

Twenty Years of Family Life

by George Verwer

OM's emphasis on priority, discipline, and real love in marriage has led to blessing and victory in family life.

Duration: 58:49

Scripture: Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 22:6, Malachi 2:16, Matthew 19:6, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Peter 4:8

Topics: "Family Life", "Marriage Principles"

Description

George Verwer reflects on the 20 years of family life within Operation Mobilization (OM), emphasizing the importance of prioritizing family, discipline, and real love in maintaining strong marriages. He acknowledges the challenges of divorce and separation faced by many, even within the church, and highlights the miraculous success of OM in fostering lasting relationships among its members. Verwer shares insights on the necessity of prayer, submission, and open communication in marriage, while also addressing the dangers of extremism and hyper-idealism. He encourages couples to embrace the principles of commitment and discipline, recognizing that true love is an act of the will rather than merely a feeling. Ultimately, he praises God for the blessings experienced in family life over the past two decades.

Transcript

And I'm calling it 20 Years of Family Life. This is not only the 20th anniversary of OM in Europe, it's the 20th anniversary of family life in OM, which is interesting because one of the things I said when I took the first teams to Mexico, and this goes way back, was I really feel this should just be for men. And some of the women, especially Jean Hall, now Jean Davey, immediately confronted me at Moody Bible Institute, where the second Summer Crusade was launched from, and they said, look, there are women who want to get involved in this.

And I think even within a few days that just seemed to be such a sensible thing. And in those early prayer meetings there were always men and women together, and as some of you may remember, my mother actually ended up taking care of the office for, I think, some 10 years. It took a couple of people to take her place when she gave up that position.

So we look back over 20 years of family life. In those very earliest days we had people who were married. I remember Mike McKinley at Moody Bible Institute.

He was already married, and he went to Mexico. Mike is still today a missionary in Spain, 23 years later. And as we look back over these 20 years and realize that we've had about 22,000 people who have gone through the OM training program, we have really given praise to God that hardly any who have been trained in OM and met in OM their life partner have ever come apart.

I've heard of one, and there may be another one that is in the midst of a very difficult situation right now. I'm sure there are perhaps a couple of others that I haven't heard about. I believe that's a miracle because one out of three of all marriages now, or four, it varies from country to country, ends in divorce.

And what about separation? And even among Christians, some people have heard about a few people who have been on OM and then have had difficulty, and they've been surprised by this. In one or two cases even blamed OM. But the fact is there is hardly a church that is not plagued with a divorce problem.

Pastor after pastor that I speak to, one of the biggest problems they have is divorce and separation. And that's among people who want to stay within the church, much less the great numbers that, after this happens, they don't want to bother with the church anymore. There, sometimes we don't have the figures or the statistics.

So divorce and separation and all the problems of family life take place among believers. And you will be surprised to discover that sometimes among the very spiritually minded, as Tozer said, the more keen Christian is more easily led astray, I would say that among the married couples that are so keen for God, often divorce and separation and heartbreak in the marriage seemingly is more possible because they get caught into extremes or they get their priorities wrong and other things that we're going to talk about during this hour. So we praise God.

And this morning, because I just got this message from the Lord this morning, I hope it was from Him, I don't believe that when I get a message from the Lord it is in terms of total, you know, whatever I get from the Lord gets verwarized, but the time you get it, it's got the clay in it, so you've got to sort out with the Word of God what came from the Lord, what got stained by verwar. It's not, you know, I got this message and put it on you and if you don't obey it, you'll be unhappy forevermore or something like that. But I believe there are specific reasons, at least some reasons, apart from the grace and the mercy of God, which is always the foundation of everything, why we have seen so much blessing and so much victory in our family life.

With Innoem, that is the people who are long-term with Innoem, there has been almost nothing in terms of divorce or separation. There was about 15 years ago one couple who were just moving into leadership. They'd already been married and were having a rough time when they came to us and they had children and somehow this brother got waylaid by the devil, fell in love with a very attractive girl on his team and it blew their relationship with O.M. apart.

Their marriage started to disintegrate and I've heard now just 15 years later they divorced. I think most of those years he was living in impurity and an incredibly patient loving wife, but it ended. Even that, of course, as Christians, is not necessarily the end of the line.

If you think that's the total end of the line, then your God is too small because even though that's wrong and cannot be justified, God does not slam the door and break off fellowship. And I was surprised recently that some gifts were coming in from this particular man or a man with the exact same name. We've been tracing, trying to trace him down to see what that's all about.

