

# Message 09

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the critical role of love and prayer in effective ministry and global missions.*

**Duration:** 57:29

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19, Philippians 4:19

**Topics:** "Faith And Provision", "Love And Patience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal anecdotes about his experiences of selling items to raise money for a mission trip to Mexico. He mentions how he used to preach about forsaking all and giving everything to the poor, but realized the importance of balancing that message with the understanding that God will provide for our needs. The speaker also discusses the significance of love and patience in our lives, emphasizing the need to cultivate these qualities. He shares a story about a woman who misunderstood his message and dumped her possessions in a canal. The sermon concludes with a story about Billy Graham driving a limousine and a rookie state trooper operating a speed trap.

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## Transcript

Something I certainly will never forget and I hope I can be faithful in motivating others to pray for the ministry here and all over the world I challenge people to pray for New England all over the United States. I challenge people that New England is within the States probably the biggest mission field in the country next to say ethnic minorities who are everywhere especially places like Detroit. It is interesting some of the things you get by by email.

I get my emails printed out. Here's an interesting one about Billy Graham. Billy Graham was returning to Charlotte after a speaking engagement.

His plane arrived there was a limousine waiting to transport him home. As he prepared to get into the limo he stopped and spoke to the driver he said you know he said I'm 87 years old and I have never driven a limousine would you mind if I drove it for a while. The driver said no problem he got so he got at it Billy gets into the driver's seat and they head off down the highway.

A short distance away sat a rookie state trooper operating his first speed trap. The black limo went by doing 70 in a 55 mile-hour zone. The trooper pulled out easily caught the limo and got out his patrol got out of his patrol car to begin the procedure.

The young trooper walked up to the driver's door and when the glass was rolled down he was surprised to see who was driving. He immediately excused himself went back to his car and called his supervisor. He told the supervisor I know we're supposed to enforce the law but I also know the important that important people are given certain courtesies.

I do need to know what I should do because I I've stopped a very important person. The supervisor asked is it the governor? Trooper said no he's more important than that supervisor said oh it's the president. The young trooper said no he's even more important than that.

The supervisor finally asked well then who is it? The young trooper said I think it's Jesus because he's got Billy Graham for a chauffeur. Just for any of you that are naive that is not a true story that is a typical email joke. One of these heavy email jokes for years I thought it was true and I used it in my sermons it was very strong and then I found out through some research group that it was just a story it had never happened so you do want to you certainly need discernment on some of these things you you get off the email.

We've been having such an encouraging time in the prayer meeting and tomorrow I'm given the privilege of leading the prayer meeting there at nine o'clock and just want to incorporate something that God has put on my heart. But I picked this email up this morning and it's three dimensions of listening prayer. I just thought this was really good.

It's just too easy for us to make our plans and then ask God to bless them. But to be an effective intercessor we must learn to listen to his plans and cooperate with him. We are then able to pray God-sized prayers and join God in partnering with his answer.

His blessing then follows because God's plans will always bring tremendous blessing. It may take time but in due season we reap a harvest. Listening is key to being effective.

It's a skill to be developed in all relationships but especially our relationship with God. If we don't listen to God and hold fast his word the devil will continually attack us with his lies. The first stage of Moses prayer training was wearing wearing the noise of Egypt out of his ears so he could hear the quiet fine tone of God's voice.

He who would become skilled in prayer must take a silence course in the University of Arabia. And then it talks about the eye expectantly looks for. Are you expecting and looking? And he gives the example of Moses.

If some of you would like to look at this email I'll have it available here. It also has the email website address of one of the largest intercessory prayer networks in the world. Comes out of Sweden.

I know the man personally. And you can receive these on your computer. I'm sure some of you probably not into this.

But maybe someone near you, someone you know is into it. It might give you a chance to link with them by asking them to receive this on their computer and letting you occasionally see it or printing it out for you. Often we have not because we ask not.

