

Staff Teaching

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of adaptability, accountability, and unity in Christian leadership.

Duration: 56:54

Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-2, Isaiah 58:6, 1 Corinthians 10:4-5, 1 Corinthians 10:12

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his observations about the dangers that can hinder the work of God. He emphasizes the importance of unity and warns against the destructive power of disunity within ministries. The speaker also highlights the danger of becoming set in one's ways and allowing traditions to replace the leading of the Holy Spirit. He references a passage from Isaiah that calls for a cry to show God's people their transgressions and sins, emphasizing the need for self-examination and a willingness to change.

Transcript

God gave me some years ago when I was speaking to our leaders. We have different levels of leadership in our work. We have our general leaders, which would include team leaders, it would include responsible people in the office, like the man in charge of our accounting, who, by the way, I think is an Assembly of God man from the West Coast, been with me since 1963, a bachelor, and I tell you, if it wasn't for him, expansion would be very, very hard.

We're working on about 50 currencies, and we have a system that, like, if anybody gives a gift anywhere in the world to India, every penny of that gets out to India. And that's all done through a computer. We have one computer, but we don't have it for our finance department.

That's done by a volunteer up in Sweden, one of the countries where we have the greatest links, actually is in Sweden, and many of them with some of the great Pentecostal churches in that country, where I'll be going, actually, in about a month's time. But we have that level of leaders, and then we have the leaders who we call coordinators, and they are the men who have under their responsibility a whole country, and oftentimes they would have two or three top men who are responsible for a whole area in their country. For example, India, we break up into about 14 areas, and they would be considered coordinators.

So every year we get together. First of all, everyone within OM, we get together for three weeks of prayer and the Word and getting right with each other, the weekends and evangelism. This year it was London.

This is apart from those in India. They have their own similar conference in India, since it's rather a big place, and we have 280 workers out there. And then during that three weeks, the coordinator level, the main leaders, get together for four days, and really praying at a night of prayer, sometimes fasting in prayer, get God's plan for the next year, talk out some of the problems, hammer out policies, changes, doctrinal things like this whole argument that's come up lately on the authority of Scripture.

This is a very important time, and it was during a meeting like this some years ago. We were actually in a little coastal town of Deal. I think it must have been around 1965 or 66.

God just gave me this burden, and I shared it with them as leaders. And it was what I titled it, The Great Dangers That I Feel Are Facing Us in the Work of God. And I drew their notice to a text in Isaiah that I'd like you to look at, the book of Isaiah 58.

58, verse 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinances of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of justice.

They take delight in approaching God. And it goes on, Why have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Why have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure in exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with a fist of wickedness ye shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? That's a terrific passage to expound and to study, but it's mainly the sense that there is a time in a work of God when we need to cry out. And that morning with my leaders, I cried out about my burden for the work. Do not get a false impression about Operation Mobilization when something gets this big, with 3,000 people in the summer, spread out into about 50 nations and two ships and 300 vehicles on the road, couple of boats in Bangladesh, 25 headquarters, one of the largest distributing operations of literature in the world, even though that's only 20% of our emphasis.

Right now we're in about 500 literature production projects in 50 languages. And when you have so many young people, so many new people, you've got problems. And one of the things I want to tell you, and I'm sure you already know this, you don't do God's work without problems.

You don't do God's work without struggles, without misunderstandings, without having at times to go to one another and to share and to be honest, and yet to believe the best and to battle toward renewal and revival and reality. And of course, we must acknowledge that sometimes the most basic mistakes can come in even into our lives as leaders. The very things that we thought we learned as two years in Christ, like maintaining a quiet time, we can be wrestling with 25 years later.

And so I cried out that morning, and I think it was before a breaking of bread service, I also shared from 1 Corinthians 10-12, which I'd like you to just look at briefly, 1 Corinthians 10-12. I think you know that chapter. It's a powerful chapter.

Consider the spiritual blessings that these people had and then what happened to them. Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. And this is given after we had this powerful chapter about the overthrow of these people in the wilderness.

