

World Vision - How Om Began

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of emotional healing, prayer, and resilience in ministry while recommending impactful Christian literature.

Duration: 59:51

Scripture: Acts 20:20-21, Acts 20:24, Acts 20:28, Acts 23:12

Topics: "World Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not being moved or discouraged by the challenges and burdens that come with ministry. He encourages listeners to renew their commitment to biblical ministry and to study and preach on Acts 20, which discusses feeding the flock of God. The speaker then shifts to Acts 23 and introduces the title of the message, 'The Conspiracy.' He highlights a specific conspiracy against the Apostle Paul, where certain Jews bound themselves under a curse to kill him. The speaker concludes by reminding listeners that it is normal for Christian leaders to face challenges and encourages them to persevere and get back up when they fall.

Transcript

From this important area of Britain that now has this glorious bridge so that everybody can rush up and get here much quicker, even though it seems that there's not as much traffic as they once envisaged. It always encourages us to read about some of these things since we've also, in our bridge building around the world, have sometimes miscalculated the problems and what was involved. I'd like to just pray once again and ask the Lord to help us.

Before I do that, I would like to say a word about some of these books. I get so excited when I come to this ship and just see the Christian books. Some of them, whenever I come here, I see books I've never seen before.

I don't know if you know about all these books, but in your position in Christian leadership, I think you want to know about books that you can recommend, that you can use in your ministry. There are two books that I have especially been recommending in the last two years, one of them only in the last year. Unfortunately, they keep putting the price up.

But this one is called Healing for Damaged Emotions. I don't think I exaggerate when I say that about 50% of the people that come on OM, young people, OM is many things. It's a long-term missionary fellowship,

but the bigger sector is short-term training.

A lot of these young people who come for training have serious emotional difficulties or damaged emotions. That's why in our work we've had to give a lot more time to counseling, to listening, to really helping young people. I don't know if I'm sure in the ministry you've discovered an increasing number of young people today have been raped in their homes.

That's just one of, say, 15 factors that we would find in society today on the increase in our counseling with young people. Often many young people open up within OM, the context of the OM team and the fellowship and the counseling, many of them open up and share their problems for the first time in their life. Quite a few homosexual young people, for the first time after hearing our teaching on the subject of sex in the Bible, have opened up and shared that they had a homosexual problem.

Others have shared, like one young girl, that she'd been raped 15 times by her grandfather. People in our society, you know this probably better than I do, they hurt him. There's no way we can hustle him off on an evangelistic campaign.

We've got to stop, we've got to listen, and we've got to somehow, in some cases, see if they're even ready for this kind of work. Quite a few people we actually encourage to go back to their own home area, try to get counseling, try to get some roots and build within their local church before coming, especially on a one or two year program. Anyway, I got sidetracked there because I'm actually just trying to talk about this book on healing for damaged emotions by a pastor, a man who'd been a pastor for 30 years or more and who I believe brings a biblical perspective to this important subject.

His follow-up book is just published, Putting Away Childish Things. Reprogram old behavior patterns that are holding you back. Two absolutely brilliant books.

And I would consider it almost worth coming here to Hull just to push in and mention these two books. I've had more people lately thanking me for introducing them to these books. And so I'm happy to mention them to you.

There's another book along similar lines, Where Is God When It Hurts? A book you can give to somebody when they're hurting, when they're having problems emotionally. Where Is God When It Hurts? Also, very balanced way, deals with the problem of suffering. There's a lot of easy answers about the problem of suffering.

And personally, I'm not very satisfied with many of them. We had one group in the United States. One church alone took a strong position.

I don't know if you read the book God Wants You Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines. That's another American export that's coming your way. Prosperity doctrine.

If you're spiritual, you will prosper. You can get rid of that Ford Escort, get a Rolls Royce, or, you know, something that's really going to bring glory to God. That's the way they talk.

And this doctrine is going to come in heavy in the next few years. It's already here. And there's a book against it called God Wants You Rich and Other Enticing Doctrines.

And in this one church where they had very extreme views about healing in America, 52 people dead in one church, many of them children. We don't always hear that side, or if we do, we don't like it. But I believe we need balanced material on this subject of suffering.

And that's one of the books that may be a help. Edith Schaeffer's book *Affliction* is another brilliant book. And that's *Love Covers*, a book about how we can love and respect one another even when we may not agree.

Are all the Christian leaders in Hull and this area all in agreement with each other? I rather doubt it. I've been around the country now 22 years. I haven't found it yet in any single area in the entire nation.

And we don't have to be. We don't have to all be in agreement on every little jot and tittle. But we can respect one another.

We can learn to love one another. We can learn to compassionately disagree instead of arrogantly, impatiently, in the flesh disagree, which so often gets into God's work. At least it has at times into ours.