That experience in the very early days in Europe really alerted us to the wiles of the devil and we have been accused of being overcautious because of rules like we have. They're not really rules, but general goals that our leaders don't get caught up just in the same room all the time with some other single woman even if it's his secretary. And some of us prefer male secretaries for that reason just to avoid the appearance of evil.

And some people have really accused us of being legalistic or unrealistic, but we have felt that in this day in which so many Christian leaders have been knocked out by their attractive little secretary or because they were living too much of a closed life in terms of God's community with no rules because we're an anti-rule day. We live in a day in which, though there are those who are legalistic and have too many rules, the general population is over here rebelling against rules. Almost all your schools in America have thrown the majority of their rules out and that's the new liberation.

And this is because they're mature. I remember the big thing we were demanding at Moody when I was a student is that people respect that. We are now adults.

Of course, we didn't behave like adults, but we wanted to be respected as adults. And it's interesting where the new liberty has led us. I think there's some good in that, breaking from legalism, but as usual it's so easy for the pendulum to swing.

What are some of the reasons why we have seen this particular area, such an area of blessing? I put first of all, and I hope you will take a few notes, because our burden whenever we have a session like this is for you to take this to others. It's not just for you. You're in training and you're not trained.

You don't know these things until you can share them with others better than I'm sharing them with you. And I'm sure that people can improve on my poor presentation of things, especially in your own language. But I put that as number one.

It is priority. We have seen victory in this area because from the earliest days of the work, and I think it was a great advantage that I was married before I ever came to Europe, and so family was already a priority in my thinking. Family, family life, marriage was priority.

From the beginning, divorce has never been an option in the ranks of Operation Mobilization, and therefore we've never had it. The only case we had was the one I shared with you in which the divorce came some 15 years after the person left OM. But we still sense a responsibility toward them.

There are people that we, of course, fail to reach. Do not think that because people are on OM, especially if they have come already married, that they are necessarily living what we teach and what we believe, even to a 50% mark. This is a very important thing to understand.

A movement of this size, where we don't force people or manipulate people, you can have people who are not paying any attention to any great degree to even basic principles. An illustration of this is the whole thing about physical exercise. I stand almost fanatic that everybody should have a physical exercise program, either jogging or something definite, every day, not hit and miss.

Of course, to me, this isn't a major doctrine. But you don't have 50% of the people in OM that have such a program. Now, I could say, if I wanted to be very legalistic, well, if you come into OM, you don't have an exercise program, we don't guarantee anything else in the program will work.

Therefore, anything that happens to you after you leave, it's totally your own fault because you didn't follow the program. Now, that's the way some of the universities and some training programs work. You either follow the program or, number one, you don't graduate, or if you're in the Marine Corps, you'll probably get shot for putting your head up at the wrong time, if you're in training, or something else.

But in OM, there is freedom. There is freedom to fail. And we want that freedom to fail because this is the way we believe the Holy Spirit works.

I would have loved, years ago, to legalize and regiment the exercise program, but I saw this would be absolutely ridiculous. I know a group that has done that, and it caused just grief and pseudo-spirituality. So, the method of OM, and again, that is a minor point.

I'm using that really in the way of illustration. But there are many other areas where you can't put your finger on things as easy as the exercise program, like certain things that we have encouraged married couples to do, to be disciplined in their sex life. That is not as easy to put your finger on as the exercise program.

You don't just barge in, even to your best friend's house, and say, now look, how are things going in this area this week? Somebody might try that. I've done it with a few very close friends, usually who I've had a very special relationship with. And so, in marriage, of course, there are many areas where we can't even ask questions.

We have a strong teaching about families sending out prayer letters and mobilizing prayer partners. I'll get to that in a minute. I found out some time ago about a family that decided not to send out any prayer letters.

And within a short time, they had left OM. And within a short time after that, their marriage was in serious difficulty. Now, you may say, you think that's a coincidence.

And the last point in my whole lecture this morning is no total answer. And you might want to run that right through everything that I'm saying. Because whatever I say, I'm not giving you some total answer.

I'm giving you different parts of the puzzle. You then have to take pieces and put it together in your situation, because we're all different. But I want to emphasize that being on OM and being in OM doesn't mean you're following these policies or basic principles.

And, in a sense, my plea this morning is that you would give some of these principles at least a fair chance in your own situation and before you write off OM. I think it's easier for families who come into OM already as families, already married, I think it's easier for them to fall out with OM or to write off OM at least to some degree. And I'll get into that a little bit later on.

