evangelical alliance that has never been forgotten.

These men have many diametrically, seemingly opposed ideas. One stays within the Anglican church. The other is calling people out into a new evangelical movement in Britain.

You read their books, boom, boom, boom. But I believe as you come into an understanding of God's working among men, of the fact that God's treasure is in every vessel, you will not see a contradiction between Martin Lloyd-Jones and John Stott, two of Britain's greatest men today. You read a book by Jay Adams, and then pick up a book by Clyde Naramore.

Any difference? Is one a man of God, and the other a kook, as we say in London? I believe they're both men of God. Personally, I want to get as much as I can from both of them. And I hope someday they'll sit down and have a discussion together.

Perhaps one of the greatest mistakes sometimes we make as so-called Christian leaders, I pray I'll never make it, I'm sure I probably have already, is we get to a point where we become set in our ways. We become set in our doctrine. We feel we have the answer to this and that, and we are therefore unwilling to take in truth from other men.

I believe one of the greatest needs in the Church of Jesus Christ today is for leaders to submit to one another, to learn from one another. Some of you probably know that in America today, in the charismatic movement, a very interesting movement that I'm not going to discuss tonight, but this movement has split right down the middle. They have had a major session, where was it, I think, in Michigan, trying to heal the thing.

It erupted again. They have just met out somewhere in the West. The big leaders from both sides of the controversy.

And I tell you, I read some of the text of that interesting meeting. It's quite amazing. But I'm glad that these men are at least meeting together and trying to keep some kind of unity.

Spiritual balance, spiritual balance. Let's move on to some other areas very quickly. Discipline and liberty.

How do you get that together? I want to tell you, if you are ever going to be a parent, you better get those two in their right proportion. I cannot tell you how much destruction you can do as a parent if it's all discipline, discipline, discipline. You've got all the rules and regulations.

Your children are going to be the little square, perfect little evangelical angels that will be the shining example in the community so that your ego doesn't get a dart into the center. I tell you, more false motivation can come into rearing children than we ever know. I don't know much, I've only got three.

You'll probably want a dozen, but three is enough for me. Discipline, we need it. But there needs to be liberty.

Self-discipline is the most important, and there can be no self-discipline without liberty. We cannot force people to be spiritual. We cannot pressure people into being spiritual or sanctified.

One of the mistakes many churches have made is to try to pressure people, to try to push people and conform them into a certain little set standard so that we all have a little same haircut, we all have our skirt at the same length, we all wear the same kind of tint on our lips, or we don't wear any tint at all, or whatever else. You can't force sanctification. You can't produce it.

It's got to come by a work of grace. And for grace to work, there must be liberty. And if there's going to be liberty, people are going to make mistakes.

People are even going to sin. And when people sin, you may be embarrassed. If it's your son or daughter, some of the greatest rebels in our nation have been reared in the strictest Christian homes.

But I wonder how Christian they really were. Spiritual balance, isn't that absolutely the key in this area? I don't have a total answer, but I know which direction I'm moving. And when I finish reading a little bit of A.W. Tozer, I land on one side, and I pick up Jeanne Price.

Praise God for Jeanne Price. I'm going to get her next year. If anybody knows her, will you get her for next year's conference? We need a couple of women speakers at these OM conferences.

We get too many heavy-handed men come targeting in on us. We feel like we're coming apart like an explosive bomb. Let's get the women's touch.

Jeanne Price, read her books. Oh, I tell you, her books make love your aim. Her book, No Bad Answers.

Her book, Where God Chooses Freedom. Read the books, men, that are written for the women. Great stuff.

Spiritual balance, discipline, freedom. Self-control, liberty. So important.

What's another area? Oh, this is a good one. Zeal and wisdom. A zealot without wisdom is like a missile with an A-bomb on the end and no radar to control it.

A.W. Tozer said this. He said, the greatest need in the Church of Jesus Christ today is discernment. Discernment.

I believe just as much as we want the power of the Holy Spirit, we want discernment. Some of you may know that right now we have one of our brothers who's very ill. He's in another room right now being counseled.

We need discernment. It would be easy to throw out some easy answers how we're going to reach this brother's need. It's a mental thing.