And so I commend *Love Covers*. I commend to you *Celebration of Discipline*. Again, you may not agree with every line.

This man comes from a unique background, not so well known among Christians, Evangelical Christians. But 95% of what you read here you'll just be thrilled. I think it's one of the most beautiful devotional books that I've ever read.

Celebration of Discipline. And the book we use in our leadership training. We had a leadership training course in Birmingham two weeks ago.

We had 800 enrolled. We turned over 150 away. We had 1,300 in the meetings in the bull ring.

There are a lot of young people who are in responsibility in their Christian unions, in Sunday schools, in youth groups. They want some training. They're making mistakes.

They're already suffering from the pain of trying to be a Christian leader because they're in youth leadership. And we believe that one of our specialties, and we're still learning ourselves, is training young people. And we use this book in our leadership training.

Spiritual Leadership by Oswald Saunders, the former leader of OMF, now known as the, formerly known as China Inland Mission, now known as OMF. So there's some books I'd like you to look at. *Putting Away Childish Things* and *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, *Where Is God When It Hurts*, *Love Covers*, *Celebration of Discipline* and *Spiritual Leadership*.

And I think if you get those books, when you look back on this particular conference, you'll be able to say it was worth it just to get some of these key tools. Many of us dream about going back to seminary for one or two years. I'd like to go back and get some more formal education.

I only had about four years after secondary school, two in universities, two in Bible college. Not enough. Well, not so simple now in my particular situation.

But you know, I find through reading, through regularly listening to lectures on cassette tapes, that I have the privilege of ongoing education. And it is so stimulating and so challenging. And there are so many

beautiful books.

And many times the cream of what people are saying in these various institutions, it's all put in books and with a little discipline, especially now with a cassette tape. I hope you look at some of the cassette tapes we have. I was before accused of being a bookworm.

Now people are accusing me of being a tapeworm, which is a little embarrassing for my wife. But the Lord is merciful. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for Christian books. We thank you for the way you are working through books. The way often when we're not exactly sure what to say to a person, we can share something and then give them a book that can be used of your Holy Spirit to meet their particular needs.

Lord, we rejoice. We rejoice. You have called us into this great work, whether it's preaching the Word locally or carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

We're together. We're on the same team. We belong to the same body.

Whether we've got an American accent, an English accent, whether we're from China, Russia, or India. If we're born again, if we're your children, then we're on the same team. We thank you for this privilege.

Help us, Lord, as we just look into the Word together now. In Jesus' name, Amen. I want you to turn to the book of Acts.

I think it may be announced in the program that I was going to speak on world vision and I will do that this afternoon. But God, by His Holy Spirit, has put something on my heart, especially for you and your situation. After all, it's great to talk to you about world vision, but you've got whole vision and you've got a particular task here.

Our burden, even as you come for these days, is that you may receive something here that is exceptionally relevant, or at least very relevant for what you're facing right now. It's been my joy all over the world to be able to share with Christian leaders. It's not easy for me.

I think I would easily cop out and say, let me speak to just ordinary people, young people. These Christian leaders, let me mainly learn from them for another ten years and then maybe I'll speak. But somehow in a very unpredictable way when I was just a young Christian I kept being thrown to share my testimony with Christian leaders.

And if that was true when I was 19 and 20, now that I'm in these great mid-years. Boy, some of you look like you may be in the mid-years. Isn't it great? The mid-years, it's a mid-year crisis.

All life's a crisis. But I find it so stimulating. My son is getting married on Saturday.

Boy, we've got another free room in the house. We're praising God that he's moving on to higher ground. Pray for the wedding.

It's a very formal English wedding and quite a formal reception. Everything is really organized. We have our sort of OM receptions if it's an OM marriage.

Just anybody come bring your own food. This is a proper reception. It's in a hotel and every guest's name's on a card.

Of course, mainly it's done by the bride's wife so it's not much problem for me. But every day somehow this week my wife, what did I say? My bride's parents. Bride's parents are organizing it.

But every day last week my wife's been exhorting me about my manners. And she seems to feel that I may blow it on Saturday. So, just pray that I may somehow be well-mannered.

Not eat too fast. I hear it's going to take several hours sitting in the same place. I was asking my future daughter-in-law whether I could bring my tape recorder and an earphone.

She wasn't so happy about that. I didn't. The Lord is good.

And He ministers to us through all the various changes in life. Midlife. I'm looking for those senior citizen days.

That's ahead. But we gotta be patient. Gotta be patient.

Acts chapter 20 is where I would like you to look just to take a quick look at some of these important statements by the Apostle Paul. Verse 19. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind with many tears.