And notice these people had a great spiritual experience. They weren't a bunch of spiritual numbskulls. They had had some tremendous experience.

Verse 4, they did all drink of the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. They seemingly had experienced the deepest experience you could have in the Old Testament. That's an incredible verse.

And yet, but with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. You know, it's always bothered me that in some Bible circles they teach the Old Testament in a way that it seems the main thing is to see how much knowledge you can accumulate in your head.

And people go on into endless Bible study. One would wonder, is it possible to have too much Bible study? Of course, anything can be taken to extreme. If a man, for example, has just endless Bible study for pure knowledge's sake, no prayer life, no fullness of power from the Holy Spirit, of course it's a dead-end street.

And we see these things are written in the Old Testament. Not that we may open Bible schools and fill young people with knowledge, but these are examples. And of course we need knowledge.

I'm not opposed to that. But it's also written for our example. Now, because of time, I'm just going to give you some of these burdens.

The first burden I cried out about, and I still cry out about, I re-shared this message recently again with the leaders. It always changes because I just had the outline. But the first thing I cried out about is the danger of getting set in our ways.

That which can be born of a spirit initially, ten years later is merely a tradition. This is the way we do it. And this is why often what starts as a movement ends up a monument.

Because tradition comes in, and well, this is the way we always do it. Come on in, Jim. I just made Jim go send off a special delivery letter.

And it's so important to be open to change. This is why it's wonderful, for example, even in the area of music, to teach people new choruses, new hymns. We can use the old hymns.

A lot of churches today, you know, are missing out on reaching the young people simply because of a little bit of lack of adjustment. You know, a few changes and they would reach that many more people. And traditionalism in the church, I don't sense that your church is that way, but traditionalism in the church, and even in a work like O.M., can be so deadly.

Getting set in our own ways. What does this mean? It means a young person comes with a new idea. We're already in the 30s and now I'm 40.

We're beginning to become set. If we had applied to come in in reverse some years ago, we would be rejected by our own traditions. And this means we've got to let new people make mistakes.

As we grow older, we may have more wisdom. We may know, look man, this is not going to work. But if the movement is going to remain fresh, people have got to have some degree of freedom to make mistakes.

This is how terrific works of the Spirit end up in total legalism. What they battled through initially in the Spirit, finding out, discovering through failure, through trial and error, through weeping, now they set up as a structure and you've got to absorb in two weeks what it took them years to learn when the movement was being born. Study the history of your own denomination.

Any mistakes made in the early days? Could it be that the assemblies of God are going to go the same way as every other denomination? Could it be that in a few years you might even face liberalism? We hope not. But you know the brethren assemblies, on the other side of the fence theologically, they are always known for being at least very biblical in their own way. And yet we've seen in some brethren assemblies people would never believe it, even the inroad of liberalism, which you wouldn't dream.

You know they have other problems, but you wouldn't expect that. Look at the Christian church. You know the history of the Christian church was called Campbellism.

It's a group that we've never had much fellowship with because of certain extremes, but they were so fundamental, I mean, dear me, in their own way. Of course, very strong on baptism for salvation, and great arguers, great debaters, and yet the whole movement, half of it, has gone completely liberal. Completely liberal.

And so there's no one that's free. There's no one free from the devices of the enemy. And we may say now, well, this is not a problem, but Satan is very, very clever.

And so you have a problem. On the one hand, you want to maintain sound doctrine. You don't want to compromise.

You don't want liberalism to come in. Playing down on the teaching of the word of God. On the other hand, there's got to be the flexibility.

There's got to be the avoidance of legalism, of traditionalism. There's a difference between maintaining a few good traditions and traditionalism. There's a difference between having a few rules, and we need rules, and becoming legalistic.

And that's why, of course, balance is so important. We, of course, in OM, we discovered within a decade, we have many traditions, some of them very funny traditions, missionary traditions. We just have a constant problem to know what to do.

For example, we took a strong stand against television. We had no television around OM, you know, within 50 miles. Then some of our people got older.

They got married. Some people were recruited in the work who already had children, and who already had television. And the Lord showed us that for these people, we could not legalistically dictate, you know, the television's got to get out of your house.

