

Staying in the Battle

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon encourages believers to actively engage in spiritual warfare through faith, prayer, and community support.

Duration: 55:58

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of not getting caught up in minor issues and distractions in our spiritual journey. He warns against the subtle methods that Satan may use to trip us up and discourage us. The speaker emphasizes the need to stay motivated and focused on God's word, as this is the best defense against the enemy's attacks. He also mentions the struggle of balancing the time spent on receiving spiritual nourishment and giving out to others. Overall, the sermon highlights the reality of spiritual warfare and the need to be alert and prepared.

Transcript

Ephesians chapter 6 is our text for this evening. Book of Ephesians chapter 6. How many of you actually finished or you almost finished reading the Discipleship Manual? Raise your hand. You almost finished it.

Some of you may not know what it is, but that is just a small little book that presents some of the basic things that are expected of you in the summer campaign. Needs to be revised again. Things change, but most of it is valid.

And in there, I believe, there are some chapters you're supposed to start memorizing. How many remember at least reading about those chapters you should start memorizing? A little survey, that's that's encouraging. How many have started memorizing slowly, however slowly, some of those chapters, at least reading them regularly as it recommends? Raise your hand.

Well, we're getting a little bit slower. You know why some people don't come on OM? Because the preparation to come on OM seems too vigorous for them. And actually, next year we're trying to reduce some of the preparation a little bit more for the summer program.

Try to maintain, you know, an increase of training and preparation for the year program. It's very difficult sometimes to decide about these things. And sometimes your feedback about the orientation given before

you came, the books, the tapes, very helpful for us, for the future.

As we think of world evangelism, as we think of the task even lying ahead of us this summer, we must become alert to the reality of spiritual warfare. Some of you perhaps heard the tape in the orientation series, which we are phasing out and changing, may even be replaced with videotapes. Some of you may have heard that tape on Satan's counter-attacks.

I hope you'll get some more about this when you get to Europe, when you have more orientation in Mexico or in Toronto. But let's see what we can look at tonight there in Ephesians 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.

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 loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

And above all, that's important isn't it, above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you 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, praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me. Paul wasn't afraid to ask prayer for himself, and I tell you, I'm not afraid to ask prayer for myself, and for me.

That utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds. He was in prison when he wrote this. Ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.

Again and again and again, hundreds and hundreds of times I have meditated on those scriptures. And I believe one of the reasons that we have seen the breakthroughs that we have seen in Europe, in the communist world, in the Muslim world, is because we have learned something of spiritual warfare, something of both defensive and offensive spiritual warfare. We're told in Corinthians that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty unto God, to the pulling down of strongholds.

We understand, of course, that there are many aspects to spiritual warfare. Let's think first of all about some of the defensive aspects of spiritual warfare. Holding high the shield of faith against the fiery darts of the evil one.

I was counseling someone today, and I said what you need for what's on your heart is to get Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones' book, *Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure*, and read it through prayerfully. He was one of the most anointed godly servants ever raised up in Europe. He was the international president of InterVarsity International for many years.

Even Karl Barth, who was a neo-orthodox, and not of the same theology as Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, said that Lloyd-Jones was one of the greatest preachers in Europe. *Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure* has some important chapters on spiritual warfare, like being in God's gymnasium. We know what it says in Luke 14.

Count the cost. I believe another reason why we don't have more people here is because OM is a movement that challenges young people before they ever come this far to count the cost. Some of the things on the tape, some of the things in the discipleship manual, we know they frighten some people away.

We know our reputation may frighten some people away. Some of those things are probably not true. That's unfortunate.

Other legitimate things may frighten people away. There's a tendency today, brothers and sisters, to forget the Gideon principle. Even in the church, lower the standards.

In the name of contextualization, in the name of whatever, lower the standards so that we can somehow fill the church. Many churches in the United States especially don't seem to be that concerned about holiness, spiritual reality, prayer, godliness, ethics, integrity. They seem to be more concerned at times about Sunday morning church attendance, and of course giving.

Not that those things are not important, because they're part of the big picture. So spiritual warfare is not something that many people seem to understand anymore, and it is unfortunate that some people who get into spiritual warfare seem to go quickly into extremes and emphasize only one aspect of spiritual warfare rather than realizing there's a whole cross-section of aspects of spiritual warfare that are brought out very beautifully in this book by Arthur Matthews, formerly a leader with OMF China Inland Mission, 31 Studies on Spiritual Warfare. Wesley Duell in his book Touching the World Through Prayer, I had one of those up here, also talks a great deal about spiritual warfare, and I hope you can read that.

