

# Message 07

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon calls for a renewed commitment to evangelism and transformation in Europe, emphasizing the importance of humility and prayer among believers.*

**Duration:** 54:28

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1, Psalm 119:11, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 12:1-2, Revelation 22:21

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity within the body of Christ. He challenges the common practice of only fellowshiping with people from one's own church or denomination, stating that there is no biblical basis for this. The speaker urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, offering their lives as a spiritual act of worship. He encourages listeners to not conform to the patterns of the world, but to be transformed by renewing their minds and seeking God's will. The sermon also touches on the idea of self-understanding and the need for continual growth and learning in the Christian faith.

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## Transcript

I'd like to just lead in prayer again as we've done on a number of our occasions together and I'd like us just to focus in on Europe. Europe is still a mission field. Places like Greece is one of the more difficult unreached nations in the world.

Of course it's complex because so many people are in the Greek Orthodox Church, which is a very strong church, very anti any other church and so evangelical Christians and Pentecostal and anybody that's not Greek Orthodox is going to get persecuted and it's incredible some of the things that happen. There may be some believers in the Greek Orthodox Church, I would not doubt that, but overall the gospel of grace is not proclaimed. People do not have an experience with Christ.

They have a religion and each country of Europe and I'm not going to pray for all the countries, but each country is different and I'm not going to take the time to speak about that, but I'll incorporate some of those differences into my prayer. Let's pray together. Father we think of Europe, we think of the great growth of the Christian Church in Europe going back over a thousand years, the deep roots of the Christian faith in so many parts of Europe and yet today as they write the European Constitution, oh God you are not even mentioned.

We thank you in some ways that Constitution has been rejected, but we cry out for this continent where unbelief and materialism and post-modernism is just so prevalent and especially humanism and Christians are even, especially if they say they believe in the Bible and the Holy Spirit, they're often mocked in film and in media and we realize Europe is a battleground and we reach out and I don't believe it's a coincidence that as I put my hand, my one hand, it more or less covers the whole of Europe from way down in Spain to way up in Norway and I pray right now for Spain. Thank you for growth among the gypsies. Thank you for many Latin American missionaries who are coming there, but still the number of believers in Spain is just so small, a tiny percentage, and I just cry out to you that there could be a greater harvest, that there'd be more attention on Spain and then for Italy.

North Italy especially is much worse than Spain with just such a small number of believers and great divisions, even though the church is small, the great divisions between different Christians. We pray for Italy, for breakthroughs in Italy and then in France, we thank you that your church is growing in France but at a snail's pace. Again, the phenomenal gypsy movement, we thank you for that.

We thank you for a lot of tremendous literature in French. A lot of it never gets read outside the evangelical and charismatic ghettos. We pray Jesus for the land of France and then for Greece, which we've already been mentioning.

Oh Lord, we thank you for the outreach at the Olympics a year ago. Pray for the follow-up and pray for Cyprus and all the complexities of Cyprus and then we would reach into Austria and Belgium, two other nations of so-called Catholic Europe, that we could see breakthroughs there and we think of Albania and how closed Albania was and how it opened 15 years ago and how the church, one of the greatest examples of church growth in Europe, has been in Albania and yet it seems to have slowed down lately. We pray for Albania and then Lord, those northern countries that have much stronger churches, Great Britain and Germany and the Netherlands and Norway and Sweden and Finland and yet the needs are also phenomenal.

Workers are needed. Revitalization is needed. We pray for great summer events.

We think of O.M.'s Teen Street in Germany right now with over 3,000 teenagers. That starts up in the next couple of days. We pray for breakthroughs there at Teen Street and thousands of other people, tens of thousands, are in short-term ministry throughout Europe during this summer and we're asking for a harvest.

We're asking for a greater harvest. Also over in the Eastern Europe, Poland and Hungary and Romania and the Czech Republic and the Slavic Republic and Bulgaria. Lord, we thank you that there are new churches.

There's a lot more literature but in all these places the growth has been slow and then into Russia, oh God, where there's just such chaos at this time and so much crime and yet your church is flexing her muscles. We think of the legalism, however, that grips many Russian believers, making it impossible for them to move out of their own little box. Oh God, we stand against legalism.