And so we made an adaptation. Basically, we never had a written rule about this anyway. Sometimes it's better not to put things in writing.

You know, just keep kicking. Don't put it in writing. But we decided that if a family is living on their own within the Arm Fellowship, and they have children, then that decision has to be theirs.

But if it's an OM headquarters, any place where the training is going on of young people, it's out. And to this day, there's not television in such a situation. That's only one example.

It may not be a good one. Number two, the dean's not continuing to walk in the light. Now, this was a big emphasis in our work.

Let's be honest with one another. Let's walk in the light. If you've got a problem, you know, let's share it.

First John 1-7 talks about walking in the light, confessing our sin, being open. James says confess your faults to one another. Pray for one another.

And we found that as we moved into our second decade, there was a danger of becoming accustomed to one another and not walking in the light. And then darkness gets in. You know, in some things, the big problem is not the sin the person commits.

The big problem is they go into the dark. For example, we have a social policy. You have to have a social policy in a movement like this with so many young people.

For the first year, we don't even allow any dating. We say, seek God first. It's not that we believe dating is wrong.

We don't. But we feel that in this type of training, preparing people for world evangelism, first year, either they seek the Lord firstly and get trained in the spiritual warfare, or we'd rather not have them come. And you know, it's amazing.

When you give this to young people before they come, they come into it and you don't have that much trouble. But sometimes you do. And when I talk to someone who may have broken the social policy in some way, I've always seen the big thing has not been the breach of the policy, but the danger that he's putting it in the dark.

He's doing it in secret. That's the bigger danger than maybe going off in the corner and talking excessively to one girl again and again and again. And so we have found the need to stay in the light, to stay in the light.

That's not an easy thing, I'll tell you. In Christian work today, there's such an emphasis on reputation and being someone. But what a beautiful thing, at least in a smaller circle like this, if you can really be in the light.

That doesn't mean you share every little detail. My wife doesn't even want every little detail. She knows, for example, sometimes I have a struggle with these magazines.

You know, over in Florida, this is nothing compared to England, the pornography thing. I'm amazed. You can actually go to a newsstand in some places here and survive, you know, trying to buy a magazine for my son or cars.

And I survived. In England, I try to just stay away from newsstands completely. You send the dog to get your paper.

Or your wife. My wife walked into one of these places recently and rebuked them. I was really encouraged by that.

But I share that with my wife if I've had some struggle, but not necessarily every detail. Walking in the light, we don't want to drag people down into depression. People already tend to be depressed.

But I think honesty and sharing and praying together is so important. Most of you will have a ministry of counseling. When people come to you for counseling, one of the key things is not to communicate that you're up here and they're down here.

But try to relate to them. Try to say, look, I've had somewhat of a similar struggle in my life. It may not be the same.

This will often bring out. Many times when people are talking to you in counseling, the first 20 minutes they don't even tell you what the real problem is. I had a fellow come to me and his big problem was dancing.

It was going on and on, dancing, dancing. This was in India. I had to go out of the room and I came back.

This was on the ship. I said, look, is that really the issue? And I sensed it wasn't the issue. And he said no.

And then he shared that he had been seduced by a professor in a homosexual act. And this was tearing him apart. And that was really what was on his mind.

Keep in mind in your counseling ministry, this is a bit of a side track, and I'd love to talk to you about this whole thing of counseling, that it is a big thing when someone comes to share to some of you as leaders in the church, especially to the chief pastor. I'm sure you realize that. Some people, I know when they come to me, they're shaking.

They've been praying about it for days. And I have been so insensitive at times, not realizing this person was shaking. Then they're having trouble verbalizing.

I wasn't concentrating enough and making them feel relaxed. And of course, I therefore blew it. Or a bigger mistake I made is overreacting to their initial thing.

They may give me 25 or 10, 20 sentences, and I overreact and give them my quick solution. They haven't even got to the problem yet. And I've lost them.