We're talking now about the ministry. Serving the Lord with many tears and trials which befell me by the lying and weight of the Jews and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you but have shown you and have taught you publicly and from house to house testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ and now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem not knowing the things that shall befall me there except that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city saying bonds and afflictions await me. When I was a young Christian I took verse 24 as one of my sort of life verses.

I like to take them all but this one really jumped out of the word to me when I was a young believer I think I was 18. None of these things move me. You long to be able to say that problems in the church misunderstandings suffering things going wrong none of these things move me.

I need to say that I got a few problems none of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. May every one of us be able to go from here renewing our commitment to that kind of biblical ministry and then it talks about some of the other burdens that were on the heart of the apostle Paul feeding the flock of God. It's a great chapter.

Study it. Preach on it. Then I want you to go over to Acts 23.

The title of this message may not say this on the tape because they have everything all advanced planned here. It will probably say World Vision 1. But the title of this message is The Conspiracy. Now since there are a couple of thousand of my tapes floating around the world it's hard to come up with new titles.

But here's a new title. Though I did share this with pastors in Swansea a couple of months ago and with a few pastors in Pakistan because when the Lord gives me a burden and a particular message and I had never preached in this way up until some months ago then I like to share it in many parts of the world not just keep it to Swansea where I first gave these thoughts. The Conspiracy.

What was the conspiracy? Verse 12 in chapter 23. And when it was day certain of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under a curse saying they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Imagine that.

Imagine getting home tonight a little note on your door. Dear pastor several of us have met together and we have decided we are not going to eat until you are dead. Now some of you feel you have got a few problems in your church but I dare to say if you had that problem it may make that little controversy in the choir look small.

There is a conspiracy. It goes on to say there in verse 21 but do not thou yield unto them for there lie and wait for him of them more than forty men who have bound themselves with an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now are they ready looking for a promise from thee.

I don't know if you have ever preached on this text. I am strongly convinced that there is a conspiracy a definite conspiracy brewed in hell against you as a Christian leader. And I think it's incredibly important number one we don't overemphasize this we don't want to all go out of here neurotic.

And I don't believe in giving a lot of attention to the devil. Someone once said every one look at Satan take ten looks at Jesus. Or was it one look at self take ten looks at Jesus.

Both are true. And in our work we're a little bit wary of all the big flood of books lately about Satan. And you know some people are seeing demons in every bush.

And if you sneeze they want to cast out a demon of cold. But you know this is what I'm talking about this morning. We don't want to go to the other extreme.

Because Corinthians says very clearly be not ignorant of Satan's devices. And what I share with you this morning is not something that I have looked for or sort of purposely researched. It's something that I've had to face in 29 years of ministry.

Now let me share just briefly my own testimony because I think most of us were a little bit new to each other. And it's not been my privilege to come to Hull very much over the years. Though I was in Hull, never forget it, the day that Nixon resigned.

You remember that day? It's hard to believe it's more than a decade ago. And I was preaching in Hull. I remember I came across the ferry.

We didn't have any sophisticated bridge. Came across from the other side by ferry. I was coming up from Ipswich.

Tremendous ferry. Looked like something out of a museum. I think somebody came to me recently and asked me if I wanted to buy that.

They think George Ford, big shipping tycoon, buys and sells, wheeling and dealing in ships. The next ship I hope to go into is one from my grandson in his bathtub. But my son says that's several years off yet.

But I was in Hull the day that Nixon resigned. And I as someone who knew Nixon, not personally but just knew about him and followed him, I just wept. I just wept in front of that TV screen right here in Hull.

But I haven't been here very much. And so maybe I could just share a little of my testimony. My grandfather is from across the water in Holland.

He was an atheist. My other grandfather from Glasgow, he was drunk. My parents were not believers though they had a little bit of Christianity Methodist.

We went to a little Reformed church, sort of a community social club. I even became the president of the Young People's Fellowship, the assistant to the pastor. But I was lost.

I didn't know what salvation was. I didn't know people had to be converted, especially Americans. We were a religious nation.

I mean, God had organized us more or less, we thought. And I was deceived. You know, you can be religious and lost, the most desperate state to be in.

And a dear woman came into my life who believed in prayer. One of the things I'd like to emphasize today, reemphasize something you already know and have preached on. God works through prayer.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christian leadership, if you neglect your prayer life, you're going to pay big. And if you neglect the prayer ministry in your church and if you neglect the prayer meeting in your church, your church is going to pay big. I warn you on the basis of several hundred verses.

This woman did not neglect prayer. She had been praying for the secondary school near her home for 15 years that people would be saved and sent. That school became the birthplace for this whole ministry.

An unknown woman. Fifteen years of prevailing, persevering prayer. We know so little of that today.