Lord Jesus, and pray for a grace awakening among the believers of Russia. We ask these things together in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you for your prayers. It's been great to gather at our little prayer location over there.

I keep hoping that we'll just get too many and we'll have to move out somewhere. We just about, we fill every seat but we managed to handle the crowd. There's not been a big stampede over there yet but I believe some prayer is always better than no prayer and since we have a lot of people today into no prayer, I compromise some of my idealism on the altar of reality and thank God for every kind of gathering and that includes prayer you're having in your own location.

Come with me now to perhaps which is among the top passages of Scripture that has impacted my life. I'm speaking of Romans chapter 12. Another one of those passages is 1 Corinthians 13.

We'll probably get to that tomorrow or Friday but I want us to look together and study God's Word together from Romans 12. I once had most of this memorized but now I'm into the forgetting Scripture mode as I find it harder and harder to bring all this back to my memory and so I'm constantly reviewing the Scriptures that I have memorized. In some theological college when you study homiletics they have this big thing that you must have just one point.

You have a sermon just have one point or maybe two but when you read the Word of God it's not like that and the book of Romans or Romans chapter 12 it has probably about 30 points so I don't know whoever wrote that probably didn't you know go to that particular seminary and I just believe as we read this this morning there's going to be different strokes for different folks and the Word of God is going to speak to us in different ways. It's interesting the transition out of the first eleven chapters of Romans into Romans 12 because in Romans the first eleven chapters we have this incredible theology about the lostness of human kind, great truth about sanctification, all we have in Christ. Another one of my favorite passages that we may be getting to in the next couple of days is Romans 8. I started memorizing that in the Boy Scouts.

I was working on the God and Country Award in the Boy Scouts. It's around the same time that I was coming to Christ and I had to memorize Romans chapter 8. I remember it was in the RSV, the Revised Standard Version, which is not so popular in some places. But after these eleven chapters of tremendous theology you have this transition into this flow of practical exhortation.

In England where I live the ministry of Bible exposition is given very high credit. In fact I've heard people even say if you're not expounding the Word well you don't really preach or just you know you're out there just waving your arms. But it's interesting back in the days of the revival in George Whitefield's day both the exposition of the Word of God and the ministry of exhortation was given very high esteem.

And many of the men who worked with George Whitefield were called exhorters. And part of my ministry with you this week is a ministry of exhortation. I am not happy just teaching from the Word of God.

I believe people have the gift of teaching and they teach in colleges and teach in churches. But I believe God has given me this passion for exhortation. What is that? It's to exhort you to put this into practice.

It's to exhort you to search your heart about your own walk with God and whether this is reality or it's just in the head. And this chapter, chapter 12 in Romans, is a chapter of exhortation. And it's interesting that preparing for it we have what's called the doxology.

Picking up at chapter 11 verse 33. And these four verses are also incredibly meaningful in my life. So let's look at this doxology before we launch into this avalanche of exhortation.

Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out. Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor? Who has

ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be glory forever. Amen. When I graduated from Bible College I really knew a lot.

And I'm sorry to say now 45 years later I don't seem to know quite so much. All my Christian life I've wrestled with certain intellectual doubts. In living part of my life among Hindus and Muslims I found it extremely difficult to think of all those people being lost.

Standing outside the railway station in Bombay giving out several thousand tracts during the day. Linking people into correspondence courses. I was overwhelmed with just the whole thought of how come I'm saved and all these people are lost.

And then I found such a struggle with God's chosen so often God's frozen people that seemed to be just so happy that they were going to heaven but could care less that their next-door neighbor was going to hell. I never have quite swallowed that happiness. It seems a bit heavenistic to me.

And that with our joy should also come sorrow. In fact Paul said he was sorrowful yet always rejoicing. It's a paradox.

The whole idea of retiring to seem so bizarre. How can I retire when I know I'm going to heaven and others around me do not know Jesus including relatives. Including blood relatives.

My atheist uncle just died last week. I have no hope for him. So a lot today that's kept me going as an older person is what I read here in this doxology.

That his ways are unsearchable. I think some of the superficial answers that were thrown out after the tsunami that hit Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia. I think even with non-christians it's better sometimes just to acknowledge we don't understand.

We don't understand all that God's doing. Why God is doing it. We do believe there's an ultimate purpose.

