

Staying on Course

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the vital role of youth in evangelism and the necessity of balance between truth and love in the Christian faith.

Duration: 52:55

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 4:12

Topics: "Youth Ministry", "Marriage Communication"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of youth in God's work and encourages the audience to recognize the value of young people. The speaker also mentions the shift in focus within the organization OM, which started to prioritize family. Communication in marriage is highlighted as a crucial aspect that applies to all relationships, including teams and leaders. The sermon concludes with a prayer for increased compassion and love towards fellow believers, even when there are disagreements.

Transcript

There are many other things I would like you to know about. So many things God is doing. By the way, these meetings are ending very early, because they only have one hour video cassettes.

So I told them they don't start the video cassette yet. Because there's so many other things we would like to share with you. And some of you who are more my age, some of you older people, whatever that means, you need to understand, and if you have a negative view of youth, I don't think you do, you wouldn't be here, would you? But I will tell you, God is using young people.

God is using young people. I have always believed that to evangelize the world we need the whole body of Christ. We need those older people, the stability, the areas of reality we gain from those that have been in the battle a long time.

But we need also new blood. We need younger people. And as I go across the whole world sharing, I am amazed what God is doing with young people.

We know many young people are not living for the Lord. It's easy to see them. We know many are shooting drugs up their arms.

We know even Christian young people who are backslidden. But God has raised up an army of young people across the world. Many of our Bible colleges are full, especially in Europe and in Asia.

In fact, I see one of the greatest problems in connection with this new wave of missionary interest, that most of these young people, many of these young people are unable to find sending churches. They are unable to find adults with the equivalent amount of zeal and vision. And so they can't often find the encouragement, the financial encouragement, the backing, the understanding.

Plus it is true that older people often easily switch off. A young person may have some little habit or something maybe about his music or something about the clothing he wears. And so people switch off.

We are reading so many switch-off books. And these books divide the body and they get us all uptight. And people, I think, are judging one another more than ever.

After a few recent books that sort of paint everybody as being seduced and everybody is in danger of being taken in by a witch or being carried away by some evil force. And it makes God look pretty small. It makes God's people look very weak.

You know, one little blow from some little force and away you are into deception. Well, I just want to bring that into balance that in my view, God is doing a lot of great things among young people. And I don't think this generation of Christian young people is that much different than many of the other generations of Christian young people.

There are many who are not committed, but there are many who are. Were you at Urbana? 18,000 young people with a relatively high level of commitment packing out the seminars. You couldn't even get in the door.

A lot of generalizations are made. I speak at the Cornerstone Music Festival. First stage in July.

People write that off. Oh, that's rock music. That's from the devil.

They haven't even gone there. You don't have to go to the heavy metal music if you don't want. They have another whole big auditorium with light stuff, contemporary stuff, you know, like this.

And you don't have to go at all. I'm actually quite busy, so I prefer to listen to it on tape while I'm working. But there's more Bible teaching, more hours of Bible teaching at that often judged famous music festival than most people ever realized.

And in-depth teaching by many, many women from all over the world. And the young people just pack into the seminars. They sit in the heat, sometimes on the grass, listening to the Word of God.

And I would appreciate your prayers as this year again I speak on the main stage after a little group called Petra that might get people roused up a little bit. And about 4,000 or 5,000 will be there. And I'll be sharing and bringing in the message of world missions.

And we have recruits in OM as a result of that festival. We usually see \$5,000 to \$6,000 worth of books. And we don't even have the main book table.

We just have a little ad hoc operation in the corner. So God is working among young people. If you're an older person, you don't like their music, no problem.

No problem. Music is not the issue. Not the main issue.

Love is the issue. Great commission is the issue. And I just felt burdened to share that this evening.

Let's pray together and then look in to the Word of God at Ephesians chapter 4. Our God and Father, we're never going to all agree on these different things. But we pray that we may know more about compassion. More about compassion toward other believers that we may not agree with.

For we long to have a revolution of love. We are not interested in compromising the truth. But we know that if we're not speaking the truth in love, then in some ways we're lying against the truth, as it says in the book of James.

So prepare our hearts now as we look in to your Word, as we consider this great subject of commitment with balance to reach the world with the gospel of your Son Jesus Christ. In his name we pray. Amen.