What are some of the defensive tactics we need to have to stand against the fiery darts of Satan, the shield of faith? That's, some people say, bottom line. Great faith is not in the absence of doubts, struggles, questions. Great faith is as you learn to lift up that shield of faith when those things are coming at you.

Don't think of them as coming at you from through the doors or through the windows. It's through the mind. Winky Prattney in one of his books, that dynamic New Zealander, just with him a few months ago, talks about how Satan tries to use memories.

What some people may think is some force of an evil spirit is often just a memory. It's the old devil trying to bring back old memories. I don't believe that most of our problems are demons moving in upon us as believers.

It's a very controversial area, something that we cannot just throw out the window as we study spiritual warfare. And as you go out to places like Pakistan and India and other parts of the world, you'll be facing demon-possessed people. Very conservative missionary woman in Pakistan, Vivian Stacey, isn't that her name? Recently wrote a book, really coming out of Pakistan experience, about dealing with evil spirits.

We're speaking here now about unconverted people. Moody Bible Institute, Moody Press, recently published a significant book about evil spirits. We can't look in the Bible without realizing there are evil spirits.

There is, however, today an overemphasis on this in some places. Thank God for Billy Graham. He has a tendency to bring things back into balance.

Instead of writing another book about demons, he wrote one about angels. You don't hear much emphasis about that. Angels and their power to protect us, and their ministry for us and on our behalf.

Let us realize that we're not going to understand spiritual warfare through one message, through reading one book. This is a lifetime experience, which is a basic part of our pilgrimage as soldiers of Jesus Christ. And we are being trained by the great trainer and the great comforter, the Holy Spirit.

So sometimes when doubts come upon us, we have to just hold high that shield of faith, and stand on God's promises, and say, thus saith the Lord. The devil is the accuser of the brethren, but we have to stand on the Word of God. That's why one of the most important things I can urge you to do, if you want to be effective in spiritual warfare, is to get into the Word of God.

I cannot understand why more people are not memorizing Scripture, including long-term O-M-ers. Is it that we really have lazy minds? Never forget, as I watched Dale Roton very closely when I was a young Christian. Just discover how much Scripture he was memorizing.

After our first Mexico trip, he went to Wheaton College, and I went to Moody. And one day I went out to Wheaton. The next year to Mexico, he didn't go.

He was getting interested in the width of Bible translators. We didn't know any kind of a movement was being born, and we sort of separated for a year or two, as far as doing anything. And I went out to Moody, out to Wheaton for Moody to talk to him, and I saw all these cards all over his room, Scripture memory cards.

And discovered at that time he already had about a third of the New Testament committed to memory. Years later, someone wanted to know Dale Roton's secret to victorious living. Dale Roton's secret for perseverance.

You know, you always expect some spectacular story, some dynamic encounter with God, some great mountaintop, treetop, blessing, zap, electric shock, bolt from glory. And Dale answered this person in his somewhat Rotonian, phlegmatic way. Oh yes, I read my Bible.

Well, he did read it a little bit intensively. The Word of God. Someone once said this book will either keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.

So memorizing Scripture, standing on the promises, I think of verses like Philippians 4, where it speaks. Did I say that the Ephesians, was Ephesians also written from prison? I know Philippians was written from prison. Ephesians was as well.

Sometimes I need to review these things. But in Philippians 4 verse 8, it says, Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. I wonder how many of us practice that.

So easy to be negative. So many things go wrong in this world. Some of you may, if you're negative, focus on the things that go wrong this summer.

And there will be things that go wrong. And we try to constantly put them right. But I can tell you, wherever you go, wherever you went this summer, the biggest airlines in the world, the greatest Christian camps,

things go wrong.

Dawson Trotman, in the summer of 19, I think it was 55, went to Word of Life camp in Schoon Lake. And he drowned. He drowned.

That's big. A friend of mine, his wife, was walking along a cliff. Slipped on the grass just before Urbana.

Went over the cliff. She was in heaven. He was in Brazil at a conference when that happened.