I've overreacted, I've given them a quick answer, and I've lost them. And I don't see anybody today in God's ministry can avoid the ministry of counseling. It's very difficult on the pastors because we can get bombarded, and we do.

We just run out of time. And people in my position, one of my greatest struggles every day is just frustration. There are so many things to do every day.

There are so many needs. I've got a couple hundred phone numbers of people I could call and minister to on the phone. And some of them are very needy.

And much less people pounding on your door or making appointments, and then you're supposed to be preparing for sermons. This is why it's so beautiful to have a team. And any team that's working with an aggressive pastor who's on the move, I don't know that much about your pastor, but I just get a few vibrations he's slightly on the move.

You are going to have to be patient. You're going to have to esteem him. You're going to have to tell him what's on your mind.

For example, I've had brothers on my team that wanted some time with me because I was moving so fast, I didn't read the vibration that they wanted some time. And if you ever have that problem, just make it clear to your senior leader, look, I really need some time with you. I'm going through some struggles.

Can I have some time? And I'm sure when that vibration comes on paper, he will make the time. Sometimes in my own position, and I can't project this on anyone else, some days I'm just hanging on for survival. I'm experiencing him and I'm filled with his love, but it's still a survival situation as far as time, problems, family, the roof's leaking, my wife's had a bad day, the kids are griping.

And it's in days like that when sympathy from your staff and patience really enables you to keep your sanity. Maybe things are easier here in Florida, the vacation land, I don't know. Number three, not taking time to meet for prayer.

This is a danger. Now I'm speaking about the leaders. We're all counseling so many people, we're all ministering.

Pretty soon, we can count the days that have passed since we've met for prayer, corporately, as you do here in the mornings, and then as much as possible with one another. You're not all going to have as much personal time and prayer with Quinton, for example, as you would want. That would be normal.

You could pray with one another. For him, he may be praying with someone else. And you know, in any ministry when we're on a team, our whole work is teamwork.

For 24 years, our whole movement has functioned as a team. Church planting teams, evangelistic teams, renewal teams, music teams. There are teams that often have tremendous struggles.

People in music are usually high strung, temperamental, they're often melancholics, and our music teams, and we've been in very heavy music ministries, television, I tell you, the devil, he has a whole set, a strategy, just for musicians. And they, you know, I've been with music teams backstage, they're at each other's throats, one or two are in love with the same girl, and all kinds of things, and some of them are depressed, and then they have to get out and sing, you know, Joy, Joy. I've seen them winding it up before they go out on stage, you know.

There they are, they're here, come along. Then they all come backstage because I'm the preacher waiting back there, you know. The moment they get backstage, ooh.

So, I've often prayed the Lord would keep me from the music team, but the same thing can happen, you know, in a regular team like this. And the devil is very, very clear, clearly trying to destroy any team that's

trying to work together to accomplish something. So don't neglect that time of prayer.

And then the fourthly, not being involved in evangelism. Think of Acts 17, 17. Here's the Apostle Paul, a great theologian.

Apostle Paul, the church planter, Apostle Paul, who had these great ideas and great experiences. Where do you find them? In the market. In the market.

We insist on our leaders, no matter how much gift they have in preaching, no matter how much public ministry, that they get out in face-to-face street or door-to-door evangelism every week. Now, we fail. You know, if you set high goals, you fail.

And I don't get out every week as I used to, but it's so important for people in behind-the-scene ministries. Our office staff all go to the door-to-door evangelism on Saturday. It's a requirement.

There's a loophole. You can get out of it. You don't want to force people, but most of them go.

I tell you, that really helps the week stay real. If you're spending so much time behind-the-scenes counseling people, if you're not out meeting sinners, we're all sinners, but those who have not been saved, unreality comes in. You know why God's people often pick each other in a monastic cage of unreality.

When you get out involved with people out there, you know, a man who's beating his wife every other week, a triple divorce case, drunkard, murderers, you know, then the problems among God's people, they get much more. When you're not involved with people in the world, the problem of the person sitting behind you in the Christian office becomes bigger and bigger, you know. Everybody has got areas of inconsistency, and when we're not involved with the world and people that are really raw, then we magnify the problems of God's people, and then that pulls us apart.