Ephesians. Turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 4. It talks about the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry in verse 12. That's one of the purposes of this time together.

To come into greater maturity. Greater wisdom. You know what A.W. Tozer said? The greatest gift needed in the church today was discernment.

Discernment. That doesn't largely just sort of fall out of the heavens during a prayer meeting. There is that kind of wisdom that God can give.

That must be backed up by His Word. But we develop wisdom. Sometimes through making mistakes.

I once saw a good quotation. Any fool can learn by mistake. It takes a wise man to learn through instruction.

We're not launching out to Europe to make a lot of mistakes. We want to make as few as possible. I'd ask you to pray for some of the great areas of safety.

We have hundreds of vehicles on the move. You don't have to take an O.M. driver's test. Because you're in a different country.

And we want to make sure that you've got the whatever it takes to be able to drive in a balanced, calm, committed way in Europe. We need drivers. So don't be nervous about that test.

We need drivers for India. We need drivers for Europe. So as we look ahead toward Europe, as we look ahead toward world evangelism, our great burden is to be more prepared.

Our great burden is to be more mature. Our great burden is to be edified, to be built up. Let's read the rest of the passage.

So we all come in the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a mature, perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we from now on, henceforth it says in this translation, be no more tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Isn't that powerful? By the sly of men, the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, I want you to underline that.

Speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and united or compacted by that which every joint supplier, according

to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making or maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. That's the key word tonight, not balance. Some people are against the word balance, but their definition of balance is not my definition.

We're not talking about mixing the world with the church. We're not talking about mixing truth and error. We're not talking about sinful compromise when we speak of balance.

We're not talking about sort of an insipid form of, well, let's not get too excited about anything really. Just our doctrinal statement alone in OM makes it very, very clear where we stand on the basic truths of the Christian faith. If you've listened to any of our cassette tapes, if you've read our books, you know that we are, as the world would say, the world would say, we are extreme.

To believe that men outside of Christ are lost and on the road to eternal separation from God is considered extreme. To want to give all of your money to world evangelism and to help the poor, to have very little interest in keeping anything for yourself is written off as extreme today as it was when we first started to teach and preach that 25 or more years ago. Luke 14, 33 has not become much more popular than it was then.

Except you forsake all that you have, you can't be my disciple. How many of you have heard that verse expounded on Sunday morning? We usually have it explained away, like Acts 2 and Acts 4, where people got overly excited and zealous and generous and started selling their possessions and distributing them to the poor. Someone writes it off as communism and turns the page of the book of Acts.

And then he finds one little verse on the next page and proceeds to beat us on the head with it for five years. Too much cafeteria-style Bible study. Pick and choose.

Here's a nice verse. This tells me I can claim a Cadillac for Jesus. But here's another one.

I don't like this one. This one says I should forsake it and give the money to missions. Cafeteria Bible study.

Pick and choose. The false cults specialize in it. And some of God's chosen, generally frozen people seem to be in that kind of Bible study as well.

Yes, we are not ashamed of the fact that in some ways, at least to the people of the world, or to the average crowd of even jellyfish who shuttle in and out of the Sunday morning sanctuary, we may appear a little bit extreme. We are not going to apologize for that. I notice that no one's been asking a poser to apologize since he died.

No one has requested apologies from C.T. Studd or Hudson Taylor. I don't know if anyone has requested apologies from Martin Luther or Amy Carmichael. Have you read that book about her by Elizabeth Elliott? Yes.

In many, many ways, those who follow Christ and are His disciples will be out of step with the world. They will be out of step with the lukewarm, though they will love them and they will want to rule them into the red-hot, flaming love of Jesus, whether it's through song or whether it's through exhortation or whether it's through serving them extra cups of tea or being a mat that they can walk on. There are many methods we can use to somehow work for the stirring of God's people, the revitalization of God's people.

And I hope you will do that. But it does seem that Satan has a rather subtle strategy. But first of all, he tries to keep us from real commitment.

He tries to keep us from what we talked about here on Sunday night, the crucified life, the spirit-filled life, the disciplined life. Real commitment. And when somehow through the Word, through prayer, a person begins to walk in commitment and in the reality of God, which we know often includes a crisis, but always includes a process, then Satan seems to, in a subtle way, change his tactic and try to get us into extremes.