Billy Graham once said, life at its best is filled with sadness. And one thing is, we must understand, as we stand against fiery darts, as we move forward in spiritual warfare, let's not shoot mice, especially the 45 millimeter cannons. You say, what, you know, please interpret this Berberian language.

Don't spend a lot of time and energy fighting little things, arguing over little things, getting all worked up about little things. One woman on the summer campaign some years ago, crisis. First time in her life she had ever washed her hair in cold water.

And this is heavy. And it's amazing. I so hate to see this when it comes out in myself, but it comes out.

Getting steamed up over little things. It's a trick of the enemy. And usually when you're getting steamed up over some little thing, the enemy is setting you up for something big.

He wants to distract you from prayer, distract you from some person you should be ministering to, distract you from the Word, distract you from a good night's sleep, which is so important. And we said of Wesley, he hardly missed ever a night's sleep. He didn't fly across the Atlantic too many times, but I can assure you, one of Satan's strategies to set you up is get you steaming and puffing and hyped up about some little thing.

Take 1st Peter 5 7 and stand on it, casting every care upon him, for he careth for you. If all of a sudden you were told today that you had terminal cancer with one month to live, most of the things that you're getting excited about would suddenly shrink and become very small. And brothers and sisters, when we consider lost souls going out into hell from terminal sin, that should enable us to focus more on other people and give ourselves to other people, rather than all just get caught up in our own little world.

Of course, the rest of my expression is that we have to shoot elephants, we have to deal with big things, and we'll be wrestling all of our life with determining our priorities. I remember walking around the park with Dr. Francis Schaefer many years ago. He spoke three or four days straight at one of our conferences in the mid-60s, the same place where we now have our international office in London.

And he shared with me how one of his great struggles was the use of time, and how much time to take in. We need spiritual food. I have to take in all the time.

I know how I have methods that I'm able to take more in, probably spiritually, in a short period of time than most people, through reading, through cassette, through exhortation, through a number of different methods. But we're constantly wrestling for the balance. How much time to take in reading, study, receiving, ministry, how much to give out.

Here he was, in his senior year, still wrestling with this. So don't worry if you're wrestling with a little of it right now. One of the reasons I recommend people to take one or two years off college, take a break in their education.

They're becoming academic eggheads. Their heads are getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and their hearts are getting smaller and smaller, and they're getting spiritually fat, and they can't even see their feet, spiritually. Take one or two years off, and go put into practice what you've learned.

The Bible teaches, to whom much is given, much will be required. If you were put into practice what you already know, some of you were already academic eggheads when you were coming out of Sunday school. If you went and put into practice what you know, maybe God would give you more.

Doing. James 1. Let's not be hearers of the Word. Mega-eared, hearers of the Word.

Notebooks filled. Let's be doers of the Word. I wish you could have been with me last night when I shared in a typical midweek Canadian church meeting.

I'm being doers of the Word. I tell you, it's an exciting little event, because I tell you, a lot of people today are just sitting. They're just sitting, and we have about as much a sanctified imagination as a retreating frozen grasshopper.

We need to open our eyes. We need to realize there is a work for Jesus ready at our hands. That's a hymn, by the way, we sing in England.

Defensive spiritual warfare means being positive. It means standing on the promises of God. It means holding up that shield of faith.

Spiritually speaking, as those fiery darts come your way. What are some of the fiery darts you can expect to deal with with that shield of faith? The fiery dart of impurity. We have not touched on that subject near enough, in my opinion.

O.M. committed to preaching the whole counsel of God in any one conference like this never gives more than 10%, never more than 10% of that which is burning on our hearts. I have over 400 tapes of basically different messages scattered around the world. Some of those messages I only give once every third year.

I don't have the opportunity, like the pastor of a church who can, you know, give 52 different messages every year, and 52 more the next year, and 52 more the next year. No wonder he can preach through the whole Bible. I have a different kind of ministering.

But don't think because you've gone through this conference and the Belgium conference that now you know everything that's on O.M.'s heart. Also don't think, because we haven't mentioned something here, that we don't have convictions about it, especially in the area of justice, righteousness. Many things we haven't touched on here we'd like to talk about.

This is a conference of basic issues, maybe a few other things added in. We have a lot more we'd like to say about the fiery darts of impurity. Some of it's on tape.