And it's so important to be involved in evangelism, and our leaders have testified sometimes this is the hardest thing. The morning you set aside to do it, suddenly, you know, ten things, zero in on. And it's a struggle, but make it a goal.

You have house-to-house work coming up on Saturday or Wednesday or whenever it is. It's an enormous encouragement to the church when some of the full-time staff gets in that kind of thing. It really means a lot.

The devil will try to divide the full-time staff from the layman. You may not have the problem now, but it's always a danger. And they at times will wonder what you aren't doing.

You, in turn, can get into a guilt trip without even taking one day off. They have to be careful, you know, in their judgments and believing the best. But I'm not speaking to them this morning.

On the other hand, you need to keep your lines of communication open and realize that our first ministry as full-time people in a church is to serve. It's to be the doorbell. And that means we're going to be misunderstood.

Somebody is going to think we're just lounging around when, in fact, we may have been up the night to three in the morning counseling someone and sleeping in an hour would have been justified. But I tell you, if old Joe Farmer who gets up at five o'clock every morning to milk his cows sees you sleeping in an hour, you know, what a lazy preacher. And, you know, it can be pretty wild.

You know, the greatest pressure in a church, I feel at times, comes upon the pastors and the staff members wise. These people are put in a cage. They're expected to be, you know, the sort of the reincarnation of the pastor's sermon.

They know he's got this problem, but, you know, they expect the pastors and his wife to sort of have all this tremendous pressure. And I've seen this in counseling. Pastors' wives just going down the tube.

That's a way to get at a strong pastor who may be going very well. One of the ways to get at him, the devil knows it, get through his wife. And he may not be sensitive to this.

Every one of you married men have got to be very sensitive to the strategy Satan will try to use upon your wife. It will not be the same strategy as upon you. And therefore, you may be making the greatest mistake in your ministry, not protecting your wife.

Old Bill Gothard says, you know, we've got to protect our wives. That's one of the basic things in marriage. So keep that in mind.

Number five, we've got to move on a little quicker. Number five, subtle influences of the lukewarm. We all know what happens, what it says in Revelation about the lukewarm.

I have a little note here. I recommend you have a quotation book. I hope it doesn't get to look as bad as mine.

You put in that book quotations that really go through you like an arrow from Tozer or anyone else. And I have a little note here to read page 29 and the book gems from Tozer, but I don't have that with me. But I think you know some of the writings of Tozer and I strongly recommend them.

It doesn't mean the books I put on my book table. I don't agree with everything. I caught this cold up in Chattanooga and it's almost gone.

Some sunshine would come here in Florida. It might disappear. But I believe in Christian work one of the greatest enemies is the lukewarm.

This is one of the things I just try to ward it off my own soul. Lukewarmness. Oh my land it can come in so many directions.

And linked to that is we become accustomed to spiritual things. We become accustomed to miracles. You go in some circles miracles what's that? Oh we have miracles here every week.

Sometimes of course the miracles we're talking about aren't always miracles but there are real miracles. It's becoming a difficult word in our work it's becoming a difficult word. The word miracle.

But whatever we must avoid lukewarmness we become aware of the danger of over familiarization with the things of the spirit. So we no longer are excited. People come to the altar tears and you know we've seen it so much we can walk off and you know mainly be thinking about what we're going to eat or some other thing.

And I mean I just have to repent. I don't know how you survive but I have to repent often because I know God sees my heart and I know sometimes I don't have the compassion and I've seen sometimes that I don't throw myself into the altar call as strongly as I used to. Sometimes it may be partly justified and I'm

battling for survival.

I've got other people to deal with. Of course you've got counselors that are doing that and you need help but I remember being in intensive campaigns in India. I didn't even eat at night.

They used to eat after the meeting. I couldn't even think of eating. Needy souls crying out for God and praying for the sick and you know they're not even happy unless you preach two hours in some of these places.

And by the time I was done counseling at midnight I just went out. And then up in the morning and out into the streets. I think at times I found that hard and overreacted to it.