Some people have wondered why I've become, in the last 15 years, so strong on the subject of spiritual balance. I was always strong against certain extremes. That's evident in this book.

That dates back, part of it, 20 years. But the section in this book, titled Balance, was a message I gave in Indonesia when the ship Lagos first went there in 1971. Through a lot of prayer and a lot of study and advice and counsel from men and women of God that I saw the need for a greater proclamation within OM of spiritual balance and the need to discern between an OM policy and a biblical principle.

There has to be, in the kind of work we are doing, a certain amount of policy that is linked with expediency. And some of that policy is unnecessary in certain environments, other environments. I gave the illustration about the fact that for expediency, and because of a lack of money, many times we slept on the floor.

But how confusion came in when people thought, in those early years, that sleeping on the floor was spiritual. And a young woman, after an OM campaign, went back to her home. There was her dear mother waiting for her to come back home.

And one of the first things she did was to ask her mother to help her take the bed out of her bedroom so that she could sleep on the floor for Jesus. You can imagine what her mother thought of Operation Mobilization. And we had a lot of problems, and there were mistakes, and we probably still have them.

We know we do, because it takes discernment to distinguish between that which is a principle of a particular campaign, that which is expedient in a particular situation. What we are engaged in this summer in Europe, in some ways, is a spiritual invasion. It's a massive forward thrust.

We move forward into a lot of new territory in the summer, and in the year, we desperately try to follow up on it. The summer program and the year program are very different. That's why it always hurts me when someone just writes off OM, because they had a difficult time during a one-month campaign on a blitz team in southern France in the heat.

Some people love it. We get these kind. Every year there are a few.

The harder, the better. We had one left, absolutely disillusioned. He said, I thought this Operation Mobilization was going to be hard.

This is a piece of cake. Do they still use that expression? Piece of cake. OM.

Went home and never heard from him again, except one letter. Well, maybe he changed his name and rejoined. You never know.

You know, as we have grown up, those of us who helped start this work, and we got families, and we studied what the Word of God said about families, and we read some of these great books about families,

we had to repent. We didn't have enough family emphasis. I mean, you can't believe some of the things I made my children do when they were five.

They'd give a big bundle of tracts. Come on, let's go. What are you sitting around, you know? One's four, one's five, one's six.

And they went for a while, until they started to, you know, turn on their brains a little more. Then it wasn't so easy to get them out giving out the tracts that I was supposed to be giving out. And so OM in some ways made an enormous shift and to some degree became a movement that had a lot of focus on the family.

Almost every year at this conference, I speak on the subject of marriage and communication in marriage. This year it wasn't included in the titles that were given to me. But I believe communication is so important.

And often, and that message I think is on some of the cassette, in some of the cassette albums, I talk about communication in marriage, but I show how that communication in marriage, many of the principles are the exact same principles you need on your team this summer. In communicating with single people, in communicating with your leader, in living together. And God brought us into a greater understanding.

Some of this would not be very strong on our early tapes. But it was there, because on those early tapes was this strong message of love, this strong emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit. The first June conference in the history of our work, we were all just going to Mexico, I was just coming back.

Every night I spoke of one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit from Galatians. Every night. So if you want to know what O.M. emphasized in the very, very beginning, I can tell you it was not just go into all the world.

It was not just reach the masses. It wasn't just forsake all and follow Christ in total commitment. It was love.

It was unity. It was relationships. It was spiritual balance, because the message, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, self-control against such.

There is no law. Galatians 5.22 is probably the strongest message on balance you can find in the whole of the Word of God. And what are some of the areas where we have to work for balance? Well, we have to avoid getting into foolishness, into fanaticism.

What are some of the problems we're going to face as we try to live on a team together and as we meet people of different nationalities and different backgrounds? Now, I can only touch on the things that burn on my heart on this subject of balance. Let me again just say that this is not optional. Balance is not optional.

Balance means getting the right blend of strong truth. Balance means getting the right blend of strong truth. Forsake all as in the Bible, but God will supply all according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus is also in the Bible.

We need the whole counsel of God. We need the whole of the Word of God. And all I can do is give you some of these burdens and ask you to study the Scriptures to see if these things be so.

First of all, finding the balance between worship and work. There's a great emphasis on worship now. Perhaps the pendulum has swung.