So, number one, it's priority. This is the series of lectures I gave at a conference, September conference, about 11 or 12 years ago. I've been always lecturing on this subject.

In fact, I got so involved with this that if I left OM, I could spend my entire life just taking marriage seminars. And I hardly feel qualified for that. And I just came across this outline.

I was going to produce a book, but then decided it would be better to produce a family that loved God and let someone else write the books. The title was going to be The Revolutionary Family. It was Chapter 1,

Working Together.

Chapter 2, Spiritual Life. Chapter 3, Communication. Chapter 4, Community Life.

Chapter 5, Sex. Chapter 6, More Sex. No.

When the Baby Comes. Chapter 7, Children. Chapter 8, The Family Witness.

Chapter 9, Family Finance. Let's see. Chapter 10, Recreation and Relations.

Chapter 11, When Separated. Chapter 12, In the Time of Crisis. And if you want to look at that outline, you're more than welcome.

Then you can write your own book. I think we need some more writers in Operation Mobilization. Number 2, the emphasis in OM on the subject of discipline.

I think this has been our, quote, salvation, unquote. Because it's so important in marriage, isn't it, discipline? It touches every area of marriage. I think of a particular couple who probably would have tremendous difficulty in the area of sex, except the wife is disciplined.

For her, sex is not a big thing. She likes to be embraced. She likes the romantic side of life.

She's very different in temperament from her husband. She's happy just with kisses and braces, back rubs and a few other things. But because she believes in discipline and other things we're going to mention, she gives herself to her husband, at least at a fair interval, in a normal way.

This meets some of his deepest needs. It also gives her, at least to some degree, a sense of fulfillment, though she is not experiencing in sex the same traumatic thing that he is experiencing every time this famous event takes place. But she's disciplined.

She doesn't see it as something she just does when she feels like it. She doesn't see it as something she just does when she's not tired, because that's very difficult in our day when all the women seem to be tired once they're married the rest of their life. And this can be very difficult for the man who, whether he's tired or not, feels that this particular event, like having a good steak, is something that shouldn't be missed if the opportunity is there.

Now, I don't want to get into great controversy on the subject, but I hope you get the point. That marriage is held together because of the discipline of the wife. On the other hand, I've dealt with cases where the wife perhaps was not as disciplined as this particular woman, and she just was no longer able to give herself in this way.

It was causing great tension, but because the husband had discipline, and he was willing to die to self and battle on and realize that this problem in his family would not justify extramarital relationships, the marriage still held together. Marriage is not each person coming 50% of the way. And for you engaged couples, boy, get that out of your head.

Marriage is each one goes 90%, and there's a great overlap. You can allow perhaps for 10%. Each one goes 90%.

That's what's going to hold a marriage together, not each person coming 50%. So the disciplined life that touches every area of marriage with our children, especially in terms of the discipline of our tongue, which can so hurt our children, and the Word of God says, provoke not your children to anger. There was a generation not so long ago that went around with great banners about how they spanked their children, and how they believed in discipline.

But unless the parents know self-discipline, disciplining the child is of relatively short value. It may help for a while. The great need today, beloved, I believe, is parental discipline, because we're an undisciplined generation of parents.

We're trying to get our children to do what we have not done. We always think, of course, that in our childhood things were different. Most of us are not that good at remembering our childhood anyway, plus there's such a wide range of situations.

Number three, the emphasis on real love. The kind of message we've given in the last two nights, as basic and as simple as it may be to some of you who have studied the Bible a lot. You see, the importance of the message isn't whether it's simple or deep.

The essence of the message is whether you're living that way, long-suffering, gentle, well-mannered, tender-hearted. And this emphasis in Operation Mobilization, this emphasis in Operation Mobilization to the whole body, including the married couples, has been very, very important. Is there a book, *AI, Love is a Feeling to be Learned?* Something along that line, how true it is.

We have always emphasized that love is an act of the will. God so loved us, He gave His Son. We so love our wives, we give ourselves.

We so love our husbands, we give ourselves. It's an act of the will. For me, there is never the option that I don't love my wife.

It's not even within the realm of debate. Anymore, there's an option that I don't love the Savior. Now, many times I don't feel like I love the Savior.

And my love for the Savior, I don't think, at times, is as strong as my love for my wife. But you see, it's ridiculous even to talk that way. Well, Jesus, today I love you, tomorrow I don't love you.