And it is a struggle. Let's cry out that God will keep us from lukewarmness and when it comes let's repent. Let's be honest.

We're walking down the street just say God you know that my eyes have been more attracted this morning to the CV shop or the clothing shop or the cars or the telephone poles. Let's face it there are days when we have more interest in passing cars than passing people. What's the latest thing? Oh what's he driving? Oh look at that shop window.

And right by us people on the way out into eternity. And you know if we lose our passion for souls whatever else we may have it's canned. May God have mercy on us and pray for me and I may not lose a passion for souls the extra mile in sharing Christ.

Then six presumption. Presumption that we know the principles. This is a danger in a work like ours we have a lot of strong principles a lot of burdens and after years ten fifteen years we can presume.

Oh we know that. We get a visiting preacher in. We develop a wrong attitude toward him.

I've been working a lot on messages on attitude. Very important. Right here in this room do you have a right attitude toward everybody else in this room? I don't care if they've stepped on your toe disconnected you on the switch board.

I don't care if you think you've heard that someone had said something about you or you think the pastor didn't really appreciate your ministry and your gifts or has not given you all the opportunities you should have. I want to ask you regardless of whatever else do you have a right attitude toward everybody in this room? If you don't you need to repent. Claim his precious blood.

He doesn't expect that you're going to get all the sweet lovely overwhelming emotions toward one another. Some people just switch us off. Certain types of people switch me off.

I'm fortunate very few people actually switch me off. A lot of people I counsel they may get switched off very quickly. Well you know we're delivered from that being switched on and off about people.

We don't make little instant evaluations based on our previous emotional experience but we seek in all that we do to have the right attitude toward people. We may not agree. We may be even spiritually upset but the right attitude.

Tozer talks about sins of the disposition. We can come Sunday morning big gospel smile and up there in front of everybody inside rattlesnakes and cobras and crocodiles are fighting and we're boiling up because

our wife boiled our egg too much or some other major crisis that we've had in the morning. You know Christians can become super sensitive.

We need to develop sensitivity toward others but not become super sensitive about what they are saying about us. What they are thinking. I find Christians get in such a bind.

Christian workers. What's he thinking about me? How do they feel about me? And we can become very unrealistic. We can become even naive about life.

Life is filled with nitty gritty things and things go wrong. And we shouldn't panic. We shouldn't read into people's words more than we really belong in.

Some people are more moody. I'm a little bit moody. I'm not talking about D.L. Moody, huh? And, you know, in the course of a day, if you have to, you can ask Jim about me.

The course of a day, you know, you can ask me the same question in two different moods and get two different answers based on major theological issues depending on the mood that I'm in. Now, yesterday morning, soon as I finished preaching, I was depressed. Just mildly, but I was depressed.

I walked to the back and I was just depressed. I'm a very idealistic person. I always feel my preaching is generally poor considering what there is here.

Then a lady came to me for counseling and she was really needy, I tell you, and immediately I went up. I respond to problems. But, you know, after Elijah had his greatest victory, he went into his worst depression.

And Christian leaders have to be careful about that. You may have your greatest crusade, great victory, and somehow go into depression. You'd be better if somebody loaded a big problem on you.

And someone was sharing with me the other day. Well, it was when I came to the ship, in my main leader on the ship. This is another important thing I can bring in here.

Your relationships with each other will change and develop over the years. And you'll find as a man, your co-worker, has more and more pressure, he will even change in his relationship to you. Maybe when he first came he was very submissive to you and, you know, you just seem to get on so well.

But as he had more and more and more pressure and had to discuss more things with you on a high level, on a difficult level, you had greater difficulties in your relationship. I've had this with some of my leaders. When they first came, you know, things just went incredibly smooth.

But as they got into more and more responsibility, they were more under pressure. They came into what I was in. And so two of us were on a similar level.

I went to the ship recently with one of my main leaders. I was in a bit of a negative mind and burdened about, you know, the need for revival on the ship, the need for more reality, more prayer. And we got locked into an overreaction.