I recommend John White's book, Eros Defiled. Maybe a few things you don't agree with, but basically that book has been mightily used of God. Erwin Lutzer's book, Living With Your Passions.

Roy Hessian's book, Forgotten Factors, dealing with the area of sex in the life of the believer. Even this summer you could have a fiery dart of impurity come at you. Pornography is all over the place in Europe.

That's only the beginning. The pornographic video going across Europe as if it had legs. All kinds of subtle methods that Satan may try to use to trip you up, to make a fool out of you in the midst of spiritual warfare.

I pray you'll walk in the light. I pray you'll put into practice that which is spoken about in this brilliant book, Calvary Road. Another fiery dart, of course, is a fiery dart of discouragement.

Here again, I'm often speaking for an hour on this one subject. I know this is Satan's biggest method for me. If I can stay motivated, very little of the enemies I watch, salt, fiery dart, very little of it gets too far.

If I can stay motivated, which is one of my goals every day. I have this prayer. I often pray it on New Year's Eve.

God, I want every day, every day this year to be special. I want something to happen every day. I want a breakthrough every day.

I have a little diary, and in that diary I write down every meeting I take. And I write down other little notes. And of course, I keep carbon copies of letters, but most of it has to be just written in heaven.

But it's great when you go to bed at night to be able to look back and say, this has been a special day. I've seen God work. Often it's just in the life of one individual.

It may be one letter. It may be one phone call. It may be a gift given to you.

It may be someone that's just shown some interest in the gospel. It may be someone that's accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you go forward this summer with a spirit of expectation? Are you expecting great things from God? Surely that's absolutely basic to this kind of work that we are going into.

I wish there were time to talk to you about my strategy against discouragement. Some of it is written in my book, No Turning Back. You develop your own strategy.

You don't need mine. You go to the New Testament. You get 50 points against discouragement.

They're all there. The Bible says, don't let the sun go down upon your anger. I think it's more dangerous to let the sun go down upon your discouragement.

It's not just a matter of praying a prayer. Oh Lord, touch me. Oh Lord, encourage me.

God often throws it back on our plate. We've got to encourage ourselves through repentance, through dealing with that which may be dragging us down, or through some of the other offensive weapons we're going to talk about in a few moments, like praise, the power of praise to deal with discouragement, the power of thanksgiving to deal with discouragement, and many other of Satan's fiery darts. We don't have time to go into a greater list of Satan's fiery darts.

Laziness, disunity, gossip, sins of a tongue, so subtle is our enemy. We don't want to dwell on it too much. The man of God said, for every one look at Satan, take ten looks upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't always spend a lot of time in OM teaching you about all the cults. There are so many cults. There are so many false religions.

You go right around the bench trying to study them all. We try to give something. You focus on Jesus.

You focus on getting to know the light. You focus on getting to know the truth, and most of these cults will never bother you the rest of your life. Keep that in balance, because it's not an excuse for ignorance.

Brothers and sisters, there's so much to learn. I feel, even though I've been reading and studying and absorbing things for 30 years, I have so much to learn. Learn how to stand defensively, not just with a shield of faith, but all the weapons outlined in that particular passage.

Let's move on and talk a little bit about the offensive, moving forward to take territory for Christ. We've already spoken in this series about strategy, different kinds of evangelism. We've emphasized that our first strategy is prayer, offensive praying.

We're told in the Word of God to pray for governments, to pray for those that are in authority. There's a great emphasis today, in some places, on binding Satan. Get people speaking with the binding and loosing vocabulary.

You'll also find a great emphasis today on building the kingdom, and through prayer, making an impact on government and on nations. Maybe some of you know something about Reconstruction theology. I won't take you into a course of that tonight, another mega-controversial item.

But certainly, even if you feel some of that emphasis is extreme, and I do, there is an element of truth in that emphasis that is seen in the Word of God. Christians should be involved in government. We should pray that our nations could become more righteous and more just.

We don't want to see people mistreated. We don't want to see racism. We don't want to see human rights abused.

What is our weapon against these things? What are our weapons, is a better way to put it. The first one is prayer. One of the fastest-growing live churches in London recently had a prayer march.

Thousands, many many thousands, marching around the great wicked city of London, claiming London for Jesus Christ. They don't spend most of their time doing that. That's one Saturday.

