

Spiritual Survival in the 80s 3

by George Verwer

Building lifetime and long-term relationships requires a deep commitment to loving one another, memorizing Scripture, and applying the principles of 1 John 3:16 in our lives.

Duration: 54:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, 1 John 3:16

Topics: "Spiritual Survival"

Description

In this video, the speaker discusses the importance of building relationships and the challenges that can hinder them. He identifies several enemies of relationships, including pride, selfishness, and lack of forgiveness. The speaker emphasizes the need for discipline and organization in maintaining healthy relationships. He also highlights the power of God's Word in transforming lives and encourages listeners to memorize and meditate on Scripture.

Transcript

Turn to 1 John chapter 3, epistle of John, 1 John chapter 3. What a powerful epistle this is. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and killed his brother.

And why killed he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. By this proceed we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whosoever hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother at need, and shutteth up his compassion from him. Very strong, isn't it? How dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

Whatever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. This is his commandment. That we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him. And by this we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit whom he hath given us. I want to speak in this session about relationships.

Building lifetime and long-term relationships. We've just finished remembering the Lord Jesus, and his death is atoning death for our sins. We know that we are right with God because of what Christ has done on the cross.

But we also know from Scripture that we are to also be right with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We all know John 3.16, we all memorize it as children in camp. But how many of us know 1 John 3.16 that we've just read? By this we perceive the love of God because he laid down his life for us.

That's very similar to John 3.16, isn't it? But we have another part to this verse. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. I often refer back to 1 Corinthians 13, because to me it's another one of the mountain peaks of biblical inspiration.

And I just commend to you reading and memorizing 1 Corinthians 13 and other great passages of Scripture. How many of you already memorize Scripture? Even one verse a month, you at least memorize Scripture. I wonder if you'd raise your hand, it would encourage me this morning.

You've memorized Scripture. I know some of you are tired. Let's try it again.

Raise your hand on the count of three. One, two, three. You've memorized Scripture even one verse a month.

Not overwhelmingly encouraging. You know, maybe I wonder why the Lord had brought me up here. I'm sure others could speak messages and bring home some of these great truths.

But maybe the Lord brought me up here just to challenge you about memorizing Scripture. You know, we have a man in the United States named Bill Gothard. He started out just a young man trying to encourage people to memorize Scripture.

And through his very humble ministry, more people have now received teaching from the Word of God than any man, as far as I know, that has ever lived. Except Billy Graham. And Billy Graham's an evangelist.

Bill Gothard now has seminars 12 months a year, almost every week. He doesn't go to them all now. Some of them are on big screen television.

Average attendance, 20,000. One solid week of teaching, several hours every day if it's an evening seminar. The success of that one man's ministry is phenomenal beyond anything I've ever read about in church history.

Of course, it's linked with the mass media. And though a lot of people have criticized him, most of the leading Christians in America, some who would disagree on certain points, believe that he is one of God's outstanding Bible teachers. How did it all start in the life of Bill Gothard? Well, first of all, he had a godly father.

But secondly, he believed strongly this is God's Word. And if it's God's Word, and it's powerful, as it says, then getting it into your mind, getting it into your heart, gives tremendous strength. It gives light.

It's a lamp. Well, just read Psalm 119. The most repetitious psalm in the whole Bible.

It says basically the same thing over and over again. Get into the Word of God. And let the Word of God get into you.

Dale Roatan, who I first met when I went to university, I was warned about him. He was a year older than me. And I was warned about him that he was a fanatic.

The rumor was out that he was baptizing people in the showers. And so I decided to find this character, Dale. And he was a Presbyterian at the time.

Later got linked in with the Brethren Assemblies. He's actually the one that eventually baptized me in the local assembly. We won't get into that.

It wasn't in the shower. Or Wesleyan Chapel. But I remember coming back from church one Sunday morning, I think it was 1956.

Long time ago. And I saw him walking along the road. And I walked up to him and we spent some time together just talking.

And we've been together now in the work except for one or two years when we were still linked in heart. All these years, 27 and some years. And Dale is very different in temperament.

He's very phlegmatic. And I remember going out to... We both transferred out of that college. And I went to Moody Bible Institute.

He went to Wheaton College where men like Billy Graham have studied and many other Christian leaders. And I remember going out to visit him. And he was memorizing scripture.

And by then he had it all on little cards. One verse on a card. All over his room with his little cards.

And by the time he finished university, he had memorized one third of the New Testament. And I've seen that in his life. I don't think anyone commands as much respect in O.M. as Dale wrote on.

I don't think I do. And I've seen the reality in his life. People have often asked him, Well, what's your secret to this life? Dale pioneered our work in Turkey.

He pioneered our work in the communist countries. He's now one of the main leaders in the ship ministry. And they said, Well, what is it that's really the secret of your life? Because young people today, they want quick answers.

They want instant spirituality. They want to know how to become a man of God overnight. With minimum work.

And Dale simply in his very phlegmatic way said, Well, I read the Bible. He reads the Bible. That doesn't sound very spectacular, does it? Well, actually he does read it quite intensely, so that it actually gets memorized as he reads it.

I would just really commend to you, even if it's one verse a month, one a week, start hiding this in your heart. If you have a particular struggle, in a particular area, find scriptures relevant to that area. You know, when I was 17, I thought, I'm never going to be a victorious Christian.

My great problem was lust. Started from age 4. Now, it was at age 4, not really lust. It was more this romantic, sort of puppy love that can come even on young people.

But the reason I remember this, is because I stood outside the local primary school, waiting for a particular girl to come to the pencil sharpener. Now, by the window, of course. Now, those of you great playwrights, if you could just control your imagination, I would be very grateful.

But I think between that particular experience, and when I was converted, there were about 32 different romance experiences with different women. And unfortunately, it started quite innocently, you know, grabbing a little neighborhood girl for a kiss or something. It didn't go over so well with her parents.

But later on, when I was 15, it got into little things that were, of course, not right. Pornography, the lust trips, and all the rest. And after I became a believer, I also did not find instant victory.

Now, maybe after you became a believer, you got instant victory over this problem of lust. And maybe you can write to me how I got instant victory and have maintained it these ten years. I would like to keep that in my scrapbook.

But with me, it was an ongoing struggle. The pornography was easy. I learned it.

It was a great day. I went up in smoke. What about my mind? What about my mind? And the pornography I was into was very mild.

Some Christians today, believe it or not, don't even classify this kind of thing as pornography anymore. I believe it is. But it wasn't the kind of hard thing that's floating around today.

Child pornography, all that kind of thing, which is just an abomination. So the ongoing struggle continued in my own mind. And I sometimes thought, you know, I'm never, never going to make it.

I'm never going to make it. I'm not spiritual. I'm too lusty.

You know, one minute I'm praising God. The next minute I'm almost breaking my neck looking at some new chick that rolled into town. And I thought, you know, there's no hope.

No hope for me. And I started, I'd already started, but I started more intensely to memorize Scripture. You know those words in Proverbs.

There's three chapters in Proverbs just on this subject. There's over 500 verses in your Bible on the subject of sex. I don't know if any of your assemblies, you know, teaching about sex is a no-no.

In some places it is, you know. We sort of boast, we believe and preach the whole counsel of God. We are the New Testament movement.

But you never hear from one year to the next a Bible exposition on the subject of sex. And there's 500 verses in your Bible on that subject. And you know, sometimes the ministry that we get is so irrelevant to what we're really facing in the real world out there.

And we're not living in a real world really so much even in this camp. Nice, protected, quiet, relatively nice place. Now praise God, some things do go wrong and that helps us, you know, reminds us that this isn't another planet.

And if you go walking out on that main road with your eyes closed, you'll be surely facing a real world. Probably a month or two in the hospital. And I thank God for the power of His Word.

It says in John's Gospel, now you are clean through the Word. I've spoken on Duke. And I found that the Word of God could even cleanse my thought life and cleanse my dreams.

I used to have these terrible dreams. You know, women, women, I don't know what's wrong with me. Coming down the chimneys, coming through the windows.

And I knew I was really, really gaining in my spiritual life. I remember one time a very seductive woman came through the door and I just jumped up and jumped out the window and ran away. And I knew the Word of God was gaining the upper hand in my mind.

And I thank God that because of His Word, He has kept me in this difficult area of life all these 29 years since my conversion. Of course, there's been a lot of battles in the mind. But you know, if you limit the battles to the mind, then you're probably never going to have to fight some of the battles in places where you should never be in the first place.

So don't be afraid of a little conflict in the mind. And don't feel, I used to feel, I must be the dirtiest little kid in town, dirty-minded little, you know, we have a lot of words in the States which we probably shouldn't use here in England. But the more I got involved in counseling people, and that started when I was about 17, the more I discovered so many people had problems greater than mine.

God led me into a ministry of counseling homosexual people when I was only very young. I didn't hardly know what that was. A young man came to me, one of the biggest evangelical choirs in the city of Chicago, in a very strong evangelical church.

Actually, Alan Redpath was the pastor. And as he began to share, suddenly he opened up that he was a practicing homosexual. Was there any hope for him? And I began to research this subject before anyone had hardly written a book on it, Christians, before hardly anyone was even talking about it, though the Bible talks about it.

And I discovered there was hope for homosexuals. I've been involved in a very small way over these 25 years in counseling mainly homosexual men, sometimes women. I can do this because I have no difficulty in this area.

I don't think the Lord would lead me into counseling women from the Soho of a particular occupation. I think God teaches us how to know our limitations, and I've seen a lot of people get in trouble when they got in-depth counseling with the opposite sex. I don't know what your rules are here in this camp, but we're very foolish if we think we can have ongoing private counseling with the opposite sex and not get into trouble.

That's a quotation from a brilliant Bible teacher whose book I read some time ago, and it's been proven true again and again. But I saw in my counseling ministry with homosexual men that God could change them. God could give them the victory.

Contrary to what some people may say, generally their emotions do not totally change. It depends how far they are down the line. But it can be a great and very discouraging factor if we promise the homosexual that all those emotions are going to change and that now he's going to be totally heterosexual the rest of his life.

Generally, if he's going to press on victoriously as a Christian, there'd be, by the way, be very few evangelical churches now in England that would not have someone with a homosexual problem. Very few. But by the power of God's Word, by the cross of Christ, he can or she can get and maintain the victory.

Now probably your difficulty is not in that area. But whatever your problem, whatever your difficulty, whatever your, you know that old-fashioned term, besetting sin, the Word of God being hidden in your heart is part of God's answer. Now whatever other answers God may have for you, if you don't get that part, personally, I doubt if you're going to make it.

You may. Now let's move into the subject of relationships. Building relationships.

Developing greater love for our brothers and sisters. Laying our lives down. 1 John chapter 3, the second part of the verse.

Laying our lives down for the brethren. This is going to be the big test even as we go away from this weekend. Whenever some people get a spiritual blessing, other people misunderstand it.

And you need a lot of wisdom and discernment even as you share what the Lord has done this weekend. You need a lot of wisdom. And one of the keys is found in Philippians chapter 2, esteeming others better than yourself.

Don't immediately go back and presume everybody wants to hear what you have been doing on your Easter weekend. Rather, be revolutionary and take an interest in what they have been doing over their Easter weekend. Maybe they got a bigger blessing than you did.

Maybe even right there in their own local assembly on Sunday, the Lord met with them. Take an interest in other people. And of course, there's nothing wrong with you wanting to share what God's been doing in your heart.

And one of the best ways is to pray to the Lord and say, Lord, somehow, cause them to ask me questions. Rather than you sort of pushing some new burden or some thought that may be on your heart. Also, when you share what another speaker has given to you, it's good not to start off with some little controversial thing that you may have picked up in passing from his message.

But try to share that which you feel that person you're talking to will appreciate. Because it's so easy to take things out of context. And it may, if we take things out of context, give some of our brothers and sisters who are not here the idea that I have come here with some sort of radical anti-established brethren assembly message.

When the truth is that I have been linked with the established brethren assemblies for now 27 years. And whereas some of those who criticize me for being a little bit outspoken are now no longer in fellowship at all with the assemblies and are down the road swinging on the trees in some new group. I'm still here, flitting away, still hoping, still believing that there can be renewal in the established assembly.

We're not only here, all over the world. And next week I'll be speaking in some of the largest assembly meetings in London. And when I go to Chicago, I speak to the largest assembly meetings there.

And in Barcelona just about one year ago I spoke to almost 1,000 from all the assemblies of Barcelona which are fairly tight in general and yet opened that door for me to be the main speaker at their conference. So I come not as someone outside throwing rocks. I come as someone from the inside who believes that God is not through with what some people call open brethren assemblies.

As you know, there's now a controversy whether it should be recognized and called Christian brethren or whether we should just accept the old name open brethren or whether we should, you know, insist on just being the brethren, etc., etc. So may the Lord give discernment and wisdom about how we share, especially when we take things out of context. And may we go back not to throw stones, but to build relationships.

To build relationships. You know who's the chairman of the OM Board of Directors? His name is Mr. Dalley. Now Bill Dalley was a very typical, somewhat tight, do they still use that word in Merseyside, brother living in Bolton, fellowshiping with a very small little hangout to the end assembly.

And God prepared his heart for the invasion of Bolton by Operation Mobilization through reading a book by George Mueller. He was one of the founders, by the way, of this whole thing that spread all over the world. And this prepared him for the arrival of OM.

And he heard that there were people living by faith. He heard about there were people praying for God to supply finance and who were not, you know, raising money in the traditional way. And a lot of other things he heard that reminded him of what he'd been reading in that book.

My first contact with him was that I heard that he was one who had left a great bag of groceries on our front door. We were living in Atherton, Lancashire at the time. Bolton was the birthplace, by the way, of the ship Vision.

This video, by the way, is about both ships, a little bit about OM, produced for Dutch television. And he and I became very close. I remember one of the first times he invited me to that assembly.

I thought I'd loosen the place up, so I led in a chorus in the middle of a worship morning meeting in Spanish. Mr. Dalley became one of my closest friends and has been the chairman of the board of directors for many, many years. And God is used to, among the assemblies, we recently traveled together in Canada, and to hear his testimony, we were speaking in some brethren assemblies in Canada, and to hear his testimony of how God prepared him for this rather unique type of missionary fellowship is quite interesting.

This is our burden for this camp. This is our burden for your own church. Building relationships.

It's easy to tear down. It's easy to criticize. It's easy to disagree.

It's easy to be disgruntled. But God is calling us to build relationships. I think you all know many, many verses that exhort us to do this.

What will be some of the dangers as we attempt to build relationships with the young people here in this camp? You know one of the things that really scared me about working with young people? I've

discovered if you don't get through to them, some of them, within a year after you're with them, actually overthrow the Christian faith. If you're a normal audience, there's probably several of you, even your type of person, at your level of spiritual growth, there's probably several of you that have thought about throwing the whole thing in. And if you haven't, in the next few years, you may.

I don't know how many of you have been reared in fairly strict brethren homes. But statistics will show, research will show, that a percentage of people reared in fairly strict homes, if they don't come into balance and see the thing in perspective, they rebel and they throw the whole thing in. Very interesting.

Now though I may seem like a bit of a loud mouth, and probably appear at times to be insensitive, I'm actually, in some ways, too sensitive. And just the thought of one person overthrowing the faith, it just destabilizes me. And if I hear of such a person, I will write to them, I'll phone them, I'll visit them, and I've had to spend a lot of my time over the years counseling people who I thought were getting near that border of just saying, well, I'm through with it.

I watched this out of the students that came out of the Emmaus Bible School. I remember one, Marty Schmidt, who came on O.M., and he went through a rough time in that Brethren Bible School. And he wasn't towing the Brethren line, because the Brethren line in those days in the States was also very right-wing politically.

And this was the day of Martin Luther King. And he dared to demonstrate with Dr. Martin Luther King. And the people in the local assembly, they just stayed this way.

Went wild! Backslidden! He's becoming a communist! Special prayer is needed! Edgar Hoover, the head of the CIA, the FBI in the United States, he had difficulty with Dr. Martin Luther King. And he did everything he could to blacken his name and accuse him of being a communist. I don't believe.

I've studied quite a lot about Luther King. I visited the place where he was killed. I just stood there and wept as an American who as a young man was so totally ignorant of my own culture, my own brothers and sisters among the black people.

I just stood in that little, that little motel in Memphis, Tennessee and I wept. I don't believe he was a communist. Anyway, my friend, Marty went out demonstrating.

That was the days of Selma. And I tell you, the assembly shot him down and he just coughed the whole thing up in one big gulp. He threw the whole thing over.

He became an agnostic. He then became a communist. He wasn't a communist at that time.

I met him years later when his great guru was Che and that Davis woman. He's come way back out of that now. We've kept writing him and praying for him.

He says now he believes in God and he believes in Christ but he just cannot handle God's people. God's chosen people. Sometimes God's frozen people.

And I will tell you, if you and I don't reach some of these young people this summer, with a balanced message of love and who God is and what the Christian faith is really about, how to wrestle with some of the problems and doubts and struggles, some of them, within a year or two after leaving here, they'll throw the whole thing over. They are given the idea that if you're a dedicated Christian you don't have any

problems, especially with lust. And a lot of these young people will be having struggles with lust and sex.

Some of them won't. You don't want to project that problem on everyone. And so often, they're given the idea that when they dedicate their life in Christ as Lord and Jesus as their Savior, they're not going to have any more problems with that.

And they may go away from here with, you know, quite, what's the word, quite hyper, quite excited and enthused, and you'll feel, wow, we reached them at camp. What a great work of the Spirit. We'll write about it in our little camp report and we'll go back and tell it to others.

But where is that person two months later? Where is that person one year later? Where are those that were at camp here last summer? Do you write any of them? Are you following them up? Did God really link you in relationship with people? Or was it just part of your ongoing journey through life? When it's happening, it's a big thing, it's an important thing, but a month later, a month later, it's not so big and it's not so important. What am I trying to say? God is wanting to build into this camp permanent relationships. Or bring as a result of this camp permanent relationships.

What are some of the dangers? Let me quickly give them to you. Number one, the danger or the enemy, you can use whatever terminology you want. Think of, for example, Ephesians 5, Ephesians 6 talks about fiery darts.

Maybe you could talk, refer to this as fiery darts to hinder relationships. Whether in the family, the assembly, in camp, or wherever. Number one, pride.

Pride. We all have it. We all have it.

It's so subtle. Some of us who feel linked to the assemblies, if we're not careful, we have brethren pride. Others have Pentecostal pride.

Others have Anglican pride. That form of pride is mild compared to other forms of pride. Nationality pride, intellectual pride.

I've even met people with Bible knowledge pride. Preachers get preacher's pride. Evangelists get evangelist pride.

And then you get those who are proud because they don't have any of these forms of pride. It seems that the enemy has an endless range, an endless range of pitfalls of pride to get us into. You even find people now that are sort of proud because they're unemployed.

They're the self-appointed martyrs. And they're living in self-pity and they're suffering. And they become bitter against the nation, against the government, and against those who are employed.

It's amazing, isn't it? All the subtle forms of pride. And we need to search our own hearts because the Bible says God resisted the proud and gives grace to the humble. You meet people from Merseyside down in London.

And they've got Merseyside pride. They think that Merseyside is the best part of England. Of course, they don't really believe that deep down.

Some of them anyway. But they would want to tell you that. Now, of course, all of this, in some ways, is not so important.

As long as we can maintain our sense of humor. But you see, when we go overseas, or we start mixing with people of other nationalities, that which may be a joke at home becomes a harmful, hurtful thing. And British people, as Americans, we're more advanced than this, have a gift of offending people of other nationalities.

Our universities in Britain train people in professional cynicism. And a university person, graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, he can take the most intellectual American from Yale or Harvard and in a couple of sentences he can reduce him to a piece of bread. Now, of course, if it's all in humor, there's no problem.

Like yesterday, that was great. Because I knew that, you know, we were linked in Jesus Christ and that was all in fun and it was very meaningful and I got my pictures of it. I've already told my wife about it.

And I'll use you as a red hot sermon illustration the rest of my life. So if you're looking for winners and losers as a result of last night, check your own seat. But that which may be funny in one context becomes ugly in another context.

And I want to share something with you that's very important. In summer camp work, beware of belittling the young people who come here. Watch out for your little bit of lucid humor because some sensitive young people, they cannot handle it.

And I fear there will be people hurt here in your camp this summer because of a lack of wisdom and discernment who will go away with a hurt. You'll never hear about it. People more easily tell you sometimes the good things.

The more sensitive young person doesn't write. If I have hurt you here during these days, it's unlikely you're going to tell me. Fortunately, I live together with my OM people.

We get to know one another. They get to know me and so they do often tell me when I hurt them. And I have learned so much from the people that I have hurt and from the people that I have been insensitive with.

Beware of subtle forms of pride. Beware of rigid thinking which often comes as a result of pride. Don't think for a minute that some of our strong unmovable doctrinal positions are minor things.

I believe it is good to be unmovable on major issues. Even then, it must be with love. Calorie love, even on the major issues, right? But to become so intense and so uptight about minor issues.

I just got a letter from a man who is more or less semi-breaking fellowship with me. Because of one sentence in one book or one paragraph in one book on that table that I have mentioned and pushed in the past. He has found something wrong in that book.

He has become so strong about it. He has written the author. Actually part of what he said is true.

That's often the difficulty. That part of what these very rigid proud people are saying is often true. But you see, truth without love becomes a form of lie.

You read the book of James. The truth that comes from above is peaceable, gentle, loving, easy to be entreated, full of good words. And so, when we speak the truth, it's got to be with love.

When we stand up in the assembly with one of our strong convictions, it's got to be with love. You know another reason why my friend became a communist, this fellow Marty? He went with O.M. to Turkey in the early days. And O.M. Turkey in the early days was very brethren.

We were very, very close to the brethren movement at that time. And some very strong men were there. And the churches we were planting in Turkey, they would have been brethren assemblies.

And they actually almost are the ones we started today. They're very small. And a number of the workers there were commended.

Imagine that. Officially commended workers. And one morning at a breaking of bread with just baby converts.

Muslims. Baby converts. One brother got a real heavy message at the breaking of bread against not having the heads covered.

And you know, he had a way of explaining it. It sounded like, you know, if we didn't get our heads covered in this breaking of bread, you know, the wrath was going to come crashing down. You know, it would be somehow like that last scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark.

And you know, this brother who had been through years of a brethren Bible school and he had been through so much, that was one of the final straws. Because he knew the life of this brother who was sharing it. Actually, the one who was sharing it had a lot of emotional problems.

Very insecure brother. Who since left missionary work, settled somewhere else. And that was one of the, do you know that expression, straws that broke the camel's back.

Smaller convictions need smaller emphasis. Bigger convictions need bigger emphasis. And in the process, we've got to learn to live with people who don't agree with us.

It's too late to ever again get the kind of assembly that existed a hundred years ago. Because of the cassette tapes, because of books, because of all these big events like Spring Harvest with the amalgamation of all kinds of teaching and people, it's too late to turn the pages of history back and think you're ever going to have an assembly where everybody believes exactly the same. In fact, if you study, the bigger divisions always come among a group where they all say they believe the same.

The big divisions haven't come between the Pentecostal church down the road and the tight assembly up the road. These two groups don't even have contact. The heavier divisions have come right within the assembly over little tiny, cute, pocky things.

And then personality clash and it's generally linked with pride and it's linked with rigid thinking and it's linked with lack of love. We have to be mature people. Isn't it good that as Christians we're still people? I'm glad that I'm accepted as a Christian.

I think all of you accept me as a Christian. But I'm glad after these days you got to know me a little bit. I used to be hesitant to speak about myself.

And the great, brilliant psychologist Paul Tournier helped me over that hang up. He said, you know, if you can't speak openly about yourself then who can you speak openly about? Don't be afraid to share your own testimony. There's no sense in me pretending that I'm John Stott and come up here and give you deep Bible expositions.

I'm not John Stott. And I gave up a long time ago trying to be other people. I'm just me.

Warts and all. Including my tag sticking out. One of the reasons I keep going is that I'm so liberated when people try to grab on to me they might get my boots and then they can have my boots.

But I keep going. I keep going. By the way, I like these because they come off nice and quick.

And you can't be George Mueller. You can't try to copy that little brethren elder who's been there for 40 years in your assembly still in charge of the Sunday school. You have got to be you.

You've got to be real and be yourself. And that's beautiful and that's important. This means we have to know how to compassionately disagree.

Not obnoxiously disagree. Not in the flesh and in anger disagree. But compassionately disagree.

And we may be how much we respect him and we appreciate his ministry and we know the Lord has used him. But on this particular point we just don't agree. We hope that we can continue to work together and learn from each other.

I think it's crazy. We all think we're going to all agree in our churches. Do we all agree in our marriages? Some of you are married.

Why? Do you agree with everything your husband teaches? Everything he does? Everything he says? Is that what Ephesians 5 teaches? Not my Ephesians 5. And I'll tell you through extreme teaching in that, when I got married I almost destroyed my wife. Because my wife was willing to obey everything. And I, I'm just the area of money alone.

I wasn't going to give her any money. My money was committed to world evangelism and Bibles. And I would have all these stories.

People dying without food. People dying without Bibles. My wife wouldn't dare come and ask for money for a piece of clothing.

We got all of our clothing from the youth, missionary barrel, everything. And in response to my challenge she had given away her inheritance, a lot of money. She had sold her sewing machine.

She had put her nice coat up for sale. She was an Ephesians 5 extremist, right down the line. And I was destroying her.

And God had to break me and break my heart. And I realized how ugly it is when we take one truth without letting it be brought into balance by other truths. And if it wasn't for balance coming into my life and marriage, you know, I would have, I would have I would have just destroyed it.

I still would have been preaching. Many divorced men are still preaching. In America, double divorced, three time losers in marriage are still preaching.

Let me tell you something. Preaching is easy for some of us in comparison to love and brokenness and humility and godliness. And you cannot measure a man by his preaching.

You have to live with him to know what he's really made of. Well, slowly, God humbled me through some of these great books on marriage, through brothers and sisters in Christ who weren't afraid to take George Berber to the wall and tell him where he was wrong. And I came into balance.

I remember giving my wife a pound and saying feel completely free. Arch enemy of relationship. Arch enemy of unity.

Arch enemy of growing and building together is pride and all of its related tentacles. Prejudice, love, rigid thinking, obnoxiousness, narrow mindedness, bigotry and all the rest. Let's flee it with all of our hearts.

The second enemy of relationship is super spirituality. I, of course, got into this as well. Overdosed with Andrew Murray, F.B. Myers, Keswick Books, Watchman Me, E.M. Bounds, Leonard Ravenhill.

I, without knowing it, without knowing it, got into super spirituality. I had crisis experiences. I had table top experiences.

One meeting where the Lord just so blessed me I leaped on top of the table praising God. How many of you have had that kind of blessing? Table top crisis. You heard of that lady that had the leap experience? I don't know if this story is true but it's really good.

This rather emotional woman, she was in a meeting and I don't know what happened but she was jumping around and she leaped into the air and as she went up boom, God met her. She came down, of course. And she then felt everybody should have this experience.

The leap experience. And she became a Bible teacher. Now, you know, I like to keep everything in balance but I always have a little hesitation when these women Bible teachers come out of the closet.

She developed a theology of the leap. And in her meetings at the end when she'd give the invitation she'd have people getting the blessing by leaping. Most of the people of course didn't get the blessing that she got.

You know, it may be a funny story but it's a very good illustration of how that which may be a blessing for one person like my tree experience in Germany which is the truth would be totally ridiculous for someone else. And I was so happy. You're so balanced here.

I just catch the balance vibrations because as I got out early this morning and went running there were no girls up in the trees. Thank you Lord. Thank you Lord.

The third enemy of relationship and an ongoing ongoing spiritual growth is faulty or lack of communication. Many times what we think is an accusation or gossip against us is actually a miscommunication. And if you can have a summer camp here without some miscommunication you are very very unusual people.

Miscommunications are a basic part of camp life. Don't immediately think somebody has it in for you. Have you ever felt that somebody's got it in for me? It usually especially comes when somebody tells you what someone else said about you.

What a blessing. Especially if it's negative. But so often when you trace it down it's a miscommunication.

There's a problem of language. Problem of language. I probably in these messages have miscommunicated some things because I speak to a small degree a different language.

Someone was trying to recruit me for a work team just a few minutes ago. I did not know what his brother was saying. I can't even pronounce it the way he pronounced it.

Work, work, work something. And I'm not saying that my pronunciation is better. It is not because I'm the visitor.

I'm the foreigner here. But the fact is we had a miscommunication and he thought, he wondered why I wasn't responding and we were signing up. Of course, when I found out actually what he was saying, I was even less responsible.

So there will be miscommunications, there will be faulty communications and that can happen when you go back to your assembly and you tell them what the Lord has done here this weekend or at the end of the summer, what he's done in the summer camp. So easy. The older generation is often speaking a different language.

They're speaking a different language. We have a semantic problem. Often what we think is a doctrinal problem is a semantic problem.

That's why I prefer to use terminology that doesn't necessarily blow the roof off. Maybe some of you go off to some special camp somewhere where they emphasize the teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and maybe in the evening meeting or something there's an invitation and you're prayed for and you have what you feel this is your experience. This has happened again and again.

So you go back to your assembly and the first opportunity you testify how you were baptized in the Holy Spirit in the woods or in this meeting. And the older brethren and the more traditional brethren they're just shaking. They're grabbing on to their Bibles, they're ready to come out to you with a whole full course in theology to show that you were baptized in the Spirit at conversion and then give you what they feel is a solid teaching.

I think there are different ways to explain some of our experiences in different groups in order to understand one another and in order to be more open minded in our ongoing process of actually trying to understand what did happen to us. Because what happened to us may not be what we think happened to us. And it's to me very important.

Anyway, I'm convinced in the road ahead here in Britain there's going to be ongoing misunderstanding in the churches. And if you don't want any of it, I don't know what to say to you. Because I know this is one of the ways God tests our maturity.

When through misunderstanding there's rejection, there's hurt, there's confusion, it may seem terrible, but God can use even that division, God can use even that hurtful situation to mature you, to bring you into greater spiritual balance. Because if we think these things don't happen in the world and in other churches and in secular organizations and in the army or whatever sphere of life, then we're very naive about life. And then the fourth fiery dart of real relationship is impatience and irritability.

I remember first reading that book Calvary Road and Roy Hesham calling irritability a sin. You know, sometimes in my life I can gain the victory over some really big problem. Two Christmases ago my son

came back the day after Christmas and shared that he and some friends were out on the road in their sports cars and my son's fiance's brother was in an identical Spitfire Triumph sports car ahead of him on the road.

Tried to miss a Christmas box, somebody left on the road, the sports car turned over, he was crushed to death, right there in front of their very eyes. Ben came back and shared that with me. I saw God give him a rancorous victory in that situation.

He was a great ministry to the family. And God somehow, a terrible thing, went out to the scene of the accident, the Lord gave me the victory and the grace. I had to go to one of our own accidents in Yugoslavia, four killed.

And yet sometimes the very next day after winning a major victory, the littlest thing brings irritation. And I sin against the Lord. Little thing somewhere, I heard a message once, the little foxes that spoil the vines.

I would say that we have to, many of us, declare all-out war against irritability. Oh, to have a sweet disposition. Isn't it great in camp to have some people with a sweet disposition? Every camp has to have at least some with dispositional problems.

Don't jump on them, especially if they're in the kitchen. You just keep loving them. God has a purpose in bringing them.

You minister to them, you accept them. But you know, a camp would be a difficult place if there weren't always some people around who've got that sweet disposition, who are consistent, who are balanced, and who really know how to keep the joy gates open, even in times of crisis and pressure when things are going wrong. A.W. Tozer strongly emphasized the need to deal with the sins of disposition.

You see, they're the sins of commission. You go out and you do something wrong. You go up there to the phone booth, and in the midst of trying to get through to someone, you can't get your money in, and you get upset, and you tear the phone booth apart, and this could get you in some difficulty.

That's the sin of commission. But there's the sin of omission. You never go near the phone booth.

Your mother would like to hear from you. Maybe your husband. Maybe a hurting loved one, but you just, ah, a phone call is going to cost ten pence.

And I find that so easy, as Christians, our big sins are not sins of commission. They're sins of omission, and they're linked to disposition. We're just so used to just taking the easy road of least resistance.

We don't know how to exert ourselves in order to serve one another, and we need to improve our serve. By the way, my favorite sport is tennis, and if any of you have a tennis racket and know where there's a court, I'd be happy tomorrow to have a game with you. I brought my tennis racket.

Impatience and irritability, deadly enemies of spiritual reality, and ongoing relationships. And number five, selfishness. Of course, it comes out in so many ways, and, you know, when we do get really hungry for God, and we do sort of enroll as a disciple in God's army, there's a danger we will become too hard on ourselves.

We will want to become the totally unselfish person, and we'll get ourselves into perpetual guilt. You know, for the sake of survival, at times, you have to care for number one. If you don't call yourself number one,

maybe you call yourself number ten.

Or you then have to care for number ten. There's nothing wrong caring for yourself. The Bible says love your neighbor as you love yourself.

If you don't care for yourself a little bit, you're not going to be able to have a ministry for your neighbor. So taking care of your health, trying to have a balanced diet, having a good physical exercise program, learning how to relax, some of these things, look through certain binoculars, and especially as outlined in some extremist books, they seem to be selfish. And we get into a neurosis about crucifying self.

Gotta crucify self. And pretty soon we get into asceticism, where anything that's good is really probably not God's will. In O.M., in the very early days, we moved down this road.

We thought, food is only just to keep the engine running. None of it's just enjoying the food. Keep the engine running.

And I want to tell you, I served some meals to my wife. I was in charge. In those early days after the wedding, that you wouldn't want to feed to your dog if he was your enemy.

Selfishness. We declare war against unselfishness, but in order to do that, we have to, in a balanced way, care for ourselves. Now, with most of us, that's pretty natural, pretty easy.

But there's more and more people with damaged emotions. There's more and more people who live in perpetual guilt, who don't really accept themselves. I find that all the time in correspondence and counseling.

And number six, idealism. Number seven, the lack of forgiveness. I wish there was more time to give you a message on each one of these points with the related scripture verses.

You might try 1 Peter 4, 8 on that particular one. And then the lack of discipline and organization, number eight. And then number nine, the ninth enemy.

There are more, but time is gone. Activism and extremism. We've already dealt with this enough, so I think we can end here.

And I hope that somehow through these very basic principles and through understanding something of Satan's tactics to destroy relationships, that some beautiful relationships will blossom as a result of being here this weekend and in the summer, and that this reality will spread back to our assemblies and to other churches and right across the world.

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