He said this. He was defending the ship and I was attacking. And I ended up saying, man, the whole movement is sick.

OM is sick. That's just what I said to him. So he musters up all his attack to prove to me that OM wasn't sick.

About a week later, he started loading me with all his problems. This thing, that thing. Without realizing it, I was defending the movement.

God's moving. Praise the Lord. We almost laughed.

And he said, I know the way to keep you motivated. Just load you with the problems and with the negatives. That forces you to become positive.

They know I'm sort of one that likes to keep the balance. So if they come with all negatives, I go positive. Sometimes if I start with all negatives, then it gets into an interesting situation.

Well, that's important. Presumption is deadly. Number seven.

Choosing the road of the least resistance. This is a danger as we become older. We know more of the angles.

And we can choose the road of least resistance. Especially in regard to our own temperament. What happens to many evangelists? They get wiped out.

Wiped out. Why? Because God's using them in evangelism. In evangelism they're fine.

And people immediately, they appreciate their ministry. People are being saved. And they emphasize that.

And they throw all their effort into that. But here's something that's very important. That man who's a gifted evangelist, he shouldn't worry about that gift too much.

He'd better search out his weaker points and work on those. At 17 I was being used in evangelism. God broke me and showed me not to worry so much about that gift.

But to look at my weaker points. Not choose the road of least resistance. My weaker points were lack of patience.

Lack of patience. Lack of sensitivity about people. Gentleness.

Forbearance. Becoming a good listener. And I think it's important not to choose that which is easiest for your temperament.

But to be willing to go sometimes the hard way. Not to justify your weaknesses in your temperament. In counseling we sometimes find men telling their wives, well this is the way I am.

And you know, more or less take it or leave it. Can you imagine a spiritual man saying such nonsense? We can't do it. Even though we may have battled against a particular weakness for years.

And I find people with super sanctification concepts. I don't think any of you are in that category. But I don't know if you've dealt with super sanctification.

They no longer are able to accept any weaknesses in their own life. It's always the other man. It's always the wife.

It's always this factor, that factor. And soon they are unwilling to repent. And I tell you when you get people in that stage you get real troubles.

You get real troubles. There may be a few people, history seems to show, that seem to get such a godly walk that very few people can find anything. But let's face it, 99% are not in that category.

And if we misuse those few people, especially when they read their biographies, because biographies don't generally give you the total story. Even A.W. Tozer, most of his kids have gone astray. He had enormous problems in his home.

Enormous problems. And if you read Tozer carefully, he confesses this. He confesses that a lot of times he couldn't figure out what was from God and what was his own temperament.

And some of his friends were there when I talked to him just openly about his weakness and his struggles. Every man of God, every prophet of God will have his weaker areas and how important it is to have a realistic view of ourselves. Billy Graham said the greatest obstacle in our sanctification is our unwillingness to see ourselves as we really are.

Sometimes to see ourselves even as other people see us and yet not become depressed. You get some people that live on a terrific high pitch but then finally it dawns on them that they've got this kink in their life. Everybody's seen it.

Finally they've seen it. What happens? Depression. Like somebody putting a pin in a gigantic balloon.

It's deadly. So we need to beware of that danger of choosing the road of least resistance. I remember Dale Roton who's been my co-worker and has stood with me for 23 years.

He's phlegmatic. He's an intellectual. He's got a couple of degrees.

I don't have any degree. Sometimes people give me a third degree. But really he's stood with me all these years.

He's been my Nathan. If I say something in a message, he feels it's exaggerated, he feels it's this, that, he comes up to me very quietly. Brother George, I appreciate that message.

And you know I have learned more from that Nathan, Dale Roton, than I have from a lot of people who are patting me on the back. And we're always growing, we're always learning. And I think that's very important.

And I remember him sharing in Madrid 20 years ago in a ministry, he said whatever you do, harden your heart against any area of sin. Anything that's besetting you, battling and falling again. With me it's been my tongue.

My tongue goes faster than my brain and this problem, that problem. How easy it would have been years ago just to harden my heart a little bit. And I think it's so important just keep breaking, keep learning and that sanctifying work will continue, it will continue.