We do believe a lot of the problems in the world are man and woman centered. Caused by sinful human nature. And we've all read things along those lines.

And I'm not I'm not saying there are no answers to these toughest questions in the world. My little grandson the other day whose mother doesn't follow Christ anymore. My own grandson.

And we have sort of permission to share Jesus. And he goes to a he goes to an Anglican school where he really gets the gospel. The headmaster's a believer.

Teachers are believer. They're singing all these praise songs which they never had in their home. Except a little bit with my wife and I. And we're we're talking together.

He's only six. To be honest I can't remember now whether it's Jake who was six or Charlie who's nine. But one of them said who created God.

That's a simple little question. They haven't figured that out yet fully in all the seminaries in the world. But obviously I could answer my grandchild.

Of course we know God was and always has been. But a child's mind cannot always grasp that. And sometimes I have a little difficulty as well.

How unsearchable is judgments has passed beyond tracing out. Who has known the mind of the Lord. That's interesting isn't it because we have the mind of Christ.

We are constantly seeking the mind of the Lord. But this passage seems to indicate that as much as we may have we only have a small amount of what there is. And then of course this is almost humorous.

Who has been his counselor. Whoever has given to God that God should repay him. From him and through him and to him all things to him be the glory forever.

Again and again in my struggles I go back to this passage and I worship God in the midst of paradox. I worship God in the midst of mystery. I worship God by faith.

And on the intellectual side to me the arguments in favor of the existence of God and then the arguments that we can trust the Bible are greater than the arguments on the other side. I remember traveling to India on a ship before we had our own ships. And I was a little seasick.

And when I'm seasick if I lay down usually it goes away. So I lay down and I was listening to some tapes by a man who was to become a close friend named Dr. Francis Schaeffer. And his material, his books are still incredibly relevant.

A humble man. He arrived one time to speak at one of our conferences. He was a little bit late.

And he met the man who was on duty. Most people were in bed. I don't know whether he gave his name but the man on duty didn't know who he was.

That was probably my fault. So he just took him over to the men's dorm. They were sleeping in a building like this.

About half this size. All sleeping on cardboard on the floor. And Dr. the great Dr. Francis Schaeffer without saying a word took out his little sleeping bag and laid down and spent the night on the piece of cardboard.

I don't think that's even in his biography. An amazing man. And I was listening to a series of tapes that influenced me.

I forget the exact number but it was something like ten problems of the man who does not believe the Bible. I was having these struggles with certain passages in the Bible. And when I listened to that tape again my faith was encouraged.

There are many reasons. Why we can trust that this is God's Word. From Genesis to Revelation.

With that little bit of background we now move into the passage. Romans 12. Therefore I urge you brothers and that always includes sisters.

In the view of God's mercy to offer your bodies a living sacrifice. Holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Rather than read in the light of the time the whole passage through as I've done before and then coming back. I'm just going to go right into verse by verse read the verse and give my my thoughts. Many times when I have not been necessarily preaching from this passage I have quoted Romans 12.

Because one of the privileges I've had is speaking to many. Well I guess over the years a couple million people perhaps. And often believers.

And I have this passion to call people to a more radical commitment to Jesus. And so that's one of the key verses. Therefore I urge brothers in the view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

Probably many of you have done that. Maybe when you were younger. But I believe as we're older we need to renew that commitment.

Many people backslide when they get older. To use an old-fashioned unpopular term. They grow lukewarm.

They grow discouraged. One of the other passages we're going to look at are the last few verses in the book of Habakkuk. Where we deal with with a phenomenal difficult situation and yet we're told to rejoice.

So I I pray that during these days together you and I may reaffirm that we have presented our bodies as a living sacrifice. You may be new to this challenge. You may be listening to this on CD or cassette.

Maybe you've never presented your body as a living sacrifice to God. Holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.

Different translations express this in different ways. All of them are powerful. This is your reasonable service it also refers to.

Verse 2. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed. One of the number one buzzwords in the mission world today is the word transformation. It's taken us a long time to get here.

Now some people have had that word all along. So we're not saying you know this is totally new. But lately there's been an increased emphasis on transformation.

Personal transformation. Transformation in the church. And then the bigger step with all of its complexity.

Transformation in the community. And even in the nation. And there are some amazing things happening.