Most of the time, those people involved in building the church, winning people to Christ, evangelizing, they now have their own mission society. Many XOMers are in it, including their director for the Middle East, actually converted to Jesus through him, used to be my team leader. And that fellowship is a demonstration in Britain of a New Testament church movement.

And there are many others. They all won't be the same. They won't all look the same, simply because they're practicing the New Testament.

That's exciting. As we study the scriptures, we will see that we are called into a great offensive aspect of spiritual warfare. Some people say, can you pray that individuals will be saved? Isn't it sad that so many things get caught up into controversy? Though there is not a specific scripture that says you should pray for unconverted people to be saved in those terms.

The whole thrust of the New Testament indicates that we should be praying for people. And seems to me that it is perfectly, absolutely normal that we would pray that our relatives and our loved ones would be saved, and that other people would be saved. You may be getting into dangerous ground when you, you know, you absolutely claim it, and you give a date, and you write their name in your little book.

It is a mystery. To me it is a mystery how people who have been prayed for for so long seem to die without Christ. That is one of the first questions I'm going to ask when I get to heaven.

Oh, I'm sure some of you theologians already have the answer, and you can write to me. I'll be glad to put your answer with the hundreds of other letters and books that I have dealt with on this subject. But I'm sorry to say, maybe I don't have as much faith as you.

It is still a mystery. There are some things, brothers and sisters, we must leave with God. The Bible says narrow is the way, and few there will be who find it.

Much of the dead end, dead end-ism in America is linked with the fact that we are trying to Christianize America, or Christianize Canada, rather than evangelize the world. And I think, in fact, when we get too far in this Christianizing process, so that world evangelism is neglected, then we have gone into extremism. My heart just goes out as I think of so many unreached people's groups where the church is not yet established.

And let me just tell you, I probably believe in Billy Graham as much as anyone, my own spiritual father. And we will be praying as Billy Graham comes here to Hamilton. But there is a high percentage of unreached people's groups, and Billy Graham would be the first person to say it, that will never ever be reached by his ministry.

They will not even be represented at the World Congress on Evangelism in the summer of 1989 in Singapore, that great event. They will not be represented because there are still no believers in that particular people's group. You will never understand OM unless you understand that in wrestling with our priorities, the unreached comes out on top.

We are called to penetrate the Muslim world, which represents one of the largest areas of unreached people in the world, one out of every six people. Many, many, many different groups. I don't know if we even have completed yet the research.

That's why that book, Operation World, is so crucial. It's so crucial for the church at this time. Pastors generally will not buy a copy of this.

You must buy it. You must send it to the pastor. They have a limited budget for books, and that is not on the list of books in most denominational lists of required or recommended reading.

Maybe it will be in the future, because it's becoming a very widely known book. We need to send it to pastors and Christian leaders. I am committed to giving thousands of these away, free of charge, as God provides the finance, because I know how important that book is.

It's now in Spanish. It's now in German. We'd like to see it in Korean and other languages.

We must be praying offensively to reach the unreached people. We cannot just dig in and pray against this thing and against that thing, but we must pray offensively that the Baluch will be reached, that the Afghans will be reached. We must pray offensively that the Turkmens may be reached, the Uyghurs in China will be reached, the Wolof people of Africa will be reached.

And as you get involved in this vision, as you get captivated by what the Holy Spirit is doing in this realm of spiritual life, yes, these very names, the Kurds, the Baluchs, the Uyghurs, the Wolof, that will become very

commonplace to you, because you will then penetrate in these places, these bastions of hell, these strongholds of the enemy, through offensive praying, nights of prayer, prayer and fasting, days of prayer, small group prayer. I believe the lack of evangelistic thrust is tied directly to the spiritual life of the local congregation. It is tied directly to the prayer life of the local congregation.

It is tied to the prayer life of the average pastor, as our seminaries try to mass-produce men of God and turn out midgets instead of prophets. May God somehow grip us with the reality of this. That wasn't original from me, I can assure you.

It must have been Tozer or Ravenhill who said something like that. Have you ever read Leonard Ravenhill's little book, *Why Revival Tarries?* You need to read it with a pair of asbestos gloves. I was in India when I picked up that little fire bomb, and I tell you, I wasn't sure I was going to live through the end of the book.

People still travel sometimes a hundred miles to meet that man of God out there in Texas, 78, 79 years of age. He has never turned from that vision that God gave him. Oh Lord, give us more of this kind of man.