And so if you'd like to see this intercessors letter I just read a little bit of it. I'll just put that up here. I'll move it down to the chair after.

Let's just pray. Lord again we just reach out to some of the needy places. We think of the ongoing crisis in Somalia and just so little witness in that place.

We think also of the Central African Republic, Democratic Congo, where two million have died in a decade in some of the most unbelievable suffering in the world. Most missionaries had fled the country. And the suffering level, the HIV AIDS level, the guerrilla warfare chaos, the corruption is almost inconceivable.

And yet your church is very large in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And we just pray for renewal. We pray for discipleship.

We pray for some of these books sitting on the shelves to get out and read. And so we would reach into that country where there's such phenomenal suffering. And then we would reach out to India, especially the Dalit population, a quarter of a billion Dalits or untouchable people.

We thank you that thousands of them are coming to you. Many new churches are being born. We pray concerning the constant breaches of human rights by fanatical Hindus, this land of over a billion souls.

We pray for Joseph D'Souza, the leadership he has in the All India Christian Council, as they attempt to defend the Dalit people and expose other persecution situations. We think of Graham Staines, who was burned to death with his children in that car seven years ago. We pray for his wife as she's pressed on in ministry there.

And Lord, we just thank you that so many are coming to know you in the northeast and in the south. But we pray for the heartland where the response is small, where less than one percent profess faith. Lord, we just look to you for greater breakthroughs in India.

And then, Lord, we would reach north to China, the persecuted church, and yet growing, wanting to send workers all the way back to Jerusalem, all through the Middle East. We pray for the Back to Jerusalem movement. And we just cry out to you also for the need for literature and scriptures.

Pray for that man who's been in jail because he illegally published Bibles, that that court case would soon be settled. And so we reach out to these giant nations and teach us, Lord, more about prayer during these days together, that we can walk through these woods and pray. We can be kneeling by our bed and pray.

We can pray two by two. We can pray in small groups. We can have silent prayer, noisy prayer.

Lord Jesus, teach us more about prayer, we ask in your precious name. Amen. I found another leaflet, the follow-up leaflet on whatever happened to the prayer meeting on how to conduct prayer meetings.

Somehow, I found a bunch of them among my many papers. You wouldn't want to even look in my little cabin where I stay. It's like a giant file cabinet, and I just crawl into the file cabinet and find a place to sleep.

I think some wonderful person goes over there each day to empty my wastebasket, and I'm embarrassed if I ever have to meet him or her, as my cabin is just such a mess with so many papers. Our passage this morning is Hebrews, I mean 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the great love chapter. Believe it or not, I've not preached on this chapter because Satan played a number in my mind, and I just thought, people just have so much of 1 Corinthians 13.

They know that, that's basic, that's oatmeal in the morning for grandpapa. I realized there weren't so many people preaching about 1 Corinthians 13. The more I was exposed to God's work around the world and our own movement, the more I realized that 1 Corinthians 13 is such a vital and key passage.

By the way, before we get into this a little bit heavy, just a little bit of Romney Conference Center trivia. I had the largest small ice cream cone in my entire life. Some friends came, a friend of mine, last time I saw him, he was single, and now he's married with eight children, and of course he lives here in New Hampshire where they're wanting more population.

And so he came with five of his children, and I thought the least I can do is buy these five lovely children an ice cream cone, a burst of generosity. So I'd never been in this little snack place. In my old days, I thought that was all controlled by the evil one.

But, you know, I turned away from that. Please don't misquote me. So, but, you know, I probably have a psychological block.

So I went over there, and I wanted to buy them all a small ice cream, you know. And it's so big, they have to give you a cup to catch the overflow of the ice cream. And what really blew my mind is they refused to let me pay for it.

So God bless these out-of-the-box generous triple scoop small ice cream people, and may they have a great reward in heaven. I don't know if you saw that little three-year-old gal. She's about the cutest little thing I've seen in a long time.