You're basing it on feelings. We are committed to the Savior. We have been bought with a price.

We are now one with Jesus Christ, and we do love Him. We want our love to improve. We want it to grow.

We will have struggles. We will have times of defeat and failure. But the basic relationship is there.

So in marriage, we're dealing with a basic relationship. We are committed to one another. One of the greatest mistakes people make in marriage is after maybe some weeks or months of not feeling the same amount of emotional vibration toward their marriage partner, they come up with a statement like, I don't really feel I love you anymore.

Imagine what an encouragement this is to the partner. It's better to sit down and talk about your struggles with feelings. Years ago, I explained to my wife that I didn't always have the same kind of hallucinations and vibrations that I had in the pre-married days when I was completely in love, as they say, and couldn't get her out of my mind, and used to run through parks, jump over benches to get back on time at the

Moody Bible Institute when I always had the last minute with her for the last final handshake before I got back to where I was going.

You know, I'm glad that I don't have this hyper-emotion all the time because I wouldn't be very useful in other ministries. But it is good that it does come from time to time, especially when I return from journeys and other occasions. So we do change emotionally, but that doesn't mean the end of the road.

It may, in fact, mean the beginning of a whole new aspect, a whole new dimension of your marriage where your loyalty to one another and your closeness and all that kind of thing becomes stronger and your commitment to one another becomes stronger. To me, this is a very important word in marriage, commitment. I am committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am committed to my wife. Regardless of what level of commitment she may have toward me, I am committed to her. I am committed to the leaders in OM.

That's another important relationship in my life. Regardless of what their attitude or problem may be with me, I am committed to them. Life is commitments.

Billy Graham says life is habits. And as new believers growing in Christ, we have to change our habits. This is why it's harder for families and couples to come into OM because OM is a community, it's a fellowship, it's quite a strong movement, and it has its ways and its patterns, some good, some bad, some neutral.

And into it comes an already existing family with their children and their lifestyle and their habits, and there can be collision. That is as normal as having a collision if a train is trying to pass a Rolls Royce on a railway track, each going in the opposite direction. So if you have some collision with OM as you sort of amalgamate into this difficult to define mongrel movement, that is quite normal.

I am still having collisions with the movement, and I was even involved in helping to start it. At times I've fallen down to God and to others, and I've said, Wow, it's out of control. OM has become a machine, a monster, and it's out of control.

It's easy to think that way in a depressed moment when there's lots of problems. Every time I've thought about it in prayer, I realize that it wasn't out of control. It was a normal spiritual movement that was growing, and a movement with real people who have freedom, and freedom to fail, freedom to disagree, freedom to say, George Verwer is all wet on this point, especially if they can share it with me first, but even if they don't, there's still freedom.

The emphasis on real love, commitment, that has saved us from hundreds of pitfalls. Number four, the war against extremism. We are a bit conservative, and couples, for example, who come from a strong charismatic background, and oh, what a blessing.

Charismatic people have been in OM, and there are plenty of them, even in the leadership, and charismatic people should not feel, even if somebody says something dumb, that happens in any work, that they are not welcomed, but how important it is to realize that a movement of this wide range of people has to be a little bit conservative in some areas if we are going to survive. We've had to sacrifice, perhaps, some freedom in the area of gifts, at least the way some people say it, gifts of the Spirit, in order that we may have basic survival. For instance, I've had people say to me, why don't we have more freedom in the area of prophecy? There are many that feel that prophecy is far more important, for example, than

speaking in tongues, and they felt inhibited in OM because there wasn't more prophecy.

We've studied this a lot. I could write a book on the subject. It's a difficult area because we can't even get the Christians to agree what prophecy is.

There is a strong group of Christians, we have plenty of them in OM, who do not agree with the concept of prophecy where someone pops up and says they got some total thing from God and this is what we must do. Every time I have researched where this kind of thing is going on, unless there is a really very unusual, strong man over the congregation with very good eyes on them most of the time, there is trouble. For example, one Christian union recently in England started to allow prophecy, and the Christian union just went more and more and more emotional, more and more and more divided.

And one day some girl, because usually the girls that get into this is very much linked with the emotion, and she gave some great prophecy at the Christian union meeting, and everybody must be at a certain prayer meeting at 7 o'clock in the morning, or they weren't really flowing with the Spirit. One of the favorite words in this generation is flowing. Well, a lot of people didn't feel like flowing into that prayer meeting at 7 o'clock in the morning, and it just blew the roof off.