And I went to one of these nights of prayer up near Birmingham England that had been going on for six months. All different churches coming together. Police giving their testimonies.

Government leaders, business people giving their testimonies. And they reported the impact of the church and this transformation movement and the prayer. They shared the impact on the community even with a considerable decrease in crime.

And I read another report about this again recently. And again it's a mystery because we know sometimes two years later the crime level may climb back up again. But nobody necessarily reports that.

So it's a it's a challenge. Let's just read those two verses again. Therefore I urge you.

In other words in the light of all we just had in those eleven chapters. In the light of all that truth. All we have in Christ.

Salvation. Everything. I urge you brothers in the view of God's mercy to offer your bodies a living sacrifice.

Holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

So powerful. Have you done that? Do you continue to do that? As I look back over these fifty years of ministry. I know that I've seen maybe maybe a hundred and fifty thousand people in my meetings somehow come forward or stand up and present their body as a living sacrifice.

Or make some kind of recommitment. Of course some came to Christ in those meetings. And Operation Mobilization was born not through some sophisticated organization.

It was born through the Holy Spirit transforming people. And as these people were transformed they got a vision for world evangelism. And so we went to Mexico.

We went to Spain. We went to Russia. And then India.

And many other countries that I have mentioned. And I just long. I just long to see this happen more.

And I guess that's why it's hard to resist these invitations. I guess that's why I agreed two days ago for a last minute trip to Korea where I'll maybe speak to ten or twenty thousand people and be able to give that kind of invitation. This is not just for missionaries.

Missionaries. This is not just for those called into pastoral ministry. Called in to work at some Christian organization.

This is for every believer. Every believer. It's clearly in the heart of Scripture.

There's no second class citizenship. We're all going first class. We're all to be totally committed.

We're all to know the reality and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But we need to move on. Look at verse three.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. Isn't that powerful? I love Christian leaders. I love pastors.

I want to serve them. But one of the things that's really discouraged me in meeting even Christian leaders and well-known pastors is how arrogance, arrogance gets into the ministry. Pride gets into the ministry.

And people, and they grab verses, they grab verses to do this. They actually think they're better than somebody else. That's got to be one of the most bizarre things that can happen in the Christian faith.

When we are told after we've done everything we're supposed to do, we're unworthy servants. You know, there are a lot of verses that are pretty, pretty humbling, right? Much less the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2.20 and there are other similar verses saying, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

I believe pride. We talk about immorality in the church a lot and there is too much of it. I believe pride probably does just as much harm as immorality.

Pride hinders us from learning, hinders us from listening. Pride separates us from other people. Pride eventually can lead to our downfall because it often gets combined with other areas of immorality.

So this verse to me is mega relevant. For by the grace given me, I say to every one of you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but rather to think of yourself with sober judgment. Now there's an English word that isn't used much anymore.

Sober. We use a little bit connected with alcoholism. Encourage someone to stay sober.

I've sometimes felt that lately in some places I go, there's a way huge emphasis on joy, but not enough emphasis on sorrow. Is there no place for sorrow? I was reading a brilliant book a year ago as I was grieving the loss of friends, as I was grieving the loss, the lostness of humankind and struggling with what seemed to be unanswered prayer, and I was reading this brilliant book by a man named Henry Newman, and he pointed out a place of grief. I know I come across like sort of a happy guy and always motivated, but in fact I'm a sorrowful person.

It's much sorrow. Always there. It's always there.

But I bring it to Jesus. People who come to Christ and then slip away. My good friend that I just had supper with whose sister was murdered by her own husband, how can I know these things? Be praying for this man, life sentence in prison, and not feel sorrow.

Sorrow is an important part of our walk with God. We don't sort of hang it out every day. We don't want to necessarily just spread it to everybody, but personally we can grieve and we can weep and we can pray.

It says weep with those that weep. Rejoice with those that rejoice. It is possible to have great joy and great sorrow in your life and in your ministry, and it's possible to have a sober judgment about yourself.

Some people, my wife was one of them, they definitely think of themselves too lowly. And my wife, because of her background, being put down by her stepfather, first father was killed in the war, put down by her stepfather, built up a poor image of herself, that developed into some illnesses. And I shared the other night the healing my wife experienced as she came into the understanding of the all-sufficiency of Jesus.