This is the day of instant results. But you know the long-term results are going to take or demand long-term prayer. Asking you shall receive.

Be not weary in well-doing you shall reap if ye faint not. We long to see a breakthrough in this area of England. I'm aware that even comparing this area of England with other areas that this is a needy mission field that God has put you in.

Praise the Lord for your ministry here. If you need some prayer I can't promise much but I'd be happy to receive a feedback paper from you. Take out a piece of paper.

Put my name on it. My name is George. And give me some prayer requests because I'd be happy to pray for you.

This lady not only prayed, she sent me a gospel of John through the post. And I read this and it prepared my heart for a one-night meeting of Billy Graham in New York City. I didn't even know what an evangelist was.

And among my circle of friends, believe me, we were not in Billy Graham's camp. But somehow some people got me on an old bus and I got to that meeting. And I heard the gospel.

I heard that Jesus Christ died for me. I heard there was a need to repent. Billy Graham emphasizes repentance.

He does not preach an easy beliefism message. You don't have to agree totally with Billy Graham to believe that he's an anointed evangelist. I probably wouldn't agree fully with you.

But I would be more than privileged, you know, to come to your church or to minister or to work with you. And I think one of the problems in the church, we don't know how to compassionately disagree. We just sort of make generalizations and we make little innuendoes.

And though I don't agree with Billy Graham on every issue, I don't know the man that well, I believe the anointing of God is on him and that with literally millions of people who are praying, the good will outweigh any negative factors ten to one. In all of our ministries there are negative factors. In this ship there are negative factors.

No one in the Christian life has arrived with perfect doctrine, perfect total victory. We're all learning. We're all growing.

We all fail. Billy Graham went to the Soviet Union. He was put on the spot.

Things got out of context and he was crucified for that visit. How would you have done? I just went to the Soviet Union, very quiet little visit. Nobody knew about it.

I didn't find it easy, especially getting out. And life is complex. The decision Billy Graham was forced to make years ago of whether he should work only with very strong minded American Bible punching fundamentalists because that's where he started.

That's where Billy started. Or he should broaden out and work with a wider range of God's people. And then where do you draw the line? God's people.

It's not so simple, at least as I used to think when I came out of Bible school when I had all the answers. Because you know we found in our country some of the Bible fundamentalists turned up to be practicing homosexuals. Some of them are in prison today.

Others are back sleeping in divorce. See, they didn't all have their act together either. And Jack Van Empie, one of our dynamic, strong speaking fundamentalists in America, he is so upset with all the fighting in the fundamentalist camp, all the backbiting, that he has turned and is preaching a radical strong message on love and has just written a book about that.

I don't know if you even know his name, but if you were an American you'd know the name of Jack Van Empie. Praise God there's an increasing number of people who are saying yes, we believe in Bible doctrine, but we must have love. That is the prince of doctrines.

And this means we will at times have to passionately or compassionately disagree and press on and perhaps when we get to heaven we'll get the full score. Anyway, I went to that Billy Graham meeting and I was saved. And that has stood the test of 29 years.

In fact, I can say honestly through much failure and great struggle and a lot perhaps not too proud about I have experienced that reality every day. Christ in me. He came in that night.

He has never left me or forsaken me even when I had flat on my nose. I went back to that secondary school and began to share the message of Christ. We started prayer meetings.

God began to work. In one meeting alone where I was able to share my prayer. O.M.'s first birthplace was back in that ungodly secondary school.

It then spread to Mexico. I went to university and there mainly through reading I caught a vision more and more for Mexico and for other countries. So at nineteen I went to Mexico and I saw that young people could work with the churches and could help the churches.

That work has gone on now 25 years. To make a long story short I went transferred to Moody Bible Institute where I met my wife. I went back to Mexico after graduation then went to Spain.

From Spain God transferred me to Great Britain where OM really had its second birth. OM did not have the name Operation Mobilization until the summer of 1961. Some of you know my friend Brother Andrew God's Smuggler.

This morning you've got Brother George God's Bungler. And I also went into the Soviet Union. got arrested by the secret police for distributing Scriptures and it was really my own ability to make mistakes.

Finally they thought I was a spy then decided I was a religious fanatic and released me. And I went for a day of prayer and it was there that day of prayer two words came to my mind.