A lot of material has been written against workaholics. By the way, if you know any workaholics, please send me their names. We specialize in making use of these kind of people.

Some of the greatest men that have ever lived would be written off by some modern philosophers as workaholics. I know that workaholism is a danger, but I don't believe it's the biggest problem today. I believe that laziness is a bigger problem in the 20th century.

That we could use a few more hard-working people in God's work. And when we consider the fact that prayer is work, then we do certainly need some more hard-working people. But it is a difficult area.

Some churches have split in two. Part of the church wanted more evangelism, more outreach. They wanted more things on the program.

They wanted a youth working in Sunday school, working in an old folks' work. They wanted a nursery, and they wanted this and they wanted that. They didn't have enough people.

More and more pressure put on the little few who do any work in the church. And then something happened. Maybe somebody blew through town with a great message on worship.

And a little group got a hold of that message. And they started little worship cells. And they looked down upon the workaholics.

And these people looked over there. What are they doing? They're going crazy. Look, they're climbing up the wall.

I saw somebody with his hands in the air in that meeting the other day. It's amazing, this hands-in-the-air controversy. When I went to Moody Bible Institute, every time we had a meeting, every time we had a meeting, somebody got up there in front of all of us, a thousand students, and started to wave his hands.

I even took a course in music, and they stood me up, and I know much about music as I do about dinosaur jumping. They stood me up in front of this big class, and they made me wave my hands and try to lead the singing. Nobody ever criticized.

Nobody said anything. Now, if one poor character in the meeting, out in the audience, puts his hands up and starts to wave them, people jump up, take pictures, and they think, you know, people are going crazy. I don't understand some of this.

You know, in OM, we're not interested in manipulation. And if you don't want to raise your hands in the meeting, like my wife, you don't ever have to raise your hands in the meeting. If you get more filled with the Holy Ghost, sitting on your hands, hallelujah! If you're going to work in Vienna, you'll be sitting on your hands in January, I can assure you.

God works in different people in different ways. Some are a little more noisy than others. OM is an interesting phenomena.

Pentecostals come on OM and get strangely quiet. When the brethren come on OM, they get strangely noisy. And the Baptists don't know what quite to do.

Isn't it true, isn't it true, that when we don't understand something, when we don't understand something, we get a little threatened by it? Rather than being a little big-hearted, rather than just, you know, giving the person the benefit of the doubt, or maybe getting to know the person. I believe we need that balance between worship and work. And I don't believe we will ever end up all the same when we work toward that balance.

Another area where we have to wrestle, we're finding balances between the positive and the negative. We have some preachers now in North America who are incredibly positive. Everything is positive.

We can't even use certain negative words even though they're clearly written in the New Testament. Obviously this is extreme. Obviously this is extreme.

But then you get other people. Every message seems so negative. Everybody is being judged.

Everybody seems to be sliding downhill to hell at 16 times the speed they were in the 19th century. The young people are all wrong. The music is wrong.

The hair is too long. They don't blow their noses enough. They're not using enough deodorant.

There's all kinds of issues that people get condemned about which may have some relevance. I believe having sweet breath is very important. I took a Billy Graham counseling course as a young Christian.

One of these great Billy Graham evangelists stood up and told us how to have sweet breath in counseling people. It seems like a small thing. But I think small things are important.

But I'm not going to start a major crusade and write a book against bad breath. A word to the wise is sufficient, my old teacher used to say. And if you're witnessing to someone and they just pass out, you know you've got a problem.

I hope it doesn't go that far. We have a little leaflet on manners. Jonathan McCroskey, our European director for many years, now a paraplegic who operates from a wheelchair and ministers around the world, he says we should only give the manners leaflet out.

For the year programmers, you know, I don't think he likes to waste the leaflets, but I tell you, I believe if you can get a hold of O.M.'s leaflet on manners, I don't know if there are any in North America, the moment you get to Europe, you read that. Because bad manners and lack of common courtesy has been a great hindrance at times to our work. People shouldn't arrive to a church meeting looking sloppy.

People, all of us need to know where we're going, what kind of people are we with. We can be all things to all men to win some. That's not easy, but it's exhilarating.

If someone told you you shouldn't bring a sport coat or a suit coat to Europe, you know, you got the wrong message. Because in certain European churches, people are very well dressed, and there's no purpose us coming in when we're still trying to win these people. Once they're your friends, you know, you can get away with a little more.