But I know later on in our marriage, things that I said were much more hurtful than I realized, because she was taking that into her low view of herself. And she still struggles with that in her sixties. And other people that I've counseled, some people say, well, part of that can be linked with pride and operating in reverse.

I don't know, I don't think it's that simple. I think it's important to understand there are all kinds of people. There are many, many shy people, introverted people, and they have been walked on through life.

They sometimes have been walked on by Christian leaders, even by pastors. They will never again sort of function on this dream, victorious life level that some of us go preaching about. They will be wounded soldiers all of their life.

And my message is that God can use wounded soldiers. And I can assure you, we got quite a few of them on OM. In fact, about fifty percent of the young people who apply to Operation Mobilization are carrying fairly serious emotional baggage with them, from sometimes being abused in their family, to guilt concerning immorality that they may have got into at a young age, or other areas of insecurity or fear.

In almost all of our conferences, we have what's called the Oasis Desk. And you can go up to the Oasis Desk, maybe after you hear a message, and you can sign up. You can sign up for counseling.

One of the things that's really bothered me about some people is that they're opposed to all counseling. This is pure nonsense. I trust no one here is in that camp.

You may be opposed to certain kinds of counseling, maybe with an extreme emphasis on secular psychology. Personally, I've seen God use even that kind of counseling. Because there are psychologists and psychiatrists who don't know Christ, who have helped a lot of people, including Christians.

It's a complicated area. I won't get into it. But even if you're opposed to some of that, the kind of counseling we're talking about is just sharing.

One brother sharing with another brother. What are you struggling with? It's no big deal. You don't have to write a book against that.

A book against sharing. The Word of God says in James, confess your faults one to another. And I'm here today partly because I've been confessing my faults to other brothers and my own wife all my life.

I'm not going to keep it in. When I'm struggling, and when I have failed in some way, maybe back into that pornography thing which is always lurking behind my shoulder, I want to talk it out. I want to confess it.

I want to pray. And so we have this beautiful challenge to think of ourselves in a balanced, sensible way. Not too highly, not too lowly.

And of course, we'll never arrive. We'll never arrive at a perfect understanding of ourselves. Let us now have those from the audience come here who will share that they have a perfect understanding of themselves.

I don't think we arrive at that. Plus, we change as we get older. I'm not the same person.

The basics are there, but now with grandchildren and stepping out of leadership. I have no major leadership responsibility except the thing called special projects. Maybe 15 people, they were just on the phone to me.

So we've always, even with 15 people, you can get a lot of challenge. And I believe many, many basics in the Christian faith we have to relearn. For example, things that you were doing when you had perfect health, how's it going now when your health is starting to go? Will you not have to relearn those things? Some people find that hard.

Churches split. Churches split because some want change and others don't want change. Isn't that sad? Isn't that sad? I don't think we can go forward in the kingdom without making some changes.

And one of the reasons OM is still on the cutting edge and we have thousands and thousands of extra people, all young people joining us right now is because young people see that OM is not some old-fashioned thing out of the 50s or the 70s or the 80s. That OM is willing to change. It has a whole movement of younger leaders who are in their 20s.

We have all kinds of events that young people of this generation like and can relate to, and yet we proclaim the same gospel. We're still distributing some of the same books like Calvary Road and seeing

thousands and tens of thousands of young people come into a greater, more victorious Romans 12 walk with God. Now let's go on to the next verse.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all of the others. We have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If a man's gift is prophecy, prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

If it is serving, let him serve. If it is teaching, let him teach. If it's encouraging, let him encourage.

If it's contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously. Wow! If it is leadership, let him govern diligently. If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Isn't that powerful? We don't have time to look at each one of those gifts, each one of those sentences. But I take you back to that very beginning where in verse four it says each of us has one body and many members. These members do not all have the same function.

So in Christ we who are many form one body. This is a huge challenge. Many people are not willing to face this, and I believe we have a grievous situation here in the States and many other countries where people lock into one church and they mainly fellowship with people in that church.

There is no biblical basis for that whatsoever. There is no biblical basis to only fellowship with people from your particular church. Some expand it and they at least fellowship with those in their denomination.

Well, that gives you a little more scope. There are 27,000 denominations in the world. The amazing thing about the fickle human heart is that each one of those denominations more or less believe they're the best.