Not that they are perfect. Not that we can't find something wrong with something on one of their tapes. I remember when Leonard Ravenhill spoke as the main speaker at this very conference.

Never forget it. He liked to put me on the spot. He was especially impressed with my wardrobe.

He said he felt he fit right into the scene in the fifties. Yes, Ravenhill has a sense of humor, I can assure you. Offensive praying to influence the government.

Offensive praying to see men captivated and brought to Jesus. I'm glad the dear old lady who prayed for me prayed specifically that I would be converted. I'm so glad she didn't pray, Oh Lord, influence him.

Oh Lord, help him to be a better boy. Is that the way you go fishing? How many of you have ever done fishing, deep sea or lake fishing? Well, what is your big thing when you go fishing? My main thing when I go fishing is to influence as many fish as possible. It's ridiculous.

When you go fishing, you go to catch fish. I happen to know that some Christians, when they go fishing, actually pray that they might catch something. I'm sure they say at the end of their little sportsman's prayer, Thy will be done.

Whatever. We're all human, aren't we? I remember when I played basketball for Jesus in that first year at Maryville College, and somebody called me a fundamentalist. I didn't even know what that was.

They called Dale Rotown and I a couple of fightin' fundies. A lot of them were into liberal theology and ecumenicalism, and we thought one of the ways to tackle these guys was to get a better basketball team. And so I helped organize a little fightin' fundie basketball team.

And I tell you, we were praying to win. Probably it was a bit of a delusion. The Lord is gracious and forgiving, isn't He? When we get caught up with things that are not quite right.

Praying offensively to penetrate nations, to see people converted to Jesus Christ, to see the church established. You must understand that in our fellowship we are not looking for decisions, we are looking for disciples. That's clearly mentioned in Acts in a number of places.

We are not satisfied also with just a few disciples wandering around with a pack of Bible verses and a copy of Operation World saying, I was converted through an OM team that blew in here last year. We want to see them gathering into living churches. We want to see the church established.

We then want to see that church multiplying so that there are more churches. And many times as missionaries, our key is then to get out of the way. All the missionaries had to leave China so many years ago, but look what God did.

They say there may be 30 or 40 million believers in China today. The story of China is one of the greatest testimonies to God answering prayer that could ever be recorded in contemporary missionary history. Absolutely baffling to the mind.

But of course a lot of those missionaries also gave their blood and their lives. I asked one of the leaders of OMF recently, I think it was when I was in New Zealand, Mabin Oswald Sanders, how many OMF missionaries actually died in the persecution, in the Boxer Rebellion and other times in China? And it was, the figure was enormous. Many, many dozens and dozens upon dozens.

Some of you need to read the history of the China Inland Mission. You need to read that book, Mountain Rain. Some of the other books about God answering prayer.

Offensive spiritual warfare. Taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. In all of our spiritual warfare, we must constantly go back to the Word of God.

Even in our witnessing, we will discover often that using Scripture can convict people of sin. When it's not clear in the Word of God, sometimes we need to be a little hesitant ourselves in what we are doing. When we get into this area of spiritual warfare, there is a temptation to get into extreme, especially if we're a little bit impatient.

You want to see everything this summer, right? Or at least next summer. I mean, love Europe, that's going to be it. Europe's final chance.

After that, we'll call down the wrath. But I believe to be gifted in the work of God, to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, which are also needed as we move forward in spiritual warfare, we have got to have the fruits of character in our life. The fruit of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance against such, there is no law. One of the most powerful books on that little book table is a book by Andrew Murray called Humility. I read it in Bombay when I was living there in my early days in India.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I think it was when I was ten years old in Jesus. I thought I was so old.

I was a Christian for ten years, and I read the book Humility. That book is greatly neglected in our day. A lot of the problem in our churches, a lot of the problems we have in some of our OM teams, maybe on your team, pride.

Pride. Have you learned how to deal with pride in your life? What an obstacle that is. It may be national pride.

It may be theological pride. It may be spiritual pride. It may be denominational pride.

It may be charismatic pride. It may be fundamentalist pride. Pride has dozens of different disguises, and it creates havoc and confusion among the people of God.

I've seen a subtle kind of pride come into OM lately. It's called many years of service pride. The guy, he's been in OM 20 years.

A little new recruit comes along, tries to tell him what to do. Sometimes we give the idea that those of us who have been in this thing so long, we have really suffered. I mean, you don't know what it was like in the old days.

From what I've just heard about this plane you're going across to Europe on, maybe it's just like the old days. I remember coming back from Europe in an old propeller plane. Last minute, they had an empty seat.

They persuaded me to go back in this empty seat. Boy, I tell you, all the way across the Atlantic, you know, the old roller coaster. Wonderful experience.

People sick all over the place. Free food. Sometimes people can be so long, so long in the church, and so long a Christian, and remain a spiritual midget.

We have people 10 years, 20 years in the Lord. Spiritual midgets. Probably the biggest reason, pride.

Lack of humility, which brings lack of teachability, which hinders spiritual growth. We have tried to emphasize this week the need for spiritual balance. Everything I share with you tonight in this brief message needs to be brought into balance by other messages, by other passages of Scripture that we cannot get through, that we cannot get to this evening.

I pray with all my heart you will understand the seriousness of what we're going into. I want to just add this. Something I wrote in my Bible some time ago.

A message I think I first gave at the U.S. Center for World Missions about two years ago. After a lot of agonizing and a lot of thinking, I shared a message called Counting the Cost before you go into full-time Christian work. How many of you are praying, seriously praying and moving toward full-time Christian ministry overseas or in your own country? Could you just raise your hand in a meeting like this? Quite a few.

Not as many as I thought. I think it is important for those of you praying, especially about overseas service, that you have chosen, you are choosing a very difficult career, very fulfilling career, a joyous career, but you are choosing also a road of many difficulties. There will be continual relationship hassles.

Often Satan's fiery darts on the mission field come at our relationships. I cannot emphasize enough the need to learn how to build relationships. Brothers and sisters, Paul and Timothy, and how to be able to deal with problems, how to talk things out, how to walk in the light.

There's a whole New Testament filled with emphasis on the subject of love and relationships being built together as the body of Christ. Praise God for the emphasis in some of our churches on body life. Maybe you don't like the terminology.

Use some other terminology. Most of the church growth in many parts of the world is in the small cell group. It's not in the big church.

I believe in both. Being built together, understanding we are the family of God, understanding the headship of Jesus Christ, understanding something of submission. I know that submission can be carried too far.

Some of the people who have carried submission too far are people who came from churches where there was no submission, there was no accountability. And so when they got into any teaching about discipleship, the pendulum went and they got into extreme brands of discipleship. We don't want either one of those, but we need accountability.

I am accountable. I'm accountable to leaders within OM. I'm accountable to the British Board of Directors who are outside of OM.

They are not full-time in OM. They are farmers and businessmen and leaders in the community of many different churches. I'm accountable to the American board who I put myself in accountability to when I was only 19 years of age and went to Mexico.

Praise God for the privilege of accountability. Praise God for the privilege of submitting yourself. And the Word of God says we should submit ourselves to those who are over us, not for person's sake, but for the work's sake.

It's easy to submit when you agree with everything. That's no big deal. It's when you don't agree and you don't understand that you're willing to submit.

Now if something comes that really sheers in an extreme way against your conscience, then you need to get your leader and you need to talk that out. Because we're not asking for some kind of blind obedience. If anything, OM is on the other end of the spectrum.

Beware of subtle forms of pride which hinder spiritual warfare, cripple us in spiritual combat, bring disunity and confusion into the church and into our teams. So much to share as we think of this great subject of spiritual warfare. I hope you will study it.

I hope you will avoid going extreme on one side or being frightened and running away from the challenge on the other side. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We have all heard that.

Are we willing for that this summer? Are we willing for that this year? Are there not some of you who are avoiding places like India and Bangladesh because you hear it's in the tropics and you know it's going to be hot and hard? It seems to me if we are biblical that there will be something within us that wants the hard places. That wants to go the extra mile. We may be weak in ourselves.

We may not be ready for that this year. Maybe next year. We need the right training.

We need the right preparation. But at least we can aim. At least we can aim for the hard places.

But of course, if we don't understand spiritual warfare, if we don't know how to deal with the forces of darkness, if we don't know how to claim that power of the blood of Christ. Oh, I'd love to talk to you about the blood of Christ. How to claim the power of the blood of Christ when you feel you're being personally attacked, when you feel that you're going into depression, you feel that deep hurt, or something is going really screwy, and you claim the power of the blood of Christ in that situation.