We need courtesy. We need good manners. Going into someone's home, picking up the phone and making a long-distance call to India without asking.

Even going into someone's home, they have their beautiful Encyclopedia Britannica. You just walk in, sit down, take volume 3 off, start praying through it. That may sound like nothing.

And many people, they wouldn't mind. But it's just better. It's just better to ask.

If in doubt, ask. Don't pick things up. Don't take things off shelves.

Don't presume that you can just... You know, he's a prayer partner. He loves Jesus. I love Jesus.

We're all one in Christ. That's his car. Really, you don't think some of these things actually happen.

Most of us aren't losing our hair over nothing. We believe that there are times when we have to make a negative statement. Thou shall not be your grandmother.

Clear. I know you wanted to do it. It's a big thing for you.

But it's a negative statement. I'm sorry about that. Forgive me for my lack of possibility thinking.

But it's, to me, basic. There's a lot of other negative statements in the Bible. A number of the Ten Commandments seem a little bit negative.

But I believe, as much as possible, as we present the message, as we go forth in the task, we need to emphasize the positives. Philippians 4, I think verse 8, calls upon us to think on that which is good, that which is pure, that which is lovely. So easily, when we go to a church, and you need to be aware of your attitude toward local churches, we go to a church and we see something negative.

Maybe somebody dozes off. Maybe the pastor on that particular day was a little bit boring, according to you. Or maybe someone did something that seemed unacceptable to you.

We need to be positive concerning what God is doing in European churches. North Americans, generally speaking, have a wrong view of a church in Europe. Because a church in Europe is much smaller.

I very seldom meet an American who doesn't have a distorted view of Great Britain. Very seldom. In fact, I think I'd give 35 books to an American who didn't have a distorted view of Great Britain.

It was one of the greatest weaknesses of Dr. Francis Schaeffer, who I spent quite a lot of time to, once walking around Hyde Park. He never had spent much time in Britain, and yet he had a rather dogmatic view of Great Britain. Great Britain is many things.

Germany is many things. And as we go to Europe, we go as partners. We do not go with some kind of North American superiority feeling.

We do not go with generalizations, like the church in Germany is dead, the church in Britain is dead. The church here is this, the church here is that. They can say the same thing about us.

Unfortunately, they are doing it. They get all the news about our television evangelists. That's headlines in Britain.

That's headlines in Europe. Jimmy Swagger was headlines in the Gulf. Headlines in Pakistan, because he had debated a famous Muslim.

And they make their little generalizations about all of us. We don't want them to do that. That's not right.

So we must avoid our generalizations about Europeans, about the church. The church is small in many European countries. But what does small mean? 50,000 went to Spring Harvest in Great Britain.

Four weeks ago, I spoke to 4,500 German young people in southern Germany and went 40 miles away and spoke to another couple thousand. It's small, but it's still got the potential of a Gideon's army. And we want to go esteeming these brothers and sisters, uniting together with them.

In O.M. this summer, if you go to Europe, you will be outnumbered by Europeans. If you go to Mexico, you'll be outnumbered by Mexicans. If you go to Quebec, you may be outnumbered by French Canadians.

I mean on the team, of course. In the streets, you will be 40 to 1. This is where we need wisdom, balance, and discernment. We need to try, most of us, to be more positive.

Any of you have a bit of a struggle like me with negativism and cynicism and then some doubts get in? Any of you have that problem? If you raise your hand a little bit, negative streaks, I'm going to see the negative. I will tell you, you are either going to get Holy Ghost victory over that negativeness, or it is going to hinder you all of your life, and especially when you get married. Now if you're extreme, and you're cynical, and you're negative, and you're Mr. Prophet, and you always know that this is wrong, that's wrong.

Let me just tell you, whatever you do, don't get married. Don't get married. One of the greatest preparations for marriage is spiritual balance.

I can honestly say the message of balance more than almost anything else. Anything else helps my wife and I to keep our marriage on God's track. Any other emphasis that come into that? Another area where we're going to have to work for balance is in the whole area of sanctification.

How to become a victorious Christian? Oh, everybody's arguing over this. There's a thousand books on the subject, that is not an exaggeration. Many people emphasize the need for a crisis.