Now, if God does not have a sense of humor concerning that, I don't know how he functions. Of course, we've already read that's a mystery. Now, I'm not saying you should not have primary loyalty.

If you belong to a local church and you're being fed from that pastor and you're working together and God has raised you up, we looked at the Antioch church yesterday. To have that as a primary loyalty, to even give most of your money there, most of the time there, to be effective? Because if you can't have the reality with a few, how are you going to have it with many? But at the same time, you should be open and you should at least have some degree of fellowship with other people. And occasionally churches should try to come together for prayer.

Isn't it exciting when Billy Graham comes back to New York City? These churches, which are all generally divided, they all come together. Not all of them, because, of course, there are groups that oppose Billy Graham. They even teach he's part of the Antichrist.

That's a real friendly kind of approach. I believe with all my heart God, by his Spirit, through prayer, is trying to break down some of these walls. And I think when we come to a place like Romney Conference, that we do meet people from other churches.

And they might even bring in some, you know, really out-of-the-box wild guy from London, who we can't really figure out yet what the nomination he's with. And if you go over to England, you'll discover one of the churches that has the most committed believers are the Anglicans. Wow, that really freaks my American

friends out, especially the more conservative types.

Because over here, the Episcopalians, especially New England, New England Episcopalians, you know, they generally tend to be completely liberal. Not everyone. But that's not the way it is in Great Britain, where we have godly people like John Stott and Nick Gumbel, where we birth this Alpha Course thing that's spread across the world, bringing tens of thousands to Christ.

Biblical people. Committed people. Now, you may not agree with them on every point.

And if you're a triple B, hyper Baptist, you're probably not going to want a fellowship, you know, with an Episcopalian and the child baptism and all that kind of thing. But I believe as we go into the Word of God, we can see there's so many things that unite us. There's so many things that unite us.

So that we can at least have a range of fellowship with a wider range of people, even though we may have our own preference as to the church we join and the position we have, even on smaller issues. Many people thought Operation Mobilization, which was clearly an interdenominational movement with a wide range of denominations, though fairly conservative. Our doctrinal statement, I think, may be on the table there.

They said to me, this is impossible. We have had almost 50 years without any major division in our movement. Without any split off.

Some even small local churches can't pull that off for 10 years. And I'm not saying we're any better. I'm just saying it's possible for people of different backgrounds, in different churches, to major on majors, to realize as the scripture says, we are one body in Jesus Christ, and to be able to have more love, to be able to be more concerned.

And what about Philippians chapter 2? That's a bombshell. Esteeming others better than yourself. Is that your favorite thing? Esteeming others better than yourself.

How many people here at Rumney esteem Gull Lake, and so we pray for the Gull Lake Conference Center. How many at Rumney would esteem Maranatha, that I referred to a couple of days ago. And praise the Lord, Maranatha probably has twice as many people as we have.

Praise the Lord! As long as we have those that God wants us to have. Bless them. Whenever I hear of Youth with a Mission, Youth with a Mission and OM are two parallel organizations, with very completely different roots.

Whenever I hear, and I've been linked to Lauren Cunningham from the early days when he came on OM for a summer. Whenever I hear that they're blessed, that they see more people come to Christ, they may see more finance come in. Mercy Ships was born out of a YWAM.

It's now a separate movement called Mercy Ships. Their ship is bigger than ours. I say praise the Lord.

They'll probably have bigger headaches too. We are one body. As one member rejoices, we all rejoice.

These things that we think are so important, these little things, I don't believe they are that important with God. And I encourage you to search the Scriptures and find the balance of truth. And First Corinthians, which we will look at tomorrow, probably is the most balancing chapter in the whole of the Bible because it makes it clear that whatever else we have, if we don't have love, we don't actually have anything.

And when I think of all the things the church is fighting about in the United States, I only can say that if they don't have love in the midst of these various debates, they really don't have anything at all. And it's the First Corinthians 13, together with Romans 12, that revolutionized my life, perhaps more than any other passages. And then it talks about different gifts, different kinds of people, different ministries that the Lord gives, even this basic ministry of serving.

There's such an emphasis in Scripture on serving. And praise God, in the avalanche of new books on leadership, some of these new books are emphasizing servant leadership. I've read such books years ago, and I just praise God for that renewed emphasis.