I was thinking about Europe I was thinking about all the hatred that had brought the war and killed so many 6 million Jews 6 million Gentiles don't think we should ever forget it even if we do have our hearts filled with forgiveness and I thought can there not be a revolution of love the word mobilization came to my mind can we mobilize young people instead of fighting killing each other Germans French British why can't we mobilize for God and on the top I was actually when I was younger I used to climb trees just for change and I was on the top of this huge tree in a forest in Germany and it was there that these two words came to me as I was praying in a day of prayer and fasting operation mobilization and I came down shared this with a brother who was with me and we went back to Madrid

where I was living Madrid Spain where my first son was born and I shared this with some Spaniards a plan to mobilize European young people to serve the church on the continent and they went for it what a miracle they had their doubts about me about this whole thing they went for it they took over the work in Spain I meanwhile had met two young men who came from England and told me of the green pastures of the British Isles among God's people and in March of 62 I came to Britain for a short visit and I've become really the founding country of OM to any great degree and is still the base for our international headquarters there in London our British base is in Manchester God gave us 200 young people that summer in answer to prayer there was no big publicity God gave us 900 the next summer

we made a lot of mistakes but because we were reading a lot of good books we were having input from a lot of good Christian leaders we set up a board of directors in Manchester of godly men who counseled us and kicked us and urged us to stay on the straight and narrow path we learned from our mistakes and God taught us something about spiritual leadership discernment spiritual balance problem solving relationships dealing with people motivating people and all kinds of other things which are written about in our leadership material in our different manuals and in our many different books and so it's through these 29 years in about 50 different nations that really this message had its birthplace I preach about 500 times a year I'm trying to cut down it used to be 900 and people say well

when do you prepare I said my whole life is preparation for the next message now that doesn't mean I don't have formal preparation I do tapes studies outlines notes I have a whole you know reams of outlines notes and messages more than I'll ever preach I don't know if we're going to have preaching in heaven but if we don't I don't know what I'm going to do with some of these messages but some of you are in the same church for 10 years you got a greater opportunity you got to really expand your mind to just keep serving them up with new meals I just pray you don't serve them up with any heresy in the attempt to keep giving new things I love to talk to you about sensitivity in preaching because I think sometimes we feel as preachers we feel intimidated by the intellectual he wants a certain

style message he's sitting there with his six gun we feel intimidated by the fellow over here who's read all the heavy challenge about exposition you know really the only real preaching is expositional preaching you know as if we're all going to be reincarnations of John Stott or Stephen Ulfran and then you got somebody else down here he's into psychology and he wants he wants a little more psychology a little practical psychology and then you got this guy over here he's just finished reading Andrew Murray's book on the blood of Christ and he's writing in his notebook how many times you mentioned the blood of Christ in your message and you know I don't know how preachers even stay sane when they're in a church more than a few years no wonder they want psychology but you you keep praying

you keep reading the word you keep preaching the best you can leave the rest with God you're never going to make everybody happy and when somebody's unhappy you go invite them over for a cup of tea take them out for fish and chips or a Big Mac whatever you're into up here as McDonald's got this far they've got this motto every man with a burger in his belly and they are moving a lot faster in many places than the church of Jesus Christ and we've got the word of God it really rebukes me that these people are more committed to spreading their fast food philosophy than we are spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ I don't want to get into that now there is a conspiracy brothers and sisters you are on the hit list I heard after World War 2 they discovered a list of British people who were up

for annihilation if Britain had lost the war I will tell you maybe you weren't on that list maybe you were a little young for that you may be you will read his writings the greatest gift needed in the church today is discernment so we are not ignorant of his satan's devices we realize as it says I think in that same passage that sometimes even comes as an angel of light look at Ephesians chapter 6 a passage I'm sure you have studied and maybe even preached on verse 11 put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles the old authorized version wiles of the devil strategies of the devil different translations have a different word this is real this is real we haven't got time to read this whole passage look at verse 12 we wrestle not against flesh and blood it's

not the people in your congregation it's not that fellow who doesn't like you it's not the deacon's wife who doesn't appreciate the great ministry God has given you we don't wrestle against flesh and blood we wrestle against principalities against powers against the rulers of darkness against spiritual wickedness in high places it's because to some degree as a young Christian I began to understand this I remember a student being a student at Moody somebody gave me a little booklet the perils of the victorious life ever read that booklet I tell you God used that I saw because I I was very committed to Christ and his kingdom I was at least classified by most as very zealous I was already in leadership and I saw in this booklet the higher you go in Christian leadership the greater the fall

when you go down and I changed my strategy and I started to develop a strategy for survival I learned how to pull back I learned how to relax I learned more how not to carry all the burdens I learned how to

handle criticism misunderstanding innuendos intimidation and how to really draw what I needed from the word of God and from the Lord himself rather than often trying to get so much from my brothers and sisters and I thank God for his word I thank God for great books that I had the privilege of reading before I was 21 I thank God that in his sovereignty I sat under the ministry of Alan Redpath when he was a pastor of Moody Church in Chicago because here's a man I believe that has proven himself as a servant of the Lord and as a soldier of the Lord and was a great influence together with