And it's a beautiful thing. And then number eight, listening too quickly to evil reports. Proverbs 11, 13 warns us about this.

I tell you beware of listening too quickly to evil reports about anyone and especially those who are in leadership because the devil is so clever in this area. We find the devil trying to bring disunity between our top leaders and it happens because here's a man over in France, here's a man in Germany, here's a man in India, they hear things, it's amazing how quickly news goes and they feel someone doesn't respect them. Little things, they arrive in the airport to visit a particular field, they expect someone's going to meet them after all and no one comes, no one answers the phone, you're stuck out there for hours, you get the feeling what am I? Nothing? The devil is so clever bringing in disunity.

Guard your unity with everything you have because the way many ministries have been destroyed here in America is through disunity and different people are reading different books, they're getting input from different directions and pretty soon if they're restless, some crazy things can take place and then number nine, allowing the discipline to slip. I will tell you, I could be here all morning on this, this is the issue. We get in God's work, God uses us, people start giving us things, sometimes we're not so accountable for our time, this is probably more on the mission field than what you and I have and our discipline begins to slip.

In evangelism, a great problem, the band just goes out, everybody wants to fill their stomachs, let's have the evangelist over for a meal, I don't know if the local pastor has this problem, but pretty soon you can just be big as a balloon, all God's people, sometimes they're trying to throw off their own guilt complex by getting you fatter, but really discipline in eating, discipline in sleeping, discipline with the eyes, discipline in our quiet time, discipline in intercession, discipline in every area is basic and the devil is clever, men who once preached so greatly today reprobates. Number ten, subtle forms of pride. You know, I actually was so stupid, I thought I was really quite victorious in this area of pride.

You know, it's like the man who's going to write a book on humility with his picture on the cover. How I learned humility, God's gift. And I am convinced that the battle against pride never ends.

It never ends. See this front door pride, the obvious guys on an ego trip, but that's not the problem for most of us, it's back door pride. Back door pride.

And it's so subtle and it says before contention, pride comes before contention. Often the disunity, the struggles, if you get down to the root, and it's hard to get to the root of issues, it's pride. It's pride.

You may have some very good facts. You may have some very good reasons. You may have been definitely mistreated.

What you have to say is right, but the root is still pride. The root is still pride. And that's difficult to handle.

You don't get roots by just pouring some kind of water on top of the leaves. You've got to dig. There's got to be surgery.

Number 11, slacking off in the war of lust. Slacking off in the war of lust. First Peter 2.11 is a verse that I often meditate on and memorize and review it.

And I need to review it now because I can't quote it verbatim, but it talks about the war against our members. First Peter 2.11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. I want to give a warning here that in your counseling ministry especially you've got to be careful.

And avoid all appearance of evil. Two things keep this in balance as you work together with the opposite of sex to some degree. One, believe the best.

Believe the best. Number two, avoid all appearance of evil. It's not a matter of going 50% in all of this.

Each has got to go 90% and stay well interlocked because the devil is so clever in this. I tell you things are happening in the states in this area that are just unbelievable and we just must not slack off. You know something you're going to face if you haven't faced it already? In most congregations, I say this with care and I know you're leaders, there are women hallucinating about the pastor.

I've been involved in a lot of counseling on this and I am speaking the truth. Generally there's some women out there hallucinating about the pastor. They have a wild affection toward the pastor.

It cannot be avoided. And we had this recently with our minister of music. There was a girl in the audience and she wanted to come on and she was actually mental.

This is often the case. A person don't know whether she was after me as well, maybe after our musical director, just hallucinating and just infatuated and then when she didn't get it, they turned. And you get someone like that out there who's after the pastor or could be the sister of the pastor.

And then they don't get what they want. You have to cut that person off. They can turn and spread malicious gossip and lies and accuse you falsely and say you've been to bed with her or any kind of story.

And this is where we need a lot of wisdom. This is why we need to stay in the light with one another because then we know one another's walk. And the fiery darts that Satan gives and this is why the women need to be saved.

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