We need discernment. What to do? What to say? That's just as important as needing the power for deliverance, if that's the thing that God wants at this moment. Discernment.

Zeal, but zeal with wisdom. I've got a little quotation on fervor, on the subject of fervor. The funniest thing when I get introduced in some countries when they can't pronounce my name and they say, we want to introduce tonight George Fervor.

But this really helped me. This really helped me. Have you ever become sort of neurotic that you were losing your first love? Have you ever had one of these hissing hot messages about losing your first love? I've not only heard such messages, I've given them.

It can make the most dedicated person feel itchy. And this is what dear old H.A. Hodges quoted that as if I knew him. I don't have a clue who he is, but this is what he said.

This fervor is especially characteristic of beginners. He's talking about this, you know, zeal, this glow that some of us are running around trying to recapture. And it's drying up should be welcomed as a sign that we are getting beyond the first stage.

I had never heard anything like that before. Just about sent me in orbit. To try to retain it or to long for its return in the midst of dryness is to refuse to grow up.

It is to refuse the cross by our steady adherence to God when the affections are dried up and nothing is left but the naked will clinging blindly to Him, to Christ. The soul is purged of self-regard and trained in pure love. You can read that from my book if you didn't.

Zeal balanced with wisdom. Fervor balanced with the willingness to cling when everything seems to be drying up. William Carey once said, Give me plotters.

How strong, how beautiful those words are. Another area that I've written down is the balance between submission and freedom. Now, we want this in OM leadership.

There's some teaching today that sort of says every young person must be subject to some elder. Now, that is basically true. That's fine.

But what do you mean by that? Do you mean that this young person can't decide who he or she is going to marry? How far does this go? If it goes too far, then we end up with little perps. And we've got a lot of little perps in the present day scene, I can tell you. And though I believe there has to be submission, I believe there is individual freedom.

I believe you must determine the will of God for your life. I can advise you, I can counsel you, I can warn you, I can weep with you, but you must decide God's will for your life. You may choose for a period to submit to a leader basically, but he must not overstep himself and force you to do something against conscience.

You must get guidance from God. Don't think you're going to join OM and we're going to tell you what to do and where to go. That's too easy.

You get on your face and seek the living God, and he'll help you know where to go. And we'll be happy to counsel you and pray with you and give you advice. This is an area of tremendous confusion in the church today, and I have seen people deeply hurt.

I have seen people walked on. I have seen people abused by strong-handed, bull-headed leaders. It frightens me.

And I think I could have easily gone that way if it wasn't for the fact that there were other men of God around me who knew how to push this little 127 pounds of nothing down. The balance in this area is difficult. There needs to be submission.

Some other people are on the other end. They think they've got a special line of heaven. No one tells them anything.

We've had people come and tell us they knew they were called to go with the ship or go with OM friends. Oh, well, that's nice. The Lord's told you.

Why hasn't he told us? I'm not an author of confusion. And if the Lord has told you you're going to a certain place, well, your next thing is to pray that the Lord will tell us. I believe that's very important.

This whole area of guidance is difficult. I don't have any easy answer about guidance. I'm frightened of spooky, subjective guidance because I've had so many experiences.

A fellow came to me, oh, you know, all in a row as if he had just come out of an electric shock experience with God and he was sharing how he had something really heavy to tell me and, you know, he wound up and unwound and wound up again. Finally, he shared that he really felt Susie was the one. This was it.

He'd been praying for several days. This was it. Susie was the one.

I said, well, well, you know, praise the Lord. If that's God's will, why don't we wait a little longer? You know, I've got to move now. I said, well, look, we have this little program I'd like you to press on for a few months more.

You know, it'll be June. Oh, no. Not this, the Lord.

The Lord has spoken. A few days later, another brother comes. God hadn't really spoken to him in the night.

Watch out for the speaking in the night. It's best to be sleeping in the night. He comes and he shares, I've got something heavy to share.

God's spoken on it for years. I've wondered, who is God's choice for my life? He's finally told me. Well, well, you know, who is it? Susie.

I tell you, it's moments like that I want to resign. Be careful of subjective guidance. You may want to check out.