other men in my life yes we wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places that's why it says put on the whole armor that's why we're told verse 16 to take the shield of faith where with we can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked what are some of these fiery darts let me be specific what are some of the specific fiery darts that I have seen over these years the enemy using against Christian leaders I don't want you to dwell on these things you can put them in your little list you can realize that they are real you don't have to dwell on them let me quickly give them to you what time do we have to go to lunch here's our man he'll tell us okay we want to have a few minutes for questions the first fiery dart that I see everywhere I go is the fiery dart of pride I've seen just in

watching the thing in Britain here these twenty two three years I've seen men I remember one great evangelist hit Britain wow soon it was great publicity he was an anointed man you know when you're anointed and you're seeing souls saved and your church is growing and people are saying oh thank you pastor God's using you in my own heart and you help families come together that's great you want to be encouraged in the ministry you're not waking up each day oh lord in the name of Jesus give me another failure today you know we don't want people we don't want people praying this way we want to you know we want to do the right thing we want to see people saved and and with all of our efforts in that direction there will be still enough enough failures you know I saw this man get puffed up I've

seen church fellowships get puffed up I see some denominations right now getting puffed up they got all the answers some of the newer groups some of them don't like to be called denominations you know if you're a movement of 50 or 60 or 100 churches and you got your own doctrine you got your own conferences and you got literature and video tapes and all this and you come out and say we're not a denomination you know you need to go back and get your definition straightened out what is a denomination and I speak honestly I long to see the older line denominations and the newer movements that are coming into being whether they call themselves a denomination loving one another fellowshiping together history is repeating itself the tensions and the struggles we have in the church today aren't

new history repeats itself some people are happy in their older churches they press on in their older churches some more by temperament and personality than by doctrine though it all gets interspersed they want to get and join something new don't be bitter against somebody that has left your church to join something new because even if they have done the wrong thing what good is that bitterness going to do you say the lord bless you lets talk together in a few years and you know some of these people are coming back into balance and there is more fellowship others are going extreme that's sorry others are pulling the blinds down and building the walls and taking on a sort of exclusive position this makes us sad we pray it's not biblical it's not right but there's no reason to be bitter we

keep loving our weapon is calvary love we keep forgiving we don't wait for people to come to us I don't know if you do this if you do you're in trouble somebody hurts you in your congregation or in your group so basically you're hurt but you say if they come and apologize I'll forgive them is that your method no it shouldn't be you forgive them even as it's happening even as he walks out the door of your study and

slams it behind and maybe murmurs something against you you just say Jesus though it's hard it's painful calvary love just calvary love and you forgive and if they come back and apologize praise the lord that's water above the glass the glass is full with the love of Christ the glass is full with the forgiveness of Christ and if they come back and apologize and put things right

that's water over the glass it's wonderful I hope you have it but don't remain bitter if you don't get it satan uses pride people overreacting to each other godly men can get together who love Jesus Christ and when strong things are said pride ego locks in even to the most godly man and ugly things can be said at that moment that people will not easily forget and if you have this cockeyed idea that great men of god don't sin or don't get in the flesh I would challenge how much you have really been around this treasure is in earthen vessels let's beware of hero worship let's beware of putting a man up to a place where we think he can do no wrong or he cannot sin because then later we get so overwhelmed we get so disappointed when we see some of our men of god getting into carnality and

division and confusion yes the fiery dart of pride is one of the most difficult of all the fiery darts that will be thrown by satan in this conspiracy that he has to destroy you and me don't just think this attack is against well known famous christian leaders no no I've just been reading a book by Campbell Morgan preaching there in Westminster chapel it's interesting he said things what 80 years ago that basically the same thing needs to be said today he warned people about becoming infatuated with big numbers he was preaching to a big audience at that time and he acknowledged as a humble servant of the lord that there might be at that moment greater blessing down the road in some little chapel with 40 people we are neurotic about numbers we've got a neurosis for success we read too much

psychology and not enough from the book of acts and the epistles and you get people looking for the perfect church I often meet these young people I really believe we need new testament churches my church is not a new testament church what do you mean by that you want a new testament church which new testament church are you thinking of let's turn to corinthians most of the epistles were written as correction to error and sin and carnality and every kind of other thing in the churches and I'm sure if you're in a normal situation sometimes you face problems because people are expecting so much from you as a christian leader they read this book and that book some of the books don't always paint the nice picture we read about some of these saints have gone on to be with the lord they look so

really and then they compare you with those saints but they're living with you they've seen you jump in your car drive down the road and hit somebody have you ever had a car accident great christian leaders out of the past they look like great inspiring saints they see you as a christian leader they compare you with those saints they look and then they compare you with those saints great out of the past they look like great inspiring saints they see you as a christian leader they compare you with those saints they look they compare with those you with those saints they compare you with those saints with those they compare with those you they compare you with those saints they compare you with those saints they compare with those saints they compare with those saints they compare with

those they compare with those saints Satanic counter-attack to the present evangelistic thrust in Drapery.