Some of you probably are going to have various crises this summer. We know, there are whole books telling about how different men of God have had crisis experiences. Some people speak of the exchange life, some speak of the Spirit-filled life, some speak of the crucified life.

We've done that. But we are convinced that to be God's soldier, there has to be both the crisis and the process. And the process is a lifetime experience.

I've been speaking a lot lately in some of the churches on the three miracles we need today. The miracle of conversion. The miracle of the filling in a deep real work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

And the third miracle, this is when it catches them, they've all heard ten messages on the first two, in most places. The third miracle is the miracle of growth. Oh, come on.

Growth is not a miracle, is it? Just a slow process, no big deal. I will tell you, you go out and see those giant redwoods in California, when you look at those huge trees, you realize that growth is a miracle. And when you see a man going on for God, like Billy Graham, like Leonard Ravenhill, like Alan Redpath, like Elizabeth Elliot, a man or a woman going on for God, you are not just looking at a miracle of conversion.

You're not just looking at someone who met with God and was filled with the Spirit or experienced a greater step of reality as Christ became Lord. You are looking at someone who's had years and usually decades of growth. Continued growth by walking with God, by feeding regularly on His Word, by keeping short accounts with God, by knowing how to repent, knowing how to bounce back, knowing how to glean truths out of great Christian books, learning how to enter into the prayer warfare, learning the reality of Ephesians chapter 6, wearing the whole armor of God.

This leads into another area, the balance between discipline and liberty. And I hope you will feel free to write us if you feel that OM is too rigid and too much emphasis on discipline. Some people feel we swung the other way.

It used to be that we required, when I had my hands more on the whole thing, many, many, many, many years ago, in the morning it was required to get up and do the exercises. And I was often out there leading, push-ups, jumping jacks, jogging. And somehow the pressure, the European pressure mounted against this, some called it Americanism, this exercise, you know, something that we manufactured in America.

And then we got in this conference center that had hardly any showers. That's where I lost the battle. But I praise God there are still many, many people in OM who get up early and who engage in a physical exercise program to keep their body in tune, maybe to break the bands of depression, which I found it helped me to do in the mornings.

And we would like to see that kind of self-discipline continue because we believe it's important. Oh, these days it's hard to get people to agree on these things. I heard a very good ad this morning on the radio here in Hamilton about the need for a balanced, moderate exercise program.

I thought brilliant, especially for somebody my age. It's hard to find that balance between liberty and discipline. When we used to have a little more of a regimentation, we would get really hit for bringing people into bondage.

This is not the way the Holy Spirit works. All kinds of things that the Holy Spirit wants me to exercise. He will lead me.

He will guide me. Your Lord is not going to tell me that I have to get up early and exercise. And you know, most of us are more thin-skinned than we look.

My kind of extrovert, we look really thick-skinned, right? I tell you, you don't understand people. All of us are more complicated than we look. And sometimes when the pressure was on certain things, it was just easier to back off.

Just easier to back off. But I pray that, O.M., I pray that you will never lose, will never lose that desire to be more disciplined. To never lose that desire to find the balance between discipline and liberty.

We are called unto liberty, the Word of God says, but use not that liberty as an occasion to the flesh. O.M. became very European. Our roots go back to Mexico and the States.

Our roots go back to fundamentalism as it was in the United States in the 50s. And then we went to Europe. I was militant.

I was a militant prohibitionist. I would have joined Billy Sunday, bang, spot on. I would have been happy to break bottles and preach against prohibition.

And I did when I was 17 in my high school. Tried to clean the high school up of drunkards. We did see some of them saved.

And I went to Europe. I was also devout. I was a devout card-carrying anti-communist.

This is the real enemy. Boy, I had a message against communism. One of the anti-communist groups wanted me to join them and be full-time.

So I went to Europe. I had my prohibition pistols and I had my anti-communist machine guns. And I went in this crusade for Christ into the Soviet Union.

I thought, you know, these are the enemies. Then I read that verse, love your enemies. Oh, no.

So I went into the Soviet Union loving my enemies. And some of you know the story of how I was arrested there and the fiasco of being accused of being a CIA agent and being given a submachine gun escort to Austria with the help of the Czechoslovakians and how that led to the name being changed and God giving me that word Operation Mobilization. But what a surprise when I discovered so many godly people were drinking wine at their meals.