She may already be married. In all this, the word that rings again to my heart, again and again, is balance. There needs to be submission, but there must be individuality.

We don't want to push you through some kind of evangelical cookie cutter and you all go out here giving tracks out at the same momentum. We want you to be individuals. There has to be, of course, some limitation.

But we want people to develop their own character, their own personality. Quickly on to another couple of points. This whole area of conservative versus radical.

Oh, I won't speak on that. I'll let you read it from John Stott's book. What a chapter.

He points out Jesus was radical and conservative. When it came to the oral testimony, he was conservative. Not a tittle could be removed.

But when it came to certain social customs of his day, he was radical. Balance, balance, balance. You get some young people that are just radical and they want to destroy everything, throw away every tradition.

Everything that existed before they arrived is no good. Get rid of it all. You find others, they're usually the older ones, but you can find younger ones in this mold as well.

Absolute conservatives. This was done this way by my grandfather. It must be done the same way.

This King James Version, it was good enough for the Apostle Paul, it's good enough for me. They won't move, they won't move. I tell you, get some people like that in your church.

Boy, it can be a pretty refrigerated situation. The balance, again, is the need. The balance between the positive and the negative.

I would challenge you for every one negative thing you think or say, give ten positive things. Why don't you try that? Some of you are way too negative. We're not husbands.

How many husbands do we have? We're in the house, we're going to have a married couple session. Look at this place. It's crawling with husbands.

Remind me to organize a married couple session. I think Mr. Stephen should speak at that. He's been married 60, 70 years.

And I know he'll want to speak at that. Are you negative with your wife? You give her nine compliments for every one exhortation. It's amazing.

Husbands that are unwilling, unwilling to preach in the OM conferences, or even the smallest meetings, feel they have a great ministry of exhortation with their wife. Every one look itself, marrying the chain said, ten looks at Jesus. Every one negative thing you've got to talk about or think about, ten positive things.

How can we survive in this crazy mixed-up world if we don't become more positive? You start dwelling on the negatives and you just want to slip into your bathroom and pull the chain. I mean, that's only a problem for skinny people like me. Someone once said that in OM conferences the reason people laugh so easy is they're all so uptight and they need to relax.

The balance, the balance is needed in every area, the negative and the positive. There are negatives in the Bible. We cannot deny it.

We must preach them. We can't just gloss over everything. But there needs to be the positive because the Word of God says that we should think on that which is pure, that which is lovely, that which is right, that which is of good report.

You know, I have decided not to read the newspaper so much anymore. The same rubbish on the headlines almost every time. This one's murdered.

This one's raped. This thing exploded. This one was killed.

You can get a totally wrong idea of the world from the newspaper. A proof of this is Britain. Many of you reading Time magazine, Newsweek, Square publication, whatever other thing you've got over here, you have the idea that Britain is going down the drain.

It's finished. Well, I tell you, if I had to choose any country to live in in Europe, I would choose Britain. The people of Britain are better off than they have ever been.

They have more cars, more homes, more bathtubs, more electronic devices, more televisions. As the world thinks, they're better off than they ever were. I think the British medical system is basically as good as many other countries or better.

And yet, oh, Americans, what they think of the British medical system. Why? Because we get all this from the papers. Never lived there.

And because we tend to be negative. Learn to be positive. Get the balance in this area.

Intellect versus emotion. Some people are very intellectual. And they feel the main thing is excellency.

This is the key word now in the American superstructure of our intellectual institutions. Excellency, excellency, excellency. I believe also in His excellency, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is a need for a deep intellectual faith. The intellect is important. And we want the balance.

The other man is over on emotion. He feels everything is experience. And he can mock the intellectual and everything is experience.

Isn't it both? Isn't there a place for men of God to be intellectual? Is there no place for Dr. Schaeffer? Is there no place for F.F. Bruce? Isn't there no place for Warwick Montgomery? Isn't there no place for John Stott, for hosts of other men, right back to Calvin and Wesley and all the rest, who were intellectual giants? Do you know what Wesley said about reading? He said his pastor should read four or five hours a day. I have a little quote by Wesley. I always felt so guilty about pushing books like I'm going to tomorrow morning.