I am for this thrust, but I fear sometimes we go into the battle with a bit of a naive mind. We need more prayer. We need to prepare now for what we're going to do with thousands of people who make professions of faith.

I know people are preparing. I know a lot is being done. Glory, hallelujah, but we need to do more.

And there's nothing more important than your own personal armor. Your own personal family. Is your relationship right with your wife? I'm not talking about it being perfect.

Marriage is God's graduate school. It's part of God's great, great training program. This is emphasized in Mr. Bilheimer's amazing book, *Don't Waste Your Sorrows*, which I'd love to see every family studying together.

Satan is going to attack your family. If he can't get at you through your wife or your wife through you, he'll go through your children. I have one 19-year-old, one 21, and one 23.

It's taken more energy, more wisdom, more strength, and more prayer to rear those three children than to coordinate operation mobilization for 27 years. And I have given equal importance to it. And I believe it's one of the reasons, the bigger reason is God's pure mercy, sovereignty, and answers to prayer, other people's prayers, that my own three children are following Jesus Christ today.

Satan is going to attack your family. Don't let it destabilize you. Do you know that term? Your son maybe someday walks in and you finally find out he's on drugs.

What are you going to do about it? Overreact? Say something really stupid to him at that time? Forgive the term. Project onto him a triple ton of guilt? Or are you going to try to work with him? Love him. Find out why he's on drugs.

See if there's a way you can help. I'm only using that as an illustration. But, you know, if you don't think there are quite a few children of pastors and Christian leaders who are on drugs or alcohol in excess or something else along that line, again, you know, you can't be living very long.

And if these things happen in your home, in your family, or something more wild, something more difficult. The pastor of my hometown church, his son was caught in a gangster move and he was in prison. His wife in a few years shriveled up from cancer.

His other daughter was in a double divorce. I thank God I never have been able to fully understand that man, but I love him and he is still going on for Christ. He is a wounded man, but he is not down and out.

And this is my message. Whatever happens in your family, in your church, in sort of the ring of being a soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul said, I don't beat the air.

I, you know, hit straight to the target. Whatever may happen, whatever may go wrong, I pray don't allow yourself to become discouraged or depressed or down. You've all watched boxing.

What's the key in boxing? It isn't, well, you must never fall down. No, the key is if you fall down, you get up. Many a man who's been down three or four times won the fight.

It's normal as a Christian leader to be knocked down once in a while. It may be criticism. It may be a domestic crisis.

It may be a personal failure. It may be something in the area of purity, for example, with your eyes, or maybe with some magazine that someone slipped under your nose almost unaware. It happens.

Sit down on British Rail, and there's a five-pound pornographic magazine that you would never buy. There it is sitting in front of you, and you might not get instant victory. One of the great Christian magazines in

America, a Christian leader without using his name, was willing to confess his ten-year battle with lust.

An unbelievable article. The response to that article was the greatest of any article they've ever published. It was a very straightforward article.

I think the best leadership magazine I know today, it's a little expensive, is this magazine produced by Christianity Today called Leadership. It was in that magazine. Yes, the fiery dart of impurity will be used by Satan against you.

Maybe it hasn't happened yet, and it may not happen for a few years. Many Christian leaders have told me that the area where they saw their friends get in trouble and where they were in trouble themselves is a lack of wisdom in the counseling ministry. Men having an ongoing private counseling session with other women, especially attractive ones, and who's the one that can define what's attractive and not attractive? And again and again, counseling sessions have turned into impurity.

Now with so many men of God telling us the same thing, isn't it about time we turned on up here and just avoid ongoing private counseling sessions with other women? If you talk for ten minutes in the corner of the church, that's not what we're talking about. If a woman comes in with a burden and you have to answer questions, that's not what we're talking about. Though that's where of course it can begin, and you need wisdom from stage one.

But when you arrange to meet privately, again and again with a woman, if you're a man or vice versa, you're asking for trouble. And I've seen it all over Britain. Why can't we get more women into the ministry of counseling other women? Nothing is the total answer.

And I will not judge a man who disagrees with me on this point, you know, who compassionately disagrees. And all these things, you're the one who decides. I can't decide for you.

But I just give that as something really to think about. It's Billy Graham's policy. In fact, he will not go anywhere with another woman unless his wife is with him.

Now he is, you know, he is under target. In California, they had a group of gangsters, and we know America is a more gangster-ridden place than Britain. And we got the mafia and we got a lot of other things.