And then the ministry of encouraging. Look at that. I meet people, they don't really know what to do sometimes with their time.

So they watch a lot of television. I'm not saying you should never watch television. There's a place for recreation, surely because we're human.

We talked about that the other day. But I believe if we would understand the ministry of encouragement, we would be battling to get more time, to redeem the time, because we want to be writing more encouraging letters to all kinds of people. We would have a better address system, so we would not lose track of people.

Because to lose track of people is to say, you don't actually care for them. If you care for them, you're going to try to find out when they get married and change names, which is a silly thing we do in our American culture. And so the wife loses her beautiful name and takes on her husband's name, even if it's a stupid name, and then we can't find her anymore.

In Latin America, we keep the wife's name. But anyway, that's just partly a joke. But we, I believe, should make a greater effort to keep track of people and to encourage them, especially if you were involved in helping them come to Christ.

If you were involved in helping them come to Christ, unless you're an evangelist, when you just, you know, you definitely got to count on others to love and to follow up on all these children, spiritual children. But if you're an ordinary person that maybe has only led a small number of people to Christ in your life, surely you should try to track them and encourage them, let them know you still care. If we would have this kind of reality, I believe there'd be far less backsliders, because people get away from Jesus when they feel nobody cares.

There are people, they never get a letter. You may be like that. Hardly ever get a letter, hardly ever get a phone call, hardly ever get a word of encouragement, especially as people get older, and when they're finally put in a nursing home, then a majority of people no longer know where they are, except maybe a few that that are around them.

It is a scandal in our nation that there are people in nursing homes who never get a visit from anyone, from one week to the next. And you know what blows my mind? Some of them, their own children, do not even visit them. We're a big country.

Grandma's in nursing home in Pennsylvania, the nursing home paradise of the universe, and the kids have got a hotshot job in Houston, Seattle, or Miami. They're not about to travel to Pennsylvania very much. I don't want to stand in judgment.

Of course, they can at least telephone, but I believe when that's happening, especially among believers, those who are local need to rally and make sure these people are loved and visited. The Ministry of Encouragement is one of the easiest ministries for anybody to get in. You can even be a jerk and be in the Ministry of Encouragement.

Nobody should ever be left out. And then, of course, the Ministry of Giving. Randy Alcorn has written many books.

We've been pushing his book about pro-life. We've been pushing his fantastic book, *Grace and Truth*. I hope all of you will get that.

But he has another book similar to *Grace and Truth*, and it's called *The Treasure Principle*. Send me an email. I'll send you one free.

I don't know why we don't have them on our book table. But the Ministry of Giving and giving generously is one of the most motivating, exciting ministries any of us can be involved in. I won't say more, because I want to just read a couple of other verses and bring it to a close.

It talks about leadership and leading diligently and showing mercy. But then look at these final verses. Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil and cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Oh, there's that Philippians chapter 2 thing. I had missed that. Honor one another above yourselves.

Never be lacking in zeal. Keep your spiritual fervor. One of the greatest compliments I think I ever had.

Somebody introduced me and said, tonight we introduce George Fervor. Hey, praise the Lord. I'm here.

Spiritual fervor. Serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope.

Patient in affliction. Faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need.

Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice. There's that verse again. Mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. And do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord. And if it's possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

And do not take revenge, my friends. But leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, it is mine to avenge.

I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will eat burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. What a passage.

What a passage. What a life-changing, transforming, out-of-the-box, cutting-edge, mega-motivating passage that I pray you will allow, I'm sure many of you already have, to motivate you and train you and encourage you the rest of your life. Let's pray.

God, we thank you for this great passage. I thank you for what it's meant to me for 49 years, that again and again I could go back to these words and be exhorted and be rebuked and be brought to repentance to experience revival in the depth of my soul. And Lord, as we go from this great passage in today's activities, we pray that whatever we do, even when we're just playing a game, that we may do it heartily as unto you.

And we would pray for all those who are serving, all those who are serving, to make our vacation here possible and that you administer to them. And for some that may be in some of these houses or trailers that are lonely or not able to get to the meetings, Lord, cause some people to go and visit with them. And in this surrounding area, that Lord, we may not be hearers of the Word, but that we may be doers.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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