Now that Christian union handled this in a very wise way. I think they decided to get a prophecy committee. And now every prophecy is recorded on tape.

I don't know what they did back in the New Testament to poor souls without a cassette recorder. They didn't have videotape either. They now have a prophecy committee, and I think they use this for handling the tongues problem as well, and they listen to these prophecies, and then they decide whether they are from God or not from God.

It's a difficult area, and in O.M. we are not ready to move down that road. There was another case of someone recently that had a prophecy in London that he had the wrong wife, and so he divorced his present wife and got one who was more flowing with what the Lord was doing in his life at this time, what he felt the Lord was doing at this time. Even David Wilkerson, who I respect and love, I listen to his tapes, got himself in an enormous amount of trouble, and he never got out of it, when he gave this vision.

This is years ago now, and if that vision took place, an awful lot of things should have happened before now. Now, later on, he adjusted it. I heard his tapes defending it, and he said, well, he had the timing wrong.

But you see, when you first heard the vision, when I first heard the tape, I mean, this was God. This was not man. This was God speaking.

This was what was going to happen. Thus saith the Lord. And, of course, half the people in the charismatic movement turned against him because they didn't agree with him.

Because they were moving closer to the Catholic Church. Some of them had become Catholics. And Wilkerson said, it's the Catholic Church that's going to persecute, in an unbelievable way, all the charismatics.

It didn't come true. Now, of course, you can always postpone the date, but this is what the cults do. The cults tell us Jesus is coming on a particular date on a particular mountain.

When he doesn't come, they say, oh, well, somehow, we just, we did get the date wrong. It is, you know, they give you another date. And, we can't go for that.

I mention this because, as married couples and families, you are probably more set in your theology than the average young person. We get families and couples even offended. Why doesn't O.M. give a greater open door to couples? But often, beloved, it's their own fault because they are already set in their ways.

They don't need a training program. And, we're not about to train people. We're all set in our ways.

They get all the theological answers. And, that coupled with pride makes it almost impossible for them to submit to the kind of program and leadership we have in O.M. And, there's no one begging couples to come into O.M. because that would bring in a far greater number of couples and many of them would be disappointed. So, the fact that we give out a little bit of a warning, and it's a little bit harder for couples, is not discrimination.

It's just facing the reality that in this kind of training, it's better if we can get people before they are all set in their ways. And, they have all the theological answers and they will not be afraid to cross the leader, even in a public meeting. We've had them stand up and just tell the leader he was completely wrong in his theology and this is why the blessing wasn't on the team and start to preach and exhort and even call down whatever, in the name of the Lord.

Oh yes, we've had an interesting history these twenty years. And, some of our leaders have been wounded. And so, if when you come for your interview as a married couple, they don't embrace you totally, it's because they love you.

And, they want you to have the best possible program and for some it may be that the best possible program is not to come on Operation Mobilization. Go join something that's more in line with your total answer or your mentality. So, the war against extremism has been important.

If you've studied religion and the Christian religion in a broad sense, you will know that the religious emotion and the sex emotion easily get mixed up. This is an unbelievable study. It's one, again, that I could write a book on and it would be incredibly depressing and I have no plans to write it.

But, others have. A funny little man over here, no, over in England, wrote a book called Queer Christians. Now, the word queer in that country, in that context, is not the same as in other countries.

Some countries, I think queer refers to somebody with a homosexual problem. But, this book was just about odd Christians and that was an unbelievable book. It's gone out of print.

I have a copy. And, he just went in religious community after religious community and showing how adultery and immorality invaded the community in the name of Jesus. It's as old as the Old Testament.

Even out in India, the whole thing of temple prostitutes, the fact that so many great religious leaders who have become cultic have been immoral. Religious extremism is deadly in family life. If you've seen the Jim Jones film, the heartbreak is when he betrayed his wife upon the advice of Father Divine, who must have brought a lot of children into this world.

And, how Jim Jones' wife was so crushed when he started to go and commit adultery with some of the other girls that he had helped spiritually. And, I want to tell you, if God has given any of you men a

dynamic ministry in which single women are also greatly blessed and therefore come to you for counsel, you are vulnerable. Keith Miller said it's hardly ever when you get involved in a long-term counseling situation with a woman, with someone of the opposite sex, is what he said, it's hardly ever that immorality does not take place.

And, Keith Miller was a very liberated person when he stated that. He wasn't some kind of a legalist. His own marriage, shortly after that, blew into pieces and his faith with it.