I remember one of my full-time workers, I forgot to check before I made him full-time, that he didn't drink. I'll never forget, he met on one Sunday and he gave me a hug and I thought I was going to flip out from his wine breath. I really wrestled with this.

And when we went to Britain and more people joined us out of Cambridge and out of Oxford, Britain is completely divided. There are many teetotalers in Britain, of course. They propagated it throughout the world.

But there are many good, dedicated British Christians, especially the Anglicans, who believe in an occasional social drink. Now this is a little less a problem than it was and I use it more as an illustration. There are a lot of things that you think are 100% from the word of God and you've got your verse and you're ready to take anybody off.

And you don't know quite what to do when you meet this European who doesn't do it the way you do it and he's got two verses. And there are many, many other things that we can get heated up on as we go to Europe. You get American, he arrives in Heathrow Airport, he rushes out of the airport, Hey, you guys! You're all on the wrong side of the road, you jerks! Goes over really big.

Little proper British Bobby, policeman, comes along and carries him away. One more O.M.E.R. That didn't quite make it. It's amazing how without realizing it, we tend to always think that the way we have done it is the best way.

And we've got to die to some of that. And we've got to be willing to change. And without willingness to change, not only is missions difficult, but marriage is difficult.

Rearing children is difficult. Living on planet Earth is difficult. And so we've got to work for balance in that area.

Another area where we need balance, this is for me, is the balance between zeal and wisdom. Oh, and in its early days, Shirley was heavy on zeal. Little weak on wisdom.

We don't want to get out of balance the other direction. We don't want to become somehow some dry, musty fellowship that knows all the answers. We've got a lot to learn, and we want zeal.

It seems to me, one thing that is inexcusable is the lack of zeal. Do you blame your lack of zeal on God? A lot of people seem to do that. Do you blame your lack of enthusiasm on God? You pray a prayer, God touch me, Lord fill me, Lord change me, Lord give me this, do this.

It doesn't happen, you blame it on God. I believe that you are basically responsible for your zeal. Yeah.

You're not a clone. Now I know some forms of depression need medical attention and long-term help and therapy, and I don't have time to talk about in-depth depression and dealing with it. I saw God bring my wife out of it, both through prayer and medicine, changing me and doing a few other things.

She's been out now for ten years. But a lot of our depression, we can shake off by faith. We can shake off through praise.

We can shake off through prayer. We can shake off through a little bit of repentance in which we say, Lord, forgive me of my attitude today. Fill me with your spirit.

I'm going forward by faith. I don't want to go to that prayer meeting, but I'm going anyway. The devil's a liar.

Boom, boom. I'm not saying you have to do it that way. You develop your own methodology.

I tell you many a time, I have not wanted to pray when that OM night of prayer was announced, and yet hardly in 30 years have I been in a night of prayer and have not met with God. Zeal is your responsibility if you are a believer, because the Holy Spirit is in you. The potential is in you.

And as you repent and confess, you will experience God's grace. Tozer was misunderstood by some people. Not the black people.

They understood. One of my greatest burdens and greatest desires and one of our areas of failure is in this area of wooing and drawing more of our great black Americans. We have many other non-white people.

We're almost one-third non-white OM. But those black Americans, they are very special. And our culture is a very special culture.

And the Civil War is not totally over yet in some places, in people's minds and hearts. One thing we know about most black people is they believe they need to feel their religion. And I'll tell you, when I listened to that A.W. Tozer tape and I heard his emphasis on the need to feel it, I knew that was something important for me, because I was going a little bit extreme on the whole area of discipline and plotting on whether you feel it or not.

I'd said maybe some things like that in these first couple of nights. But there are many, many, many times, I'm sure you've experienced it here, when we do feel it. There's nothing wrong with feeling some emotion toward God, toward one another.

We express it in different ways. A lot of people are uptight. It's true.

Some people seem to become too free. And then, you know, they may be hugging too many people and they can frighten you after the meeting. I mean, I was in a meeting in Toronto, and it was a people's church, and I preached my heart out.

I was a little tired. And this really beautiful chick, Wow! Praise the Lord! I felt she was a little too free. Of course, probably she felt that I was, you know, uptight.