Or you stand on the authority of Jesus Christ. We need to learn to stand in the authority of Jesus Christ. We are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Satan can do very little against us as God's purchased possession, indwelt by the Holy Ghost. His tactics are largely scarecrow tactics. But we're so ignorant.

We're so ignorant of our inheritance. We don't know the Word, nor the power of God. We're easy targets for the enemy.

Let us be sure when we go out of here tomorrow, we go in the whole armor of God. That is our hope in this great conflict, the whole armor of God. In fact, the best way to describe it is that scripture that says, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't understand that fully, but I know it works. It works.

Let's go out and prove it in Europe, in Toronto, in Mexico, across the world in these coming years. Amen. Let us pray.

The other evening I gave a rather different kind of invitation for people who wanted greater spiritual balance in their lives. That was a special invitation to a particular message. But tonight I want to give a very general invitation, as I often do the final evening of our conference.

It's an invitation for you to recommit your life to Jesus Christ. Spiritual balance is only one tiny part of it. Some of you have only been here tonight.

I want to give you that opportunity to make a recommitment to Jesus Christ and to say to him, I want to be a good soldier of yours. I want to enter spiritual combat. I want you Lord Jesus Christ to be Lord of my life, Lord of my time, Lord of my money, revolutionizing my prayer life.

If you will make that recommitment in sincerity and in prayer, even though you may have stood the other night, if you will make that recommitment to him, then I would like you to quietly where you are, stand up as an outward expression of an inward transaction that you're taking a step of faith, to believe God for great things in your life, to be a soldier in God's spiritual battlefield and to wear that whole armor day by day. You have probably noticed in OM we don't have one particular terminology. The Holy Spirit can determine that in your situation.

But this is just a general call to submit yourselves unto the Lord, to go where he wants you to go. There may be some that have come as visitors and God has spoken to you about missionary service. God has spoken to you about taking up one of those gaps as a secretary in Port Colburn or in Peachtree City or London, England.

Different people have been spoken to in different ways. And as we bring this conference to a close that we have our communion service in the morning, many of you cannot be there. I want to give this open opportunity for you to present your body as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, Romans 12.1. Will you do that? Has God spoken to you tonight or during these days in a way that you feel you must act? We know standing up is only a new beginning, a small beginning, but you've got to start somewhere.

You can't keep sitting and saying, that was a nice message. Oh, I'll pray about that. Next week maybe I should really make a definite commitment to do something for Jesus.

I wasn't going to do this tonight, but I felt a constraint as I was bringing this to a close to give that further call as commitments like this helped revitalize and change my life as a young Christian. And I had to respond a number of times, somehow before God got really thick, got through my thick head, what spiritual warfare and living for him was all about. Praise be to God.

Anyone else, before we pray this prayer together, God knows your heart. God knows your need. We're not throwing out quick, simple answers.

We're presenting a lifetime of spiritual conflict, a lifetime as a soldier of Jesus Christ. The real battles will be won on a day-by-day basis, but there may be some of you that need to say a fresh start tonight by the grace of God, the whole army, the Lordship of Christ. Anyone else, before I pray, God bless you.

I wish I could go down and talk for an hour with each one of you. The Holy Spirit will give you much longer term help than I can ever do. Let him fill you right now.

Oh Lord, fill us, fill us afresh. We've been leaking, Lord. We've been leaking all over the place.

Pride, tins of the tongue, gossip, unbelief, fear. Fill us afresh, oh God. Let's pray.

Oh God, we dedicate our lives to you. Most of us have done this before, but we come back to the cross again. And we say, oh Lord Jesus, cleanse us by your precious blood.

Take us deeper into the arena of spiritual conflict, that we may stand firm with your whole armor on. We, Lord, realize more than ever our own human weakness and our own limitations. And we know for the likes of us, it's going to take a long time to be the kind of men and the kind of women you want us to be, to penetrate the unreached frontiers in the world in which we live.

But by your grace tonight, this is a turning point. We are turning to follow you in a deeper way, to go deeper into your word, to be filled again and again with your Holy Spirit. We pray this in surrender, absolute surrender to our Lord Jesus who indwells us.

Amen. Amen.

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