And, it was later on through another woman who had been attacked by a pastor and almost raped, I think, by him. And, who had gone through other ugly experiences in the church. And, when Keith Miller saw that she came out of that to love the Lord Jesus, he was touched and came back to Christ and wrote a book about it.

Oh, if only we could learn some of these lessons earlier. This has been the advantage in O.M., that many of these lessons had been learned before the tragedy, before the crisis. Because we read widely, we've been able to glean from others.

And, we've been sharing this for the last twenty-some years. And, it has been an enormous help. They're all linked together, aren't they? Extremism, discipline, real love.

And, then number five, the emphasis on prayer and prayer partners. Before I ever went out to Mexico in 1957, I was still single and the foundation in my life was laid before I was married. And, that's probably another reason we feel that we can often go further with single people.

Though, we have seen some wonderful successes with people who have come already married. Though, it is a much, much, much tougher road. And, before I ever went to Mexico, I had about 200 prayer partners.

Now, that may sound like a small thing. Do you realize the protection, the covering I had? Now, I could have so easily fallen into immorality. I tell you, some of those little Mexican girls.

And, when a hot-blooded North American meets a hot-blooded Mexican, you have population explosion. And, that's what you have all along the border. And, I blame the Americans more than the Mexicans myself.

But, you see, I had 200 people praying for me. You know, I had some weird temptations. I sensed constantly, I was just being guarded by the Lord.

Prayer partners, getting prayer partners, which we're talking about later today, is not some minor thing. We need that protection. We need not only prayer partners, we need a prayer board if we can get it, a group of people back home.

If our church is not functioning in a strong way to oversee us, then we ought to get a group of laymen who will be our overseers, who we can be responsible to, back in our home country. I did this before I ever went to Mexico. Those same men are still standing with me today.

Never ceased to pray for me. Edward Gallencamp, one of the men who helped pay for the bus that took me to the Billy Graham meeting, became one of the first members of our board, and has been with me to this day. The protection I've had because of my prayer partners has been a very major thing, and also

linked with the next point, submission.

The emphasis on prayer, of course, is important because we are not in a carnal warfare, we are in a spiritual warfare. You think the problems in your marriage are your wife, or your husband, or his background, or her background. No, they are often Satan's attempts to destroy your family.

Try to see these things not as your husband's kink, or your kink, but as the devil's strategy to destroy you, and to destroy your family. So the emphasis on prayer, getting prayer partners, staying linked with the local church, has all been an important factor in keeping this testimony. Then number six, submission.

Owen had a, I believe, a healthy emphasis on submission, without even knowing there was such a teaching. Lately there's been big emphasis on submission. That is a reaction from the church not teaching anything about submission.

Don't be too hard on some of the local churches that overemphasize submission, because they are just reacting to the no submission that has existed for years, when the pastor and the elders in the church could care less what the people do. You just come and tell them what you're doing. Nobody asks any questions.

Now the pendulum has swung. This is always the problem. When we find the truth, we take it too far.

And the chaos this extreme teaching on submission has brought is just unbelievable. Even men telling other men they should leave their wife. One of the things I'm scared of the most in church life is accusation.

You know in some local churches they have accusation sessions. How frightening. To me there should be questions.

One of the things that marks the Scientology cult, and if they get a copy of this tape they may take me to court just for what I say right now. But one of the subtle things about the Scientology cult is the control over the people. I read a book about a man who tried to get out of this movement and how they used his marriage partners to keep him in the movement.

To keep him gripped with fear. The children of God, the family of love it's now called, use the same manipulation. Even threatening people.

If you leave your marriage will fall apart. If you leave your babies will be born mongoloid. If you leave all kinds of threats.

Threatening is as basic to cults as the Bible is to a believer. They live by threat, by manipulation. And it's so deadly.

And as you know one of the ways some of the people come out of the cult is when one of the marriage partners doesn't go along with it. That's why it is valuable to listen to one another. It is valuable.

If your wife is one type of theology and you're another type of theology that doesn't necessarily mean great division in the home. That may bring protection. You launch something in your side of the theological camp that you just got off the latest cassette tape and your wife says, well you know that's interesting but what about John down the other side of that and he ended up divorcing his wife and marrying this woman who, well I think, oh yeah she did, she made this cassette.

You know so often the wife, we often say, especially the male chauvinist, that you know the men were more logical and more intellectual and you know all that funk. And the men, the women, they're more emotional. Of course this is a generalization because there are cases where it's just the opposite in a family where the man is more emotional, less logical and the wife is more logical and less emotional.