But there was a group in California that were blackmailing ministers. They would send beautiful women to their homes for counseling. They studied each case.

The women arrived when the wife was away. Tears in their eyes. Pastors invited them in.

And many, many cases, these men were seduced into bed with these women. Right behind them, I'm not making this story up. It was also in the press.

Right behind them came the cameras. Pictures of these men in bed with these women. Can you imagine the blackmail money they got out of those ministers? Praise God, the police quickly caught up with this, and they were put out of business.

Why do I mention this? Because I think it just shows how unscrupulous the enemy is. He will try anything. He knows if you have any weak link in your armor in this area of impurity, and he will try to use some little area to just somehow nail you to the floor.

And I think we need to restudy what the Bible says about sex. There are over 500 verses in the Bible on the subject of sex. We cannot be silent on this subject.

We need to have, especially if we're vulnerable in this area, and I know I am personally vulnerable, we need to have people we can share with. We need to stand together. We need to pray for one another.

One evangelist here in this country, when I was preaching to a group of evangelists, shared with me that he'd just been in adultery with a woman in one of his campaigns. And we united in heart. And he said the next time he was tempted, he was going to phone me.

And you know that man, this is now years ago, has never again phoned. His wife knows about it, their marriage is held, and God is mightily using him. We need one another in this area.

We need honesty. Better to lose your reputation and keep your sanity. Not that I think we need public confession of difficulties in this area.

Private sin maybe needs private confession. Firstly to God, the one and only who can forgive. But then maybe for growth, for therapy, for further strength, we can share it with another brother.

There are many, many people hurting in this area. So many. Every time I give an invitation for recommitment to Christ, and I get feedback, I have people write down on the paper what it means.

Every time, two out of ten would be difficulties in this area. And often as well with Christian leaders. Praise God for forgiveness.

Praise God being knocked down is not the end of the road. Praise God that His Word can strengthen us. There is holiness.

There is sanctification. It's an ongoing process. There might be the crisis, but if the crisis isn't followed by a process, it will be an abscess.

Do you think because you're filled with the Spirit, and because God is mightily using you, you can't be tricked into one of these satanic booby traps? Don't be foolish. One evangelist in America left nine women pregnant in one campaign. We're dealing with things that many of us are naive about, because perhaps we're locked into just a small world, and we're not counseling a lot of these other men.

And, of course, we feel we've got enough problems with our own congregation, much less get involved with a couple hundred Christian leaders around the world, as I've had to do over these 29 years. I've had 14,000 personal letters as a result of just one of my books. Many of these letters from Christian leaders in difficulty.

Corinthians says, Be not ignorant of Satan's devices. I wish I could talk to all of your wives on how a wife can help a husband stay free from some of these fiery darts. There are a lot of practical things we can learn as we read, as we grow, and as we stand firmly on God's Holy Word.

The third fiery dart, I believe, is unbelief. I believe it's normal that fiery darts of unbelief are going to come upon your soul. Are the heathen really lost? That's been a big struggle for me.

When you're committed to world evangelism, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and you spend a lot of your life living out there, there's something in you that just says, I don't want to believe these people are lost. I don't

think that's wrong to think that way. We're human.

Some of the members in your congregation are struggling with this, even if you're not. It's a tough theological issue. There are some things, personally, after accepting God's Word, and there's a book on this subject, God, is it fair on the book table? I have to leave it with him.

I can't figure out exactly what hell is. I can't even figure out exactly what heaven is. Sometimes, if I'm not to get dragged into an avalanche of unbelief and end up overthrowing the Christian faith, then I have to come back to the basics.

You know one of my basics really helps me? I believe in God. When I graduated from Bible school, I had a much wider doctrinal position. Now, sometimes, my main doctrine is I believe in God.

Now, don't worry, my good evangelical friends, I don't remain there. That's my survival tactic when I'm under pressure. I come back to the basics, and then I move out.

I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in His Word. I believe in His atoning death.

I believe He's coming again, and I build out from there. But, you know, sometimes I just can't take all this on. Heaven, hell, second coming, eschatology, hermeneutics, you know.

I just say, Lord, help! I go off to the woods for a day of just singing and praising and worshiping and just get back to the basics. I believe in the God of creation. I believe that God created all these galaxies and all these worlds.

I believe God created me, beautiful, amazing intricacies of the human body. And then I build out from there. Though I've had the fiery darts thrown at me in ways when I thought I would never go another day, every time the Lord has brought me out of it.

And I was helped by a man of God who said this. He said, Great faith is not made in the absence of doubt. It's made as we battle through.

And if you're having struggle with the Christian faith, I'd love to write to you. Don't think it's unusual for a Christian leader to struggle with the very basics of the Christian faith.

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