It's a difficult area. To hug or not to hug? One more of the 100 controversies that we have to deal with as Christians. To hug or not to hug? In Spain and Italy, we hug men.

But now that's a problem. Oh, you're into hugging men, huh? You can't win. We have a no-win society.

I like little children. I love little children. I don't think I've ever had a sexual urge for little children that I can remember.

And yet today, if you show an interest in little children, people get talking. Why? Because the amount of sex among little children is one of the greatest scandals in our culture. In London alone, they estimate 180,000 cases.

Child pornography is flowing across Europe underground at an unprecedented rate. Brothers and sisters, we don't have much more time. Tonight, we live in a complicated world.

We live in a lost world. The devil has thrown his hand grenades seemingly on every street corner. There are wounded people.

There are confused people. We come out of that. We have our wounds.

We have our hurts. Therefore, I don't see how we can possibly move in commitment and zeal and spiritual revolution unless we have lots of balance, lots of love, lots of sanity. Let's keep our feet on the ground.

Let's emphasize what the New Testament emphasizes. Let's be developing a little bit of what Tozer said and called reverent skepticism. So if someone says, Hey, I just saw that tree filled with the Spirit and gave me a word of knowledge.

We may say, wait a minute. Let's go out and just see the tree and check that out. Because I can tell you, even some of the things written in Christian books in efforts to turn people on, in efforts to get people excited about this and that, some of those things have been proven to be absolute lies.

We live in complicated days. There is a lot of seduction. Christians can be seduced.

And it's going to be a battle to maintain balance in the 80s and in the 90s. And if the church doesn't learn how to maintain that balance, many other areas, we're going to split and we're going to divide. We're going to disintegrate more.

And that is going to slow down the process of world evangelism and revitalization more than we can ever know. The Word of God says, Speak the truth with love. You're going to meet people on OM you don't agree with.

Things are going to come out of their mouth that they may upset you. You don't agree with them. What are you supposed to do? Just forget he never said it or just throw your convictions out the window and be some kind of a spiritual jellyfish? Have you ever heard this expression which I've coined? I'm sure someone said it before I did.

Compassionate disagreeing. Compassionate disagreeing. I believe that's one of the keys for moving ahead in the present day theological scene.

You can disagree even strongly on some issues. Even with us as leaders. But let's do it compassionately.

Let's speak that truth with love. That includes making sure that we've got the facts right. That we've done our homework.

That we've done our research. Before we make our dogmatic statements. I saw a little sign.

It said, Keep your words sweet. Because sooner or later you may have to eat them. Brothers and sisters, let's go forth to speak the truth.

But let's speak the truth with love. Let us pray. Again, I know we need time to think about this kind of message.

The kind of message that doesn't lean toward an instant decision. But I'd like to just know how many of you, how many of you crave, you long for more spiritual balance in your life. And you're willing to pray tonight, Lord, I want the truth with love.

I want spiritual balance. I want commitment with wisdom and balance. Some of you know that you've been into extremes in your thinking, in your practice.

You've become judgmental. You've become critical. Maybe even cynical.

Tonight God has spoken to you about making a step toward spiritual balance. Toward maintaining the spiritual equilibrium. Through being on God's cutting edge by having compassion and love as the roof and the wall and the foundation.

If you are serious about this, and you'd like to pray a prayer of commitment and surrender to be a more committed person with balance and love and compassion, then I'd like you quietly, where you are, just to stand up. And I want to pray a prayer of dedication that we may be refilled with the Holy Spirit and that we may be men of love and balance yet of commitment and conviction for the Kingdom of God. We're just going to take a moment.

But I just felt that a lot of people have been spoken to about this need in their life. I know it's certainly true in my own. Now living God, you see each one who has stood before you.

You have prepared us for this message tonight. We've read these Scriptures before. We've seen 1 Corinthians 13 a dozen times.

We've seen this kind of balance also in the lives of different people. And that has spoken to our hearts. And so this night, Lord, we come to You and we present our bodies as a living sacrifice for greater commitment, but with love, with balance, with that discernment and wisdom that will keep us from dead-end streets, that will keep us from extremism or tangents.

O Lord, fill us afresh even at this moment with that great Holy Spirit, that great Spirit of love, that we may be Your men, that we may be Your women, that we may go where You want us to go and do what You want us to do. For we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15436.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/staying-on-course/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net