There is such a wide range of people there are today. There may be an element of truth in that. What am I trying to say? The need to submit to one another.

Submission in marriage is not the woman just submitting to the man like some little duck on the end of a rope being pulled across the duck pond. The wife should know basic submission and respect the headship of her husband as Christ is head of the church, but as far as the practical working there is a submission to one another. There's a recognition of one another's gifts, a recognition of various abilities that our partner has.

I think the hardest thing for a man is when he picks up a rumor that he's being bossed by his wife. Why he's not able to overreact to that and never come back from a major neurosis. But I don't think it's possible to have a really loving family where you're sharing and speaking and where you don't run rough shot over each other without being eventually accused of being run by your wife.

There's all kinds of little jokes, you know, like she's the neck that turns the head and all this kind of thing. Well, whatever people are saying it's a great mistake to overreact. And you decide when you pick up this rumor you're going to tighten up on your wife or you're going to prove to others that your wife is in submission to you.

And some of you do some really dumb things. And your wife, bless her heart, she's so loving, she decides to go along with it for the sake of peace or the sake of the children and you go around and show this as a credential that you have a submissive wife. What does this prove? I don't know.

It may prove that you're dumber than the other guy down the road. I don't know. Learning to submit to one another, to respect one another, to love one another.

It's interesting that in OM we don't expect dictatorial leadership. There's no one that's going to take any dictation even from me, I can assure you. I have a lot of respect and loyalty but people don't want dictators.

And you don't want dictators. And yet the man who doesn't want a dictator turns around and becomes a dictator in the house. It's not God's way.

So this emphasis on submission and balance and the emphasis on protection is very important. We ought to protect our wives as men as much as possible. If the financial policy, not functioning right on your team, is hurting your wife then you run defense.

Certainly you tall, good looking, strong men are not afraid of some little team. Certainly you're not afraid of a team leader. Most of our team leaders are incredibly cooperative.

They knew you wanted an extra five dollars or five, they'd give you ten. But you know the mistakes the married couples make? They don't share. The team leader does something offensive or the team treasurer goes home offensive and they go home and they have roast team leader for supper.

But if we don't know what's on your heart, if you don't share, if you're afraid of your leader or you give up after the first miscommunication because it's bound to be miscommunication if you ever had any with your wife, so why are you so amazed if you have one with your team leader? And as we're mature and go back and talk things out we can find that middle road of love and spiritual life. Number eight, I've already mentioned when people are already married it's harder so we are a little fussier in terms of families. We do throw up a smokescreen and just to make sure that it's really the Lord who's sending them and because we've been conservative I think we've had a pretty good average with the families the Lord has brought us.

Of course there has been some failures. Some families after a time on OM they they're convinced that they they're not ready for the foreign mission field. I feel that in itself is a ministry.

Some families in the United States they will never be happy and settle down there until they get a year overseas and discover that's not their thing. Then they'll return home and they'll be a lot happier and a lot more peaceful. And I have a burden for such people who they want to come with us we say look we don't think it's worth it.

They write again, they phone, they come to the conference, they go to the interview. I generally at that point say look I think you should come. Now I have leaders who don't agree with me on this and I'm sort of a liberal family recruiter and I've undergone a little bit of criticism for that which is which is great.

But I'm out for bringing families after they persevere and they pray it through and they pass some of the tests go to the conference see money come in all these different things because there's an awful lot of barriers. Some of you have been going over barriers for the last year and you're still wondering what next thing OM is going to throw up that you're supposed to go over to prove that you're stable or that you aren't going to destroy the movement or some other thing speaking of course in exaggeration. So that's been a great help.

And then number nine, number eight is the fact that we are cautious about people who are already married and especially if they already have children. Okay number nine just being on OM is not enough. Just being on OM is not enough.

We want to see fruitful lives and we realize in God's training program OM can only play a small part. Nothing we teach you this year or anything we teach you this year does not guarantee future success in your marriage. Life isn't like that.

And to blame someone's divorce or separation without examining the facts on OM which some people I've heard recently have done is so naive and so childish. It proves that people do not understand much of what life is about. When you're in OM you are subject to the circumstances of this kind of life therefore they will be perhaps one of the factors that could bring difficulty in your marriage.

But if you were not in OM there would be other circumstances and from the people I talk to they say the circumstances get rougher when they leave OM. So in a sense we can't prove anything by finding one couple who when they came on OM they found it rough and they had marriage problems. We can't prove unless we had a thousand case histories at least on each side those who never came on OM from similar backgrounds with those who came on OM and made a heavy research we cannot prove much by such things.

So to me it's not that relevant. Also of course in the future we are going to have some marital bust-ups maybe even within OM. I hope not.

Over 1,500 people and as people move into the 40s and as the devil continues to hack away history shows that some will collapse in the midst of the battle. And that will not prove that we've been going in the wrong direction all along because probably you'll discover that some of these basic principles have been dropped along the way which are so biblical and because life is incredibly complex. That's why I've always had a compassionate view toward the divorced and I feel that these people need a lot of understanding.

Some of them got divorced and separated when they were young Christians when they had very little teaching very little help. Life gets incredibly complex and I just believe that whatever policy we have through the divorce and separated and all that it must be just so compassionate and we must see the grace of God and the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. OM was one of the first main interdenominational movements to accept divorced people.

When we started that it was a no-no. We kept it very quiet but it was our conviction especially if the divorce was before they became a Christian that they should have an opportunity for training. That's how we helped some people who were against it said well look OM is a training program.

We're not taking these people necessarily as a main apostolic missionary to Central Africa. And we have seen that this was God's course. We are conservative.

We interview people. We have even accepted, what do they call it, single-parent families. And we've seen the Lord work.

It's a revolutionary road we've chosen. Many of the new generation they don't even understand how revolutionary some of these things are in missionary work. Even today a vast percentage of missionary societies the moment they hear you're divorced that's it.

They won't correspond with it anymore. And now the pendulum swings and of course we we get people who don't feel you know that OM is totally fair simply because we ask a few questions. We want to try to find out what's happening, what the situation is.

It's a hard thing to please people in these areas. That's why our main goal is to please God. And then number 10 openness about sex.

We were also criticized for this. You can imagine 20 years ago speaking openly about sex. And in previous September conferences I have given lectures on sex.

If they ever got out to public listening back in those days I don't know what would happen. I was openly answering questions like what is the biblical basis for oral sex and every kind of wild question you can think of. That's ten years ago.

And we have no fixed plan for such sessions. But I can tell you many many people have written telling me how much these open talks about sex have helped them. Because it seems the last thing that spiritual people want to talk about.

And it seems that there is teaching among Christians that certain things within marriage it's lust. And people go around with a guilt trip that they're they're in lust in their marriage. I believe lust is difficult within

marriage with your own marriage partner.

I'm sure it's possible but I wouldn't want to be the one to draw the line as to where it begins and ends. And of course there's a wide range of thinking on this. But the very fact that we talk about it, we're open about it, many have sought counsel about it, has helped a lot of people.

I will tell you hundreds of marriages have been healed through the teaching and the emphasis of OM. I'm not speaking now about within OM but in our marriage teaching, in our seminars, on the all over the world. And number 11, the influence of books.

Books on marriage and family have gone through OM for over, for about 20 years at an unbelievable rate. You won't agree with everything but it at least causes you to think. Some of the cobwebs are knocked, knocked out.

Again and again books have brought me to repentance in regard to my own marriage. Number 12, the emphasis on sharing and fellowship and honesty. How important this is.

Number 13, the war against hyper-idealism because hyper-idealism is one of the most destructive elements in marriage. The husband is expecting his wife to be this, the wife is expecting her husband to be that, and eventually it breaks down. But in OM, the constant chopping away at total answerism, hyper-idealism has brought many a marriage racked down to earth.

And then the emphasis on brokenness and on maintaining a realistic view of life and of suffering. True spirituality with the love and the balance has been a major factor that I believe has helped us to be able to really praise God after these 20 years of family life that so many have run so well. Oh yes, problems there have been and they will become greater.

And the whole area of rearing children is probably the greatest challenge we're faced with. But even there, these basic principles will be major factors, I believe, in keeping us in the right direction. Let's pray.

I will have a question and answer session with you next year, next week, when I speak on survival in marriage. And for people hearing the tape, I'd be happy to correspond if you have some burden on this subject. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can just openly share these expectations, these thoughts.

Help us to really appropriate this, to talk about it among ourselves, in our families, and to pray, and to really believe you that we're going to have a healthy and a happy, growing experience within this spiritual army that you have raised up. And we thank you that OM is for families. It is for all who want to serve you with all their heart and are willing for the biblical principles of marriage and spiritual life.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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