And boy, I found that those people were on my computer. I prayed through my whole computer. I don't remember praying for those folk.

He met his wife on OM. So if I hadn't started OM, none of those children would be here. That's sort of an encouragement.

I told them that. They sort of looked at me wondering, you know, what planet I had come in from. First Corinthians 13, good chapter to memorize.

In the end of chapter 12, it talks about a more excellent way. Isn't that interesting? That the last part of chapter 12 sets us up for realizing chapter 13 is the excellent way. And my conviction is whatever else we may have in terms of Christian convictions, and one of my problems as a young Christian, I had too many convictions.

Have you ever met those Christians that are opinionated and they've got opinions on everything? Of course, on the White House, on vitamins, on the Supreme Court, on Amway, on just about everything you can think of, they got some opinion. Now, that's not necessarily wrong unless they just talk too much and never give you a chance to say anything. That always bugs me.

And I repent when I've committed that sin myself. But I feel that First Corinthians 13 is the glue. It's the Holy Ghost glue that holds it all together.

If you just take this verse out of the Old Testament and this verse out of Revelation, even as we did last night, and you don't have this glue, you go off balance, as I did. So let's read this great chapter. Wow, we were big into that.

We weren't so good in that area. Oh, Lord. It's not easily angered.

Love never fails. The imperfect disappears. Wow.

Then we will see face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I'm fully known. And now these three remain, faith, hope, and love.

The greatest of these is love. Hallelujah. Dynamite.

Let's go back and start at verse 1. It's interesting. Last night, I had one of the most critical letters of my ministry that I've ever read. It was an email forwarded to me.

It was in a non-priority email section, and it just came up last night. And it was somebody that had briefly been on OM, a very extreme Pentecostal. There are many balanced Pentecostal people.

He was very extreme, and he made these claims about OM and about what I said concerning the gifts of the Spirit, which, as far as I can remember, were not true. And then he launched many, many paragraph attack against Billy Graham. He claimed that I made people two times the child of hell as Billy Graham, and then he left me alone and went on to attack Billy Graham.

I'm, a friend of me forwarded this, and he wants me to answer it, which means that my friend, I don't really know him that well, an acquaintance, he's believing some of this. And it's amazing how things get circulated, especially now through the internet, that are not really true, and yet people, people believe it. I remember A. W. Tozer, he said, in this present day, we need to develop some reverent skepticism, because you cannot believe everything you read.

And I wonder how many people have seen that email. I had another email a few months ago attacking all American missionary work, mainly attacking short-term, but then he flowed into the most unbelievable extreme statements about American missionaries, and even accused agencies of just promoting it in order to get the money, in order to keep going, because an agency will take like 10% of the missionary support, or in the short term they may get 10%. And so he accused these many agencies that I know are good, godly agencies, they're not perfect, of just doing this for the sake of money.

What incredible accusation. I did answer him briefly, and he did not appreciate my answer. Without love, and there were no, there was not really any love in either one of these emails, it doesn't, it doesn't work.

And most discerning people do not follow, do not swallow this kind of almost semi-hate mail that can just get circulated. You know, Billy Graham is, is, is a clay pot. He's acknowledged his mistakes, his, his struggles and complexities with Richard Nixon and that statement he made, where Nixon stayed and Billy sort of agreed something about the Jewish people.

That came up in the press again last week. The press loves to dig the old dirt. If the press can't find new dirt, they go and get old dirt, and they bring it all up, even if it's 20 years later.

And I just, as I look out across the world, the Palestinian crisis, I was talking about that with my Palestinian friends last night, the crisis in the Muslim world, of course we're committed to truth, we've been pushing this tremendous truth about the balance between grace and discipline, but I am convinced that here we have the passage that can really, really help us. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I'm a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. That letter I read, I read last night, I could hear the

clanging, I could hear the clanging as I read the letter.

Some letters are hurtful to me, that wasn't really, the clanging was so loud that there was no way I could take it very serious, though of course I try to learn from everything I receive. And I just thank God for this, this, this heart of the New Testament. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, if I have faith that can move mountains, if I have not love, I'm nothing.

I think about when our own movement, we had almost an overemphasis on faith. We got into extremism in the area of money, so that we'd hardly ever talk about money, even though the Bible does all over the place. And we wouldn't ask people for money because even though many of the greatest men of God, even my hero Oswald J. Smith and D. L. Moody and Billy Graham would in a polite, good way, you know, ask for finance, we wouldn't do that.

We were just so extreme on the whole area of faith that we left out other aspects of biblical truth like 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9, two full chapters just about money. And it was a wonderful day in our movement when through various men and women of God, we changed that view and we began to speak more openly and honestly about funds. If I had known that was going to cost me \$1,300 to come here, and the letter I had of course said they would pay that, but they didn't know what it would be, I might not have come.

Originally, this was on the end of a tour, and so the travel expense would have been minimal as it usually is, and I travel heavy discount fares. But when you fly in July and August, and I came here on a discount fare, they're not so inexpensive. So that's why I think they got a little surprised when they got my invoice for my air ticket.

But I think it's beautiful that he had the courage to share that. Sometimes a little embarrassing, but I think that's beautiful. And God enabled us to bring the challenge of faith into balance.

You never arrive. You always have to worry, and I worry now the pendulum going the other way. Are we going to be willing to take risks? Are we going to trust God for the impossible? Well, I think we are, because the new ship project we're in, we're in financially, is equivalent to all the other ship projects put together, and all the money we have put into repairing all the other ships for 30 years, this one project, Lagos Hope, which we hope will not become Lagos Despair.

So we need your prayers as we have locked in to 11 months of conversion and repair work there in Croatia. I'm sure you know out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, there's what's called the Faith, the Word of Faith Movement. Have you ever heard of that? Probably not very big in New England.

The Word of Faith Movement is one of the biggest, fastest growing church movements in the world. It's spread to Sweden. It is huge in Nigeria.

They basically teach that God always wants to prosper his children. Sounds good. They take their favorite verses, it's name it, claim it, nab it, grab it.

A pastor in Nigeria, who may mainly have a church full of poor people, would insinuate they're poor because they haven't understood God's program for prosperity. The pastor is driving a Mercedes Benz. The pastor in Nigeria is maybe pulling 50,000, 75,000, 100,000 a year, living when he travels in the most luxurious hotels.

The same is true of many of the more extreme television people. And I'm not saying God never uses them. You know, God uses donkeys.

And God can use some semi-backslidden preacher who's playing money games, because when his word goes out, people get saved. And that's a mystery. A mystery that really bugs me, actually.

And there are many believers caught up into these movements. We're not dealing with non-Christians when we're talking about the prosperity movement, because they also preach salvation by grace. They add this.

And it is complex, because history shows that when people come to Christ, they usually do prosper, including financially. But history also shows it doesn't always happen that way. And for the thousands and hundreds of thousands of poor believers in China, in India, in Pakistan, I've been in their homes.

There is usually some element of prosperity, but nothing like these people are promising. It's a different world. And I believe it is possible to have an extreme view about faith.

One church in Indiana, God will heal everyone. We don't need doctors. We don't need medicine.

They have their own cemetery. Over 70, that was the count of 10 years ago, are buried in their own cemetery, who died. They think of them as martyrs.

They held out. I don't understand the cockeyed thinking that gets into people. But I will tell you, extremism is alive and well in the United States.

And they got a corner into the television industry. And it scares me. And it's off balance.

And things go off balance when we don't get God's priorities. And we're not willing for the whole counsel of God, which talks as we've been speaking about in these days. And we'll be speaking about it more tonight.

It involves hardship, involves suffering. It involves unanswered prayer. No wonder so many sensible people are reading Philip Yancey's book, Disappointment with God.

Ronald Dunn's book, whose son committed suicide. Ronald's now in heaven. We ministered together at Keswick years ago.

His son committed suicide. I believe the end of the day, extremism leaves a lot of confused, discouraged people. And I think it's shown that quite a few overthrow the Christian faith because of these extreme teachings.

Love helps bring things into the right perspective. I have the gift of prophecy. I can fathom all mysteries, all knowledge.

I have faith that can move mountains. Have not love. I am nothing.

That's strong. That's stronger than anything I've said up to now. In fact, there's a part of me that would want to modify that.

Of course, it's speaking in a very special kind of language. And it's not literally saying there's nothing there. But it's trying to drive home this incredible comparison, this incredible point.

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. One of the miracles of our fellowship from the early days is that when we did some of these extreme things, like the Wheaton College students selling their possessions, Roger Malsfad resigning from the class presidency at Wheaton College in protest against them spending five thousand dollars on a fountain to put out in one of the buildings. That's the way we thought.

And he left the college. That story is written up in a book called True Discipleship by William MacDonald. That book fanned the flame even more of what we thought was a revival.

And God was working, but we had to grow. We had to come into a greater understanding of his word. In fact, the Wheaton students would carry out of the breakfast hall everything that was non-perishable.

They'd only eat the perishable and everything non-perishable, like a box of cereal or raisins. They'd carry that out and it ended up going to Mexico. But often there was a lack of love on the part of some of those who were doing this.

Judgmentalism came in. Phariseeism came in. Fortunately, we read books like Calvary Road.

We read books like Theodore Epps, Love is the Answer, and so we repented. We'd apologize to people. One of my favorite verses in those days was, Except you forsake all that you have, you can't be my disciple.

That's a winner, isn't it? Is that your favorite verse? Except you forsake all that you have. It took me a while to bring that one into balance. I had to get on to Philippians, where it says, God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

One scripture will bring another scripture into balance, but the devil tries to play mind games. And when I preached on that message once in Holland, a woman who had emotional problems, something went wrong. She went home and got her possessions and dumped them in the canal.

She forsook all. I tell you, when I heard that, I thought, Verwer, you need to be a little more secret sensitive. You need to make sure that Philippians, God supplying, comes in together with your message, I'm forsaking all.

Because students at Mooting were forsaking things when they heard me preach, my room turned into a secondhand store, which did not please the woman who was in charge of that floor. And I think I slept on the floor and used the bed as a display case. And so people would come and buy things in my room.

We're always trying to get money to get back to Mexico. And I'll never forget one person came to buy something. And as they left, I gave them the message about forsaking all.

And so the item that they bought, they eventually brought it back again. Then we had to sell it to some other backslider. At least that's the way our thinking was.

Oh, we had much to learn. And this passage, this passage was used more than any other scripture and books based on this passage. Yes, if I give all I possess to the poor, surrender even my body to the flames, we all used to read this Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Wow. If I have not love, we gain nothing. Can you find anything stronger? It's hard.

Verse four, love is patience. How many of you, let's be honest, you're not boasting. How many of you feel that patience, especially men, patience is one of your strong points.

Hallelujah. You got the patience. You got that nailed down and you know, you have other problems, but patience is your strong point.

Just raise your hand. Is there anyone? Okay. A wife indicated that her husband has that as a strong point.

Don't confuse it with laziness now. Patience. Good.

Hallelujah. Peter made in the present leader of OM. I can tell you patience is his strong point.

And when he was my associate leader, he was mighty patient with me. I thought patience was my wife's strong point, but I think I tested her to the very core. And so she had her challenges in that area.

But in my life, patience has been one of my biggest struggles. For me, everything is going too slow, including myself. And so then I get down to myself.

But this passage starting 30, 49 years ago, my first year in Christ, God started to teach me patience. And in those first few years, there was transformation or I never would have been able, I never would have been able to gain the loyalty of brothers and sisters to stick with me in this movement, with this vision. When I failed, I quickly repented.

Love is kind. What a revolution that can bring, not just to adults, but to children. I think many times as I look back on my life, I failed.

I failed to pay attention to children. And as an older person, I can understand. He was experiencing emotional mental change in his life as someone who was 90 years of age.

So those of us who are younger and we have people who are really elderly and find the noise and the chaos of little children overwhelming, we should try to protect them, take them for a ride. I used to take my dad for a ride. He'd love to ride around, take him to a park and deliver him from the pesky little, I mean, the wonderful little great grandchildren that were driving him right out of his whatever.

And then he would say, he would say unkind things. What is it about some older people that unkind things quickly come? Is that a psychological thing? If it is, then we just have to forgive that, right? Because God incorporates our human weakness. But I believe, listen, that what is an acorn in our 50s becomes an oak tree in our 80s if we are not careful.

And we become one more grouchy, unpleasant, complaining, moaning, impatient, unkind octarian. Is there a word octarian? I never used it before. I just sort of popped into my head.

I think I heard it in London, but I think I have it mixed up with something else, maybe something that'll come out in the golf course this afternoon. What beautiful, powerful words. Love is patient.

Love is kind, does not envy, does not boast. You know what the reputation of the United States is in Europe? There are some positive things, by the way. Positive things get said about America.

We're often commended as being very creative. But one of the negative things is that we are a nation of boasters. Because some of our presidents and top people, including television people, have been

boasting, you know.

We're the greatest nation in the world. Why don't we just keep that among ourselves? Why do we have to broadcast that to the whole world? Do you think other countries struggling? Do you think Switzerland, who think they are the greatest nation in the world, and Sweden, who know they are the greatest nation in the world, and the Netherlands, do you think they want to hear our president say, I'm not sure Bush says that anymore, that we're the greatest nation in the world? Then we keep, you know, keep that to yourself. What about humility? Do you feel that's a strong point in the White House? Well, maybe it's creeping in a little bit.

I'm not talking about the present group there. I'm talking about historically. And of course, it's only you.

It's only human to boast. But it's not Christian to boast. And there's a way, there's a way that we can share good and positive things.

We can have respect for our president. I already spoke about that the other day. And we can say perfectly positive, commending things without a spirit of boasting.

It's possible. And that's what the word of God is. I want to hear some good things about your life.

I think you should be willing to share what God has done in your life. I've done a little of that. That is different from boasting.

And sometimes people who are boasting, they don't even realize it. A lot of people I know, they're just the opposite. They're just the opposite.

They got a low view of themselves. They don't think God ever used them. You don't hear them boasting.

You know, somebody needs to crank them up and get them to be more affirmative and share more about themselves and share how they've sensed God has used them in a particular situation. After being here with you one week, I am expecting one letter or one email. And I'm not going to develop a wrong attitude if I don't get it.

But after a whole week, because even seldom by OM leaders in the last 20 years have ever had to listen to me for a week. And so I want one letter or one email. And you know what I'd like? I'd like you to share what you sense God has done in your life, either this week or any time in history.

That's easy, right? Just anything God has done. I've shared some of the things that God has done in our lives. And I will print up your email.

I will read your letter. I heard something on the radio the other day that handwritten letters now are considered something special. People now are saving.

All handwritten letters are being saved. Some of them are being framed. I got a typed letter from Billy Graham when I stepped down from the leadership.

It's framed. You got this framed Billy Graham, you know, letter to George Burward. I hope he actually saw it.

But praise God. It's not rude. It's not self-seeking.

It's not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Isn't that radical? Isn't that revolutionary? Have you ever discovered some of the Lord's people? They seem to keep a little bit of dirt in their pocket about someone.

They don't use it unless necessary. I never forget years ago having to confront someone about some sin in their life. I found it so difficult because when I tried to confront that person, instead of him facing the issue in his life, he reached into his pocket and pulled out some dirt about me that he'd been storing there.

Why didn't he tell me about that when it happened? Why did he put that in his pocket? I would have repented, I believe. Remembering the wrongs. The world does it all the time.

They keep a wrong stored up. And as long as you don't do anything against them, they won't use that. But if you come against them, they'll use that to counter you.

That's of the world. That's not God's way. Of course, when we fail, as I have, we have to apologize.

I believe one of the greatest revival words in marriage and in teamwork and in missions is two little words. I hope it's in your vocabulary. I'm sorry.

Now, I know one brother who's extreme on that. In all my life, one person who is extreme. He's saying he's sorry when there's nothing to be sorry for.

He also is thanking me. We've been together 47 years. He's thanking me.

I didn't do anything. Have you ever met anybody? They're thanking you too much. You got a lot of people in your life like that? I don't think so.

In fact, I think this guy, you know, he probably belongs in the Holy Ghost Museum of Special People. And you know, it's amazing how we have the Basketball Hall of Fame. I just passed that on the road coming here.

We've got the Baseball Hall of Fame. We've got the Football Hall of Fame. You know, all of this, and I'm not saying it's totally wrong.

Don't misunderstand me. But it's tied to human ego. It's tied to human achievement.

I read a brilliant email this morning from a secular guy who's been writing articles in Hollywood for years, and he's been writing about the stars and how they go to this one restaurant. Maybe some of you saw that email. You know what this older guy has decided? He's decided most of these movie stars, anymore, they're not his heroes.

And he's pointed out how so many of them are so miserable and so selfish, and yet they are the stars on the screen. And I'm not saying we should never go to a movie, but I am saying we need discernment as to what is really important. And then he shared in this article that his heroes, because I don't think he's a Christian, his heroes are firemen.

His heroes are people that are giving their lives out in Iraq. And he went on to other classes of people. Praise God, I'm sure there's a few heroes out in Hollywood as well.

And we hear of some of them coming to Christ and repenting and even starting to give away some of their money. And I'm sure many of them are so miserable because money is often the root, as the Word of God says, of so much evil. What an unbelievable challenge this passage is.

Love does not delight in evil, rejoices with the truth. It protects, it trusts, it hopes. That's a huge struggle in my life.

And I look back and realize I have not emphasized hope enough. Faith, hope, love. The greatest of these is love, but that doesn't mean we neglect hope and faith.

So many of the things I've been praying for, I've been wanting to see my whole life, it's not happened. And so despair, I'm going to be talking about this when we look at the book of Habakkuk. But despair comes upon my heart, the loss of hope.

And then when that begins to happen, I feel myself slipping into depression. My wife slipped into depression for a year. It was the toughest year in our marriage, 1976.

We'll never forget it. It shook my daughter. She couldn't cope with that.

We prayed. It was probably some kind of chemical imbalance. We don't understand it, but we are so thankful after about a year, year and a half, she came out of that depression.

I know that I certainly was part of it. And it took a courageous woman. I remember because it was the same week we decided to buy the Dulas, which I actually found very hard.

I wasn't sure we should go ahead with another ship. I was I was leading the way and yet wrestling with doubt. And I remember a South African man giving a speech about how he was going to find a lot of money in South Africa to help finance it because I was worried about the finance.

He never did send any money. He just went to heaven last year. But I remember that same time this wonderful woman got me in a corner and she said, I believe part of your wife's problem is you.

Insensitivity toward your wife. I remembered at that time or around that time, my wife saying to me, you're ministering to a lot of people. You don't seem to be ministering to me.

Whoa, that really shook me. And I sought the Lord in tears, brokenness and started to spend more time with my wife and talk through things more and try to be a better listener. How do you score on that listening thing? Are you all good listeners? Women are definitely better than men.

What about men? How many of you between one to ten, ten being the top of the scale? How many of you rate yourself? Ten? Nine? Eight? Any hands up? You're all too humble. Seