

# Spiritual Warfare - Finding Reality and Balance

by George Verwer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of balance, love, and patience in our spiritual lives, and challenges us to apply God's Word in our lives in a practical and effective way.*

**Duration:** 1:14:24

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Balance in Christian Life"

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## Description

George Verwer emphasizes the reality of spiritual warfare and the need for balance in the Christian life, drawing from his experiences and the history of the Church in Wales. He warns against extremes in ministry and encourages believers to be doers of the Word, not just hearers, while recognizing the importance of love, patience, and humility in their interactions with others. Verwer highlights the necessity of being equipped with the Word of God and the armor of God to withstand spiritual battles, urging Christians to engage in evangelism from a place of authenticity and grace. He concludes with a call to embrace the reality of their struggles and failures, reminding them of God's grace and the importance of community in their spiritual journey.

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## Transcript

I've been this summer reading the history of the Church in Wales, and just coming back again to this more exciting and emotional part of the British Isles. It is a great challenge to me to think that not far from here men were martyred for the faith and for the right to interpret the Bible the way they felt it should be interpreted. It's a great privilege and a great challenge.

Sorry I wasn't here earlier. We had our 20th anniversary of OM in Europe rally last night in Westminster Central Hall and in seven other places around Britain, so it was not possible to be here earlier. I've just come from a month-long conference over in Germany and then a weekend in Switzerland, and my heart is very, very full.

I was thinking that in evaluating my own ministry that I'm actually a little bit dangerous in small doses. Being a natural extremist, I can say somewhat extreme things, and if I don't get a chance to rectify that later on and bring it into balance, someone could really go around the bend and become extreme. Of course, very little has ever been accomplished in the church by anyone who was not extreme to some degree.

The Lord has a wonderful way of bringing us out of extreme back to balance, and I remember the words of Brother Andrew when we were ministering together in the Netherlands, and I'm very hesitant about giving invitations. I'm a little more conservative than some on that, though I'm not against it. I had spoken in the afternoon.

He was going to speak in the evening. He asked me if I had given an invitation, and I said I hadn't. He said, well, he would because he found out that it was easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse, and that is certainly true in the church today.

I don't come to you as a Bible teacher. I come with a ministry of exhortation. Back in the days of George Whitefield, who was very much aligned with the saints here in Wales in the great controversy that took place after the revival, his men, as they went across Britain, actually were called exhorters, a term that is no longer used.

Whether we use that term any longer or not, it is a ministry, in many ways, distinct from just teaching the Bible. Both ministries are needed, and they overlap. But I really come to you, as it was in the New Testament, with much exhortation.

And if you try to take notes, and I want to encourage you to try, you will find it perhaps not as systematic as you would like, especially when I am assigned various titles. I don't know if people wait upon God in much prayer before they assign these titles to the speakers, but, praise God, at least the titles given to my message, which I had to be reminded of this morning, are quite broad, and so they do act as a good title for my exhortations. But it is true, some of the things I may say will seem strong, and if you stay around after lunch, we will try to bring those into balance.

But I have grabbed a few books. I knew Lindsay Brown was here with his paraphernalia, and so I didn't bring many books, but I just wanted to make sure that I had a couple of books that could follow up on what I want to say. One is a book that is almost unknown in Britain called No Easy Answers, a book on the subject of suffering, a book on the subject of why God allows suffering, written by a woman.

I am very indebted in my spiritual life to women, and without women, both the lady that prayed me into the kingdom, and my wife, and now my daughter, I am sure I would be even more extreme. And this woman, Eugenia Price, has helped me a lot to expose some of the evangelical American chewing gum that got into my spiritual life and kept me from functioning properly. No Easy Answer, I greatly recommend that little book.

This is actually a British edition. It used to be called No Pat Answers, but people couldn't figure out who Pat was. And then my own little book with its radical cover, which I am told is out of date, Revolution of Love and Balance.

This will especially help balance off some of the extreme things that I may say. Ralph Shallis, from now on, in its third edition already, translated from French, probably one of the best books for a young Christian, for anyone that really wants to grow. A little tape I brought along also, called Maintaining Balance.

You see, you need a lot to bring this message back into balance, but I brought that along and a few other tapes from the conference I had with the Navigators up in London. Then lastly, Eros Defiled, a book on the subject of sexual guilt, written by a man very much linked with intervarsity, John White. How many of you

have read this book already? I figure quite a few of you, not as many as I thought.

I would say there's no book that's more needed at this time than this book. And most all the people you witness to in your mission are all going to be having moral problems, minus very few. Whether they're heterosexual, or whether they're homosexual, or whether they're playing both sides, which is so common today, or whether this is all in their minds, or whatever.

This is the number one problem that most young people are facing, together with, of course, their own ego and all that involved. And since I'm not speaking to any degree on this subject, I brought a book by someone who can speak to the subject more than I. You know, leading a man to Christ is just the beginning. Then how to counsel him about his three different girlfriends, and how to counsel him in other practical areas, if he, for example, is homosexual, is really where the battle begins.

And the last thing we want to be as we go into a mission is naive about people and their problems, their relationships. Because I think it's pretty well seen that out of a hundred people who make a decision for Christ, if ten are going on ten years later, we've got a miracle. I mean going on in any degree of commitment.

I believe strongly in these missions, and I just praise God that you're going forward. I know all the criticisms against missions. I could list them.

Some of them are semi-valid. Lately we've been told, I was reading about it this morning, that we can't really move ahead in evangelism until all of God's people get right with each other. This is a very big thing right now in Britain.

We're all a bunch of gossipers. We're all a bunch of murmurers. We're all no good from Scotland to the south of England.

And until we all get right with each other and stop our gossip and our divisions, we can't really evangelize. Well, that sounds good, and I go along with it to a degree. But history shows that there would be no evangelism if we waited for all of God's people to stop gossiping or even half of them to stop gossiping.

And if you wait until you're all the little holy Cardiff Christian Union and whoever else, Mary's representative in this interesting cross-section of human representation, if you wait for everything to become fine and you're all living the total consistent life, you never murmur anymore, you never complain, you never gossip, you never get upset, you never lust at magazines or do anything that's wrong, if you wait for that, then forget it. We can use Nigel Lee in a number of other areas of the world. I'm his boss, actually, supposedly.

And I'm glad we both get our orders from the Lord. So I believe in this mission that you're going into. I believe also that the more sin can be rooted up, the more gossip can be killed, the more holiness there can be in operation, the greater the possibilities of the mission.

But I think Scripture teaches that some of these things can only be learned as we learn them on the move for God. And the New Testament church, though it had plenty of problems, was a witness in church. We do not witness from a point of perfection, we witness from a point of weakness, which we're going to see from God's Word.

And as we even testify to the people around us about God's grace to us as failures, we discover that the Holy Spirit uses that and that we can relate to people far better when we take our place with them as needy sinners and failures and point them to the grace of God. Let's look at a number of Scriptures, starting in the book of James. I don't know how many of you are familiar with my method of speaking.

The main thing to be familiar with is that it's usually too long. You all probably have heard my favorite story, how in Germany somebody tried to stop me by holding up their wristwatch, waving it at me in the meeting, and so I said, Hallelujah! I was preaching about world missions and mistaking all discipleship. I said, Hallelujah! Here's a man giving his wristwatch for world evangelism.

James chapter 1. Luther was a bit confused when he called this the epistle of straw because it's part of God's Word. We're given an exhortation in verse 19, one of the most important exhortations that I have ever had. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore, put away all filthiness and the overflowing of wickedness and receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save your soul. What a great verse.

And be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way and immediately forgeteth what manner of man he was.

But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth in it, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Let's pray. Living God, we thank you for the privilege of being together here to look into your Word to consider the facts that face us from society and from the state of your church and from our own lives.

We know, our God, that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, but we thank you that in us you have implanted a new heart and a new life and your Holy Spirit which is able to live this great life out through us. We come from many different backgrounds. We're bombarded with so many different theories and even truths in our day that sometimes we're all but confused.

And we would just try out that somehow we may hear that still, small voice or, if necessary, that loud voice to our own hearts and that we may obey. That what we receive into our minds may be converted into practical, spiritual, dynamic reality in our lives, whatever the cost. That we may not be condemned by the truth we have received on this weekend.

And that it may be worked right into the very fiber of our spiritual being so that ego is crucified and Jesus Christ is living, even though we just come in much weakness and in great failure. Lord Jesus, speak for we pray through your precious name. Amen.

We are all incredibly aware of the horrific war going on between Iraq and Iran. One of my favorite ministries is to go around with spiritual hand grenades and attempt to blow God's people out of unreality. And the socio-political situation in the world today should be enough just with a few hours watching the news on the telly or a slide film strip on Cambodia, which I just looked at, or any other number of media sources should be enough to blow us out of our complacency and the sickening, death-bringing materialism that has so gripped us here in this country and in many other countries.

I had a wonderful time coming on the train and among other things was reading about this new writer, Naipaul, or whatever his name is, forgive the pronunciation, now considered one of the greatest novelists of our day. Not being a man up on all these things, I haven't heard much about him before, but reading about his writings, which seem to be able to devastate places like India, the West Indies, and Oxford University, all at one sweeping blow, gives me an interest in reading, especially his new book, about fundamentalistic Islam, which probably will be buried in his latest novel. Of course, you don't need a lot of intellect to be able to find a mess in the world today.

Someone once said, anybody can tear down, but it takes an architect to build. I don't know if you find the present student population cynical, but that certainly is the order of the day in many places today. As you attempt to witness in your university for Jesus Christ, you're going to meet people who have read these novels.

You're going to meet people who are totally cynical about Christianity and have plenty of answers for what they think are answers. In some ways, the university is one of the most difficult places that one could ever choose to have an evangelistic mission in the 20th century. In fact, it is quite a miracle in answer to prayer that we see any conversions at all, considering the terrific force of the media to belittle what they think is the Christian faith, which isn't really the biblical Christian position, but constantly the straw man put up and then destroyed.

The little I see of the media at home down the road and the little that I'm able to read it really is overwhelming the way most people are going. To come into that and start to talk about specific truths, the Bible being the Word of God, and Jesus Christ actually living and dying and rising from the dead is a tremendous challenge. I pray that above all else you will not be discouraged.

You will have some failure in this mission. You will have some people that you turn off. You will have some people that ask questions that you can't answer, so don't pretend.

You don't have to say it. And I just pray above all else you'll not be discouraged because discouragement is truly one of the big gangrenes that Satan is managing to spread around. And I wonder if there's any even this morning, really down underneath you're discouraged.

The Bible says the joy of the Lord is our strength. I tell you if that's true, we should be mighty strong because there's unlimited joy. But I find many of God's people are depressed or discouraged or confused.

An increasing number are totally baffled by the Christian scene in Britain. So many different streams, so many different voices, house groups, cathedrals, soul men, short men, Bible expositors and different schools sometimes totally disagreeing with one another, in some cases not even fellowshiping with one another, in some cases actually writing books against each other. And for the young Christian who comes into this, it can be discouraging.

And even in the Christian unions, though I know little about your Christian unions, the ones that I do know something about in the past year have been plagued by disunity. All kinds of confusing things like people jumping up, giving some great prophecy that everyone must show up at a particular prayer meeting at a particular time or they will not be spiritual. So that Christian union now has to have a special committee to handle prophecies and they record them and then have a big meeting to decide whether this prophecy is from heaven or hell or just from Lulu who drank too much coffee the night before.

And the amazing controversies that blow in and out of our Christian unions, dividing so that we even have people parading down the road saying the Christian unions really are not scriptural. He's read his New Testament through. Well, he almost got through and decided that the Christian unions were not scriptural.

So now we have people leaving the Christian unions and going to some little church down the road which they feel is the true New Testament church. And lo and behold, now Witness Lee and his crowd has arrived in Great Britain and set up shop in Blackpool and have declared that they are the only true New Testament church in the entire world except their other church in Manchester. They are a little upset with me.

They confronted me outside the Keswick tent this summer and I hope I don't end up in a court case because of some of the things that I say which are not always totally controlled by the Spirit. I was greatly encouraged by this quotation from the book *The Best of Tozer*. I just happened to bring a few copies of that along with me.

But on page 80, Tozer, who is a very extreme person by nature, and his wife found that rather difficult, because it's difficult to be married to a tornado. If you've ever been upset by his statements, listen to this balancing statement by W. Tozer. This is really something.

Briefly, I have seldom been called a coward, even by my most cordial enemies. But my want of moderation has sometimes caused grief to my dearest friends. An extreme disposition is not easy to tame, and the temptation to bring severe, immoderate methods to the aid of the Lord is one not easily resisted.

The temptation is further strengthened by the knowledge that it is next to impossible to pin a preacher down and make him eat his word. There is a ministerial immunity accorded to man of God which can lead into extravagant and irresponsible language unless he uses, and this is my need, heroic measures to bring his nature under the sway of the Spirit of Love. This I have sometimes failed to do and always to my own real sorrow.

And I believe as we go forward in this mission and in the work of God in general, that is truly one of the greatest needs. More love. Love for one another.

Patience with one another. Long-suffering with one another. We've seen here in the book of James very clearly that we are not to be hearers of the word, but doers.

If the Americans want someone like John Stott, they arrange the Urbana Convention and get 15,000 people to listen to him. But somehow you were able to get him down here just through the careful strategy of Lindsay Brown or somebody else. I haven't been together with John Stott since Urbana in 1968, I believe, except for a cup of tea once in London, so I'm looking forward to perhaps meeting him again.

You will be responsible for what you do with the kind of teaching you receive from men like that. There's really no need with someone like that ministering for me to even come, except perhaps to jab those that are just slightly spiritually schizophrenic and have an unbelievable ability to take an endless Bible teaching from anyone without having any of it really transform their life and turn them into a radical, disciplined, Spirit-filled disciple of Jesus Christ. For those two slightly spiritually schizophrenic people, I am here.

Others can memorize Bible verses or pray for me or do whatever you want at this time. It's a beautiful day and I would prefer to be walking in the nearby mountains than in this stuffy room, especially with my tie, which I think I will take off since most of you do not seem to be strapped with such imperialistic

strangleholds. Clearly from this book we are told that what we hear and receive from God's Word is to become practical in our lives.

It's to affect every area of us and our life. Now this is especially important because we are in a spiritual warfare. I've referred to the Iraq-Iran crisis, which goes on right now, and which we should be constantly praying for.

Last time meeting, almost at this very time, I was with Benjamin Eagley, the last missionary almost to leave Iran. He was actually living in Abadan, the city now captured by the Iraqis, attempting to plant a church. He spent five years in training with OM and then joined the better mission, the WEC, and he's been the director of the WEC in Iran for a number of years.

He's Swiss. And as he shared just how God brought him out just before the Iraqis moved in, it was just very, very encouraging. Iran was one of the first countries that God put on our heart almost 20 years ago.

So we're concerned. But you know the spiritual warfare that you and I are in, whether we're in Cardiff University or Bromley-Kent, where I live, and this is more or less my 18th year in Britain, I haven't just, you know, come over from Texas to bring you my little gospel message. But I've lived here for 18 years.

Forgive me that I've never learned the language. I'm not a good missionary and I've given up trying to be. But I believe with all my heart our spiritual warfare is greater than that which is going on in Iraq and Iran.

My basis for saying this is a number of verses spread from Genesis through Revelation. I won't read all of them, but turn with me to Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. This is war. We're to put on the armor of God.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having your loin skirted about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. Have you memorized that passage yet? Seriously.

I've taken a number of surveys around Britain and I've discovered very few are memorizing the Bible. Muslims from the Al-Azhar University memorize the entire Quran before they graduate. But Christians now are having trouble with John 3.16. And one of the exhortations I have for you is to begin systematically memorizing part of the word of God.

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he quoted the word of God. As a young Christian converted just before I went to college, I had enormous struggles. And I don't know where I would be today if in my first year at college I hadn't started to memorize the word of God.

Dale Rothstein and I have been together for twenty-three years. He was a great influence on my life. Actually ended up baptizing me.

He's always been an example of spiritual strength to so many of us, especially people like myself, more weaker emotionally and in other ways. And I've seen that the source of his strength, firstly, of course, the Lord himself and the Holy Spirit, but then the memorizing of the word of God. The psalmist said, I've hid my word in my heart that I may not sin against you.

Some of you have read Dale's book. I saw it out there on Lindsay's table, Logic of Faith, Dale Rothstein. He's also written a book called Christian Strategy.

Before he finished university, he had one-third of the New Testament committed to memory and still managed to get high grades in all of his courses. And he was at a very difficult college. On top of that, he was involved in winning many other people to Christ, worked as an assistant to the university professor and had a few other sidelines like encouraging students to forsake all the possessions for world missions.

It was a very upsetting experience, I can tell you, when he spoke at my wedding and challenged all the people that my wife and I would be selling everything they had given to us. I don't know why he had to tell them about our plan. Dale was an extremist, but we've seen him come into balance.

Three children and a wife and 23 years on the mission field. He was the founder of our work in Turkey and the communist countries. Now the director of the Duluth Ministry.

Always helped bring someone to balance. What a blessing it was to fellowship with him the first time in a year, a few days ago in Germany. His secret, the Word of God.

In Colossians it says, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Then it speaks about the Spirit-filled life and gives a vivid description. In Ephesians it says, Be filled with the Holy Spirit and gives the same description.

Different terminology, the same reality. How foolish to fight over terminology. One says, Baptism of the Spirit.

Another says, Wholeness of the Holy Spirit. Another one says, The exchange life. Another one talks about the process.

Someone else emphasizes the crisis. I say what Billy Graham said. I don't care how you get it.

Just get it. Reality. Love.

Holiness. Spiritual life. And I believe one of the ingredients, the Word of God in the heart.

Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. It would be worth coming here just to give that challenge to you. I have had many people write and say they started memorizing God's Word because of that.

Amazing enough, many are not even reading God's Word much less memorizing it. In surveys I have taken in Christian unions it has shown up that 50% have never read the Bible through once. Go around claiming we believe it is the Word of God and we have never even read it.

Obviously we are saying that because someone has told us to say that. Or maybe we have had some kind of existential experience in the mountains. But it would be good to read the Bible through at least once.

And maybe you could write that on the top of your list of priorities for the coming year. Even reading a little bit a day starting in maybe two or three different places which makes it more exciting. I hate to have a breakfast of just cereal.

Even the cereal needs milk and a little sugar or something. And then a cup of tea is good to have with it. It's a miracle.

The buffet on British Rail was actually working this morning and I actually had quite a breakfast. And when you read the Word of God it's good to read at different places and get a balance of truth because your daily survival may be hinged on that. So we are clearly in an unbelievable intensive spiritual warfare.

This is also seen very clearly in 2 Timothy. It's always difficult to speak to groups like this because I'm sure some of you are many, many years in the Lord and you know these passages. Others are young in the Lord.

In any case it doesn't hurt to look at them again. 2 Timothy 2 we're referred to as soldiers. Verse 3 Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that wreath entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And on we could go. Verses like fight the good fight and many others which we seem to neglect in our day.

I don't think you can ever live a realistic Christian life until you have something of this concept in your spiritual blood stream of being a soldier of Jesus Christ. We are in a warfare. I read a lot of material both from the left and the right politically and I'm now since I'm still an American by passport supposed to vote.

This is my big event this next month. I have to vote. I'm given a wide choice of people who I have nothing to do with getting into the voting.

And I have to choose between Mr. Carter and Mr. Reagan. Both of them are born again Christians. And it's interesting to read their different viewpoints.

But one of the things that never ceases to amaze me is people on both sides of the political spectrum and in the middle as well is how naive we can be about life. I read a lot of left wing radical socio-radical political literature. Some of it really excites me.

There are many good points. Magazines like The Third Something is floating around Britain these days. And people come up with all these interesting answers especially as to how we're going to get a better government and we're going to really resolve all these great problems that we have.

The more I read and I've been reading this for 20 some years the more convinced I am about what the Bible says. The heart is desperately needed. And some of our American friends now who have gone further and further into the sort of left sided thing and things and they're parading around that we must close up all of our nuclear weapons and all this is wonderful.

If you think Russia and China are going to do that you must be extremely naive. And I hate warfare probably more than most people in this room. But there is no easy answer to the heart of man.

There's no easy answer to things like Pol Pot and Hitler and Jim Jones that film that some of you saw on TV just a few weeks ago that is enough to just cause anybody to go and I personally feel that we as ambassadors of Jesus Christ have the answer. Whether we're talking to the man on the left or the man on the right. Whether we're talking to the social radical at our university who is parading through the streets with the big sign no nukes or whether we're talking to the student who could care less about all this give him his six pints and his two birds or his women and he will be happy.

I believe we have the answer to both. Jesus Christ changing people's lives. I don't believe it is the plan of God for us to have Christian nations and Christian governments.

I'm not saying I'm against that no more Christians in government. Fine. But I don't think this is the great plan of God.

We Americans are told that America is a chosen nation and we are a chosen people and if we don't get to the polls God will judge us especially if we don't vote for the right man. And then there's twenty different voices telling us all what we're supposed to do. I could spend all my time just researching who I'm going to vote for in the next election and would come out more confused than I went in.

I believe we are a peculiar people, a chosen people. We are a minority group. We don't understand that but the Bible teaches it.

There was the way until there will be that find it. We are pilgrims in this world and we are to begin to live that way. Yet at the same time we are soldiers standing against unrighteousness, speaking out wherever we should against man's sin.

And sometimes there is the prophetic role that the Christian must have in society but all that he may speak from a foundation of the Bible and of real wisdom and discernment rather than some little naive theory he picked out of the latest magazine that he subscribed to. The world today is incredibly complex. One of my own relatives and dear close intimate friends has become a Nazi in America because they have the total answer.

They can tell you that Hitler was not the man that we had been deceived into thinking he was but was the hero of Europe and the savior rejected. But now there will be a new Hitler raised up and I will tell you there's a few hundred thousand Americans ready to follow him. Fortunately that's not many in a land of two hundred million.

But when you sit in a car and witness to a neo-Nazi as I attended to my own relative a few months ago I just couldn't believe it. And though it may not seem this way I am actually a person very subject to depression and when I see the horror of war and when I think of Cambodia and then I think of the failure often of the church to move as a compassionate army my temptation is cynicism and depression. But by God's grace and by God's word and because of his Holy Spirit I have been able to stand against those unbelievable temptations.

You may not face that temptation so much in your early twenties. I was so turned on and so choleric in my early twenties that it was only marriage that eventually brought me into enlightenment. I really thought I was getting sanctified around the age of twenty.

I was winning many people to Christ. I had already been preaching for four years. I had already started the work known today as Operation Mobilization.

I really thought I was becoming sanctified and then I got married. If I had my choice of subject today I would have spoken to you on communication in marriage or survivalship in the home or why you should not keep a gun in your dresser drawer. In many ways I believe your time at university is as much a preparation for marriage as it is for that great job you're going to have with the Rolls Royce company if it still exists when you graduate or when you finish.

I really believe there is a neglect of emphasis on preparation for marriage. In a culture where 90% marry it seems to be quite significant especially among Christians. How do we find the balance between on one hand being soldiers of Jesus Christ in a total warfare and on the other hand happily married living in a little cottage down the lane outside of Merthyr Tydfil.

Forgive the pronunciation. It took me 15 years even to get that far. I believe we can find the balance.

I believe as Christians we are in a warfare but we are not some kind of fanatical terrorists. We are in an army of compassion and that God can give us the balance. And I hope I can sum it up.

somehow give at least some material along that line today. What are some of the areas where we have to find this practical reality? We have touched on marriage and marriage leads me to make a few comments about communication. If God has met with us in this weekend if we have recommitted our lives to the Lord Jesus and experienced more of his love and his word then we will go from here better communicators.

That is going to be the foundation stone of your coming mission. We will be learning some of the basics on how to communicate. And by the way, learning how to communicate is one of the best preparations for marriage because a big part of marriage is communication.

Communication. And if you can learn to communicate now with some of the interesting people you have around you, the ones that turn you off or the ones that turn you on or the one that you would rather not become friends with. If you can learn something about communication, accepting people as they are and all of that kind of thing, what a great preparation that is.

Sometimes in an evangelistic mission we go after people like evangelistic targets rather than having legitimate concern and interest in them as people. I'm sure that's probably already been said, so I won't say so much about that, but I think it's very important. Let me give you a list of areas in this important aspect of the spiritual warfare and reality that I've been working on in my own life.

Number one, learning to be unselfish. So basic. But what good is Christianity if somehow we don't become more unselfish and learn more about giving, giving of ourselves.

How many of us back in our homes, because we're now living in digs at the university, how many of us back in our homes have all kinds of possessions we'll probably never even use to any great degree, but there it is just rotting when some of it could be sold for the glory of God or given away. You say, but if I did that my parents would become so upset. Young people, we are not going to be able to do anything without some people getting upset.

And I am convinced that often times our parents, and I speak as a father of three teenagers, we're never going to get anything done because so often our parents are not concerned with the things of God, they are not concerned with world evangelism, they are living basically an egocentric life, they are concerned mainly about your career, the family reputation and endless things that have nothing to do with living for God. I am very close to my own parents, both of them converted to Christ after I came to Christ. And I

know the toughest place to live for Christ is your own home.

And I also know that in anything you do, especially when you are still young, you must consider your parents, you must be in subject to them and there is no easy answer. So I had to be committed and radical and really do something for God and yet keep mommy and daddy happy. But I believe at least we should try.

And as they see reality in us, unselfishness in us, even in the little things when we are at home, like helping around the house, doing the dishes or washing up or whatever else, that is going to speak louder than any sermon you preach or any book you happen to read casually on the toilet seat. Learning to be unselfish, number two, learning to be patient with those over us. I have always had great sympathy for anyone that had to leave one of these Christian unions.

They don't seem to get very much training. They seem to be elected by some democratic system and all kinds of interesting people end up as presidents of the Christian unions. In fear and trembling they go through the years.

Some cases have an ulcer by the end of the term. No, they don't discover it usually and they come on OM or something like that. But how we need to be patient with those over us.

They are going to make mistakes. As you go into this mission mistakes are going to be made. And without patience and forbearance with one another it just doesn't work.

And then learning to really accept others as they are. We have an interracial group this morning. That's very challenging.

In OM we are interracial and we are also international with about 30 different nations. And what a challenge that is. To learn to live together with different people.

To really try to understand them. Most of us are very provincial. The university seems, though it may appear to be international, can be incredibly provincial.

And people suffer from tremendous rejection often if they come from another nation. They can experience tremendous rejection even if they have some little idiosyncrasy in their life or their physical makeup. And how we as Christians need to reach out to the rejected.

If you try to win the most popular, as we say in the state, big wheel in your university you might find it an overwhelming task. But I will tell you, if you reach out to the neglected and the rejected and the people who are crying out inside for a little bit of love, you are going to see some people that come to the Lord Jesus Christ and go on for Him. And then number four, learning to break and to bend.

Have you ever read Calvary Road? I would consider it required reading for any evangelistic mission. You can't come out of it unless you read that. That's why many don't ever come.

Without brokenness, without that kind of Calvary reality, it's impossible to get on with the work of God. 1 Peter 5-6 speaks about submitting unto the Lord. It says that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

So easy to be critical. And yet when we have that humility, we can often see the best in learning to love. Some people give the idea that love is just a matter of having a special experience with the Lord.

I say that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not the end, it's the beginning. When you have a special experience with God, you do not become some kind of evangelical computer so that when the right clichés are fed in, the Christian life comes out. I believe Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones' series on the Christian warfare is one of the most important series of books recently published.

And he emphasizes, to use my own terminology, the ball is in our court. We cannot blame God for the lack of spirituality. We cannot sort of hang around waiting for some mystical revival to blow in the window.

We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The ball is in our court. We must move.

Every time I play my middle son, who hopes to go to one of your interesting universities, he's 17, every time I play him in tennis he gets better and I'm sort of holding my own. And so yesterday morning it was 7-5. I just made it.

In a couple more months I'll be losing, which is always a beautiful experience for the ego. But in tennis it's very simple. When the ball comes to your side of the court you hit it back.

It's a very simple game. I'm sure many of you are very successful at it. Don't neglect your sports and recreation in the midst of your Christian intensive activities because even though you're getting more and more and more spiritual you are still a human being.

Took me many years to discover that. And it's good to eat and it's not very unspiritual to enjoy a decent meal. And it's good to get some recreation whether it's jogging or boxing or tennis or now that I'm in the middle years I have taken up golf.

And it is the sport of all sports. Some of my old friends who knew me in my more fanatical days they cannot believe that George Verra has taken up golf. But if they saw me going from one hole to the other praising and praying and singing out the choruses of God they would know that I've been able to mix the two together.

It's a great challenge this challenge of really learning to love people. Taking the initiative. That little kind letter.

I wonder if you've written one for those who've shown some kindness to you this summer. A letter can make all the difference in the world. A fellow once responded to me and said thank you for your letter.

It was through it I decided not to kill myself yesterday. I had someone tell me once you're too caught up with the details of life. But beloved life is filled with details.

That's why I almost didn't get here. Because my famous travel agent in Bromley gave me a sleeper reservation on a train that didn't exist in a compartment that didn't exist. Finally being a little skeptical about the general trend of organization I phoned up to see if this train was leaving on time to find out it didn't exist.

So I came this morning and I get five pounds back on my sleeper. I was going to have to get off in Swansea anyway and come back if I was going to get much sleep. Love.

Learning to love. Cheating on 1 Corinthians 13 until it burns in your mind and your heart and every time you fail on any one of those points there will be the conviction and then the repentance. And when you repent like that you don't have to stop on the sidewalk and bow down and throw ashes on your head.

You can repent as instantly as you can think evil. If I have to walk through the west end of London I have to go almost through a perpetual state of repentance. Almost on every corner as things tempt one's mind to go in the wrong direction.

And then learning to discipline ourselves. Hard work. So important.

You think of the apostle Paul who said I buffet my body and bring it into subjection lest after preaching to others I become a reprobate. If Paul had to say that what about us? Do you have a disciplined life so that you can do what you know you should do rather than what you feel like doing? And I believe this is very linked, very much linked with our standard of conduct. The more I survey the teenage scene, especially the three teenagers who give me lots of information, the more convinced I am that it is very unpopular to speak about any kind of standard.

Since for years the Anglicans have taken the stand that drinking in moderation is acceptable, if you want to be popular in Britain you must not say anything about drinking. I felt very nervous about this as a teetotaling American and so have hardly ever mentioned drinking in my preaching in Britain. See, I'm not as bold as you think.

But I am convinced and I'm not against someone who can really in a disciplined way carry on moderate drinking, but I believe that something should be said about alcoholism, something should be said about drinking, and the dangers of drinking because it's becoming again one of the major social problems in the nation. And it seems to me that we need to wrestle through that and discipline ourselves. And I personally feel that so often it's better to avoid the whole theme completely.

So that's something you will have to personally fight out before God. But drunkenness and excess of drinking of any kind is clearly condemned in the Word of God. And therefore it should be condemned by Christians.

Of course, when you're witnessing to the unconverted person, your main thing isn't to stuff him about a few pints he's just trying to down as you're talking to him, but to present the positive message of the Gospel. But if he continues, however, to be a drunkard after he makes his decision for Christ, the assistant missionary in the Christian Union also is a heavy drinker, it's very hard to try to convince other people that this is not God's way. I'm sure, of course, that is an unlikely situation.

Discipline touches every area of the life. So many young people write to me about this whole thing of their social life. How far do they go? What about petting? We now have a whole new scene.

I call it evangelical sex. This is when two young people who don't want to commit adultery because they love Jesus and they know that's a sin, clearly described in the Word of God, they do everything but. Even going to bed together without any clothes, but somehow not committing the final act.

If you don't think that produces an awful big crop of guilt, I can assure you you've never counseled many people. Isn't it safer to somehow avoid appearance of evil? Isn't it safer somehow to discipline our bodies so that we don't get caught into compromising situations which leave women like the girl who's just written me six-page letter this week, because of a compromising situation, got pregnant, overwhelmed with guilt, sought abortion, and now sees the only option as suicide. Somehow, by God's mercy, she was in my meeting recently in which I failed, which I shared God's grace to sinners and failures, and she now once again has a ray of hope that somehow the Lord can use her.

Of course God can use her. I don't know if there's anyone here who may feel that something in your background is keeping you from being used of God. I just counseled a girl a few months ago, raped sixteen times since she was five.

Not long before that, there was another girl seeking counsel, and men seek counsel for even worse things than women who have been raped endlessly by her grandfather. They're living in a weird, wild society where most of the people we have to counsel are wounded or scarred in one way or other. Praise God we have the answer.

Forgiveness. Grace. Though your sins be of scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.

Years ago, a young man came to me very guilty, very intense, had committed incest with his sister, and thought this was the reason he could win no soul for Jesus Christ. You know, Christians easily get warped guilt trips, and I was able to show him from the Word of God that this would not keep him today from being a soldier of Jesus Christ, and he has been in full-time active service for God ever since. Discipline is important, and the discipline life is that which is going to save you from compromising ugly situations which so easily can paralyze you spiritually.

But if somehow through lack of wisdom and discipline you've already been in such situations, praise God for the glorious total forgiveness, redemption, deliverance, and restoration there is for all of us. One of the reasons I've been involved in ministering and counseling people with extreme problems over these twenty-some years is because I never feel I'm any better than any of them. I've often been able to relate in quite an in-depth with homosexuals and help them find reality and spiritual life and discipline.

Even though I'm just the absolute opposite end of the spectrum and in myself a whole thing I find very, very nauseating, through Christ I have been able to relate and understand people with this problem and realize that I'm just as evil. I may be the other end of the spectrum with my lust trips in my mind, and so when they first share this with me instead of putting them into a further guilt trip by showing them how evil they are, I share some of my own failures, my own struggles, especially some things I experienced shortly after my conversion. And I find that immediately enables me to get a real relationship with someone.

In your witnessing don't just tell them all about your victories. Don't give them this pretentious idea that you're from the holiness club down on the other end of the corridor. But share from a point of weakness.

And don't be afraid to admit doubt. Great faith is not made in the absence of doubt. Great faith is made as we battle through doubt sometimes daily to a position of faith.

You ever feel a little uptight about some of your doubts, maybe about the Old Testament, maybe about the doctrine of hell, maybe about whether the heathen are lost, maybe about a lot of things, and you can feel very guilty about even mentioning some of these things. My beloved, most great saints have battled through doubt. Some of them seem to arrive to a very strong position.

Others, like myself, sorry to say, have never arrived there, but have lived in perpetual struggle over intellectual questions all of my Christian life. And yet it never stopped me from serving Him. Because day by day I deny self, take up the cross, and follow Him, and I believe His word, and I believe His statements, and with the little trembling faith I have, I cast myself totally upon Him.

Nothing is more obnoxious in some ways than a man who knows it all and seems to have perfect faith, and very little love, brokenness, gentleness, receptivity, teachability, and all that we so greatly need. Then,

as I've already mentioned, we need to learn to relax. Enjoy fellowship with one another.

Some of the people you're going to be with during the mission, you may not get an opportunity to militantly witness to them. Don't go home feeling guilty about that. The last time I was on a motorway not far from here, somebody was in a desperate situation with his tire off, or about to come off, and not having a jack.

I was in an incredible hurry to a meeting, but decided this was an opportunity to see what's wrong. I didn't know what was wrong, and of course, when I stopped, he came to my car, he asked me for my jack, which meant that I had to be there the whole time. And actually, it meant going back to him and helping him jack up his car.

It was the wrong kind of jack, and this is always a great blessing on the motorway. Well, I didn't have the opportunity to give him the four spiritual laws or the seven basic principles of OM, or how to be born again and as we were changing this wretched tire. I was able to leave in my calendar a calling card, which had my address on it, and had the gospel in a few words on the back of it.

But often, sometimes, I don't even have the opportunity to do that. To be relaxed in our lifestyle and our witnessing. To not feel we have to witness to every single person we see, everybody we sit next to, on the bus, and get caught up in some kind of neurotic compulsion, I believe, is very important.

You're free. If you want to witness, witness. At least pray about it.

Maybe you don't feel you can witness at that point, but as you pray, the Lord will give grace, and you'll be able to open your mouth. Don't overreact to some of the problems that you have, but seek reality. And then learning to share and to open up and to open up. You know, isn't it funny, as Christians, we can't even talk among ourselves, much less talk with the sinners down the road who are about to hit us on the head with their pint glass.

I want to say that I believe for every mile you move in evangelism, you have to go down two miles in fellowship and relationships. Some meetings I go to, people are hoping I'll speak about the ship, ship ministry. People know we have the duos, we have the logos.

So I come and I say, I'm going to speak about not two ships, four ships. Worship, fellowship, relationship, discipleship. Whether you ever sail on any of O.M.'s ships as Lindsay Brown did, you can have those four ships, and I hope you will in your Christian union.

And you know, one of the biggest problems in this area and one of the greatest reasons for unreality is we don't take the initiative. We're waiting for someone to come up to us and fellowship with us. We say, I'm shy.

He doesn't seem to be shy. Therefore, I will wait for him to come to me. Those of us who may seem the most extrovert, I am classified as choleric, extrovert.

My mother said I was a loud mouth. I've got all those traits. And I will tell you when I come into a room, there's a feeling of awkwardness, of shyness.

I don't feel like running up to somebody and pumping his hand. I'm George Miller. Who are you? You know, I'd rather, I love ornithology, I'd rather go out in the woods here and for hours just watch the birds, you know, the winged birds in the woods.

So, if someone like myself, so outgoing, loud mouth, extrovert, with 25 years of blabber mouth training, forgive the slang, have at times shyness and feel we're unable to take the initiative then, of course, I know some of you must be going through agony at times trying to relate to people. But believe me, any little bit of initiative you take is going to be worth it. And if you realize the main goal is not to be ministered on to but to minister, you're going to go out of your way to be a little more friendly.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if in your university you were the friendliest people around? And isn't it enigma, isn't it weird that the Mormons come into this country, thousands of them, and with their little plastic friendly smile go around cutting lawns and being kind to people, have won 100,000 British people to the Mormon way. I am convinced friendship evangelism is one of the forms of evangelism that God uses the most. Be real.

Be relaxed. Learn to share and open up first among yourselves in fellowship. Not getting caught into the puddle of self-pity for reaching out to others.

Not believing that someone doesn't like you because they haven't remembered your name or they haven't shaken your hand but realizing that person may have the need for you to go up and just get to know them a little better. And that may especially be true when students come in from overseas. And then learning to repent and embrace the cross.

Without that none of the other things I've shared with you will work. In the spiritual warfare without repentance we will soon be mowed down by enemy fire. The victorious life includes knowing what to do when you sin.

I don't know what struggles you have in your Christian life. I have about 10 major struggles and 20 minor struggles. And I can just tell you that if God can keep me 25 years and it's been every day for 25 years since my conversion He has kept me then He can keep anybody.

His keeping power is very very great. But being kept by God does not exclude our humanity and it does not exclude failure and in fact failure is often the back door to success. And I wonder if any of you have had some real really great humpty-dumpty failures over the past year.

Would you praise the Lord for them? Not in a flippant sense and not if in a sense someone's been hurt by it but that's already done now and the best thing is to be able to thank God that despite this or because of it or over it or under it or around it He is working. He is working through you. Many people don't witness because they're afraid they're going to blow it.

No one can witness it without at times miscommunicating. If I didn't believe God could overrule some of your miscommunications in your great mission I'd find it difficult to even pray much less to get involved. I've seen the Lord again and again use failure and weakness to bring glory to Himself.

As young Christians we all have our testimonies about the victorious life. I share something with you only out of desperation to somehow get this point over to you before I close. I was out in the woods in prayer.

I've always had among my ten major struggles a terrific struggle with pornography. I was peddling this stuff when I was 16 and got into a heavy lust trip mainly in the mind. I of course rejected it with all the vigor of a new convert, burnt it and went on to live at least several weeks in major victory.

When I came to Europe and discovered pornography everywhere as a full-blooded male I found it at times overwhelming. Having a deep sensitivity toward the Lord's money I've hardly ever in my life since conversion ever bought any of this horrible, expensive literature. But it's another thing when you find it laying somewhere where somebody else has paid for it and it's just there and of course, I mean as a Christian leader you need to keep a little up on these things and all kinds of other little mechanisms go triggering off in your mind and you don't always win the victory on the first round.

Well recently I was walking through the woods actually during a time of prayer and I came across a piece of pornography hanging in a tree. This was not a new species of tree, porno tree, but some twisted person had hung this piece of lewd literature in the tree and it's always so complex in my mind because truly a woman's body is beautiful and is created by God. That's what makes the whole thing so difficult and even more so when you're married and one minute it's all beautiful, it's given by God and the next minute, of course, it is wrong.

And so here this piece of magazine was in the tree. Apparently someone had hung it there and was using it for target price. Well I'd love to be able to testify that I just, you know, gave one big shout of praise and went jogging by the porno tree.

But unfortunately due to my own weakness, failure, lack of reality, call it whatever you want, I failed and the victory in that little day went to the magazine not to me. Why do I tell you that story? I'll tell you because many, many people have told me I should keep telling such stories because how often we as Christian leaders communicate that we don't fail. Maybe that's not your problem.

Fine, that's not the point. But the problem is that as a Christian you probably will fail the Lord. And when you do you will fail, feel terrible.

And when you do you will certainly feel you'll never be a missionary. And you certainly will feel you'll never be a Christian leader or a preacher. But in fact God's grace is to us as failure.

I don't want to do that again. And praise the Lord just two days ago there was a piece of free porn on the train coming into London and I didn't even give it the first look. I grabbed it in my hand, it almost burnt my arm off, and dropped it in the trash can without ever looking.

Now that, oh, George Borah, if I just gave you that testimony it gives a false impression. And as preachers and Christians we often give a false impression about what the whole Christian life is about. And so though a few may catch this and become very super victorious, at least for a while, the majority ultimately become discouraged.

And when you're looking for missionary recruits you know why you can't find them. Because people don't feel they're spiritual enough, or disciplined enough, or in the word enough. They don't feel they're Henry Martins or Hudson Taylors or even Lindsay Browns or George Brewers.

Hence therefore even the thought of one monk on the mission field is enough to say that they feel called to be a farmer in Wales. I don't know if they have any of those kind of trees down here. Yes, God's grace is to us.

Throughout our entire Christian life I've had failures. Of course we want to move higher and higher in the things of the Spirit. Of course we want to put on the armor of God more and more firmly and hold the shield of faith more and more in a way that we can stop every fiery dart.

But if one does get through because of our humanity, because of the nature of the warfare, because we live in a promiscuous society in which it's thirsting out like a sewer all around us, we have moments of sin or failure not justifying it. But in reality we go to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing and we get back into the battle because Satan's desire is not to win a few battles with you. He wants to win the war.

Satan is not happy when he trips you up on a Saturday evening and you do something really dumb. Satan's goal is to get you depressed and discouraged so that never again will you take up a cup and bread and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Reality.

It involves these things we just talked about and much more. But we won't have any of it until there's real honesty. Taking off the mask.

Being real. Not pretending to live up here when we're down here. Learning to really live together as a community of God's people fellowshiping, repenting, growing, exhorting, and witnessing.

And from that foundation of reality a mission will flow in a lifetime way rather than just in off and on spurts depending on what particular year you're in and what particular organization you belong to. Truly, real evangelism and witness is a spontaneous outflow of a life that's simply in tune with God. May that be so in these coming weeks and by God's grace years.

Let's pray. Let's take a few moments just for silent prayer. Search our hearts.

We worship the Lord. We confess our need. And we take a step of faith to believe that God is going to give grace and that we will be doers of the word.

That we will be different as a result of being here this weekend. Let's have moment silent prayer for prayers of faith and commitment to the Lord. Our God, we thank you for your all sufficient grace to us as sinners.

We thank you that when we fail you still love us. That you know all about us and you love us still. That you are in a restoration program in our lives that even we cannot measure because your love and grace and faithfulness is so great.

And we do yield ourselves to you. We do present our bodies as a living sacrifice as we are told in Romans 12, 1. And long not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. That, oh Lord, we may know that straight and narrow road of reality.

That our standard may be high and that our discipline may be real. And yet the degree of our reality will be so great that it incorporates even those moments of loss and failure so that we can come back to the cross and proceed forward in the battle. For we have become conscious that truly we are in a great spiritual warfare and we don't want to be found with our shield of faith gathering rust in a corner as we run forward with our little flimsy shirt of self-effort to be stopped by the first fiery dart of the enemy.

But God, by your grace, we want that shield. And only you can give us the grace even to hold it up to stand against the wild of Satan. Deliver us, Lord, from operation excuse that each one of us as a result of being in your word this weekend may move into this term with the anointing and the power of your Holy Spirit.

For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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