But I really got helped by this quote from Mr. Wesley. Here's what it says. John Wesley said that the work of faith would die out in a single generation if the Methodists were not a reading people.

He told his preachers that it was necessary for them to spend at least five hours in twenty-four reading the most useful books. Useful books. Warning them that one can never be a deep preacher without extensive

reading any more than being a thorough Christian.

Even wrote a book on primitive physics. Became a little classic. A balance.

Now we're not all called to go on to higher education. And it's a great mistake to try to push everybody into this direction. Here's a brother.

His parents are pressuring him off to college. The guy would be a fantastic motor mechanic. He'd do wonders for Jesus.

And mommy's pushing him through his Latin course and sending him off to college to be another misfit. He'd be a better cook. We can't get cooks in L.A. This is why the food is so horrible sometimes in L.A. Nobody knows how to cook.

And I tell you, when you have a lousy meal, if you think it's my fault, you're wrong. I take no responsibility. I take only responsibility for all good meals between now and when you leave the movement.

Like this thing tonight. This is O.M. Style tonight, isn't it? See, that shows how little you know about O.M. Balance. It's so difficult to get this into people's heads once they become what I call discipleship bugs.

They're like cockroaches. And, you know, they think to be a disciple, it's got to be bad. Long faces, you know, like a long ketchup bottle face.

One day I'm trying to communicate something of what the thing is all about. I passed out chocolate bars in the meeting before I spoke. We had people almost fainting.

They thought I'd gone mad. Chocolate bars. First thing I did when I got my team to Italy.

What do you think? I know what some of you think. Beat them. I gave all a big dish of Italian ice cream.

Balance. It's not easy to get it. It's not easy to get it.

And perhaps one of the balances is to know when to speak long, to know when to shut up. And I think I'll shut up. But I pray, and in many other areas, I pray that you will make this one of the goals of your life.

Spiritual balance. It won't cut down your zeal. Don't worry.

It'll give it flavor. You'll lose your driving power, but it'll enable you to drive on and on and on, not 5 years or 15 years, but 20, 30, 40, 50 years, like so many balanced men of God. It won't lead you into compromise.

Have you been taught that compromise is a dirty word? I know some places. Compromise? Well, I want to tell you, if you believe compromise is a dirty word, don't get married, my friend. Don't get married, because marriage is a long series of compromises.

And I've seen some of the great spiritual, super dedicated giants go down the tube, as we say in London, so quick, because they didn't know how to compromise with their wife. They didn't know how to sit down and say, look, you give a little, I give a little. I buy you this, you go here with me.

You know that my wife doesn't get up at 6.30 exercises. Do you know that? We made a compromise. She can sleep to 6.35, and turn, I get about 6 other things in exchange.

That's not true. But I believe with all my heart, unless we have balance, we're going off the track. We may not go as far as the children of God.

You don't need to go that far to make a ruin of your Christian life. In fact, sometimes the closer person that's off balance is the more confused. He seems alright.

He seems like such a nice fellow, but in a number of areas he's just off balance. He's far more dangerous for you girls. Because when you first meet him, boy, he seems so nice.

He's a communicator, got just so many nice things about him, and you marry him, and discover you've got an off balance, egocentric, selfish husband to live with the rest of your life. What a charming experience that is. Spiritual balance is the need of the hour in the Church of Jesus Christ.

It touches every area of our faith. Every area. And I pray you'll seek this.

Because the substitute word for balance is love. And if you have not love, you are nothing. Let us pray.

Our God and Father, we thank you for the reality of the life in Jesus Christ. We thank you for the spiritual balance that can be ours in Him. The zeal and the wisdom, the freedom and the discipline, the submission and the individuality, the zeal and the wisdom, the intellect and the emotion, and all the rest.

Oh God, keep us from tangents. Keep us from extremes in the wrong sense. Keep us from straining at knots and swallowing camels.

Give us that deep love for one another and all your people. Minister to us through the Ravenhills and the Shapers, through the Jeanne Prices and the Tozers, through the Naramores and the Jay Adams, through the Bill Gothards and the Oswald Smiths, through the Buck Sings and the Billy Grahams, through the Amy Carmichaels and Lord, only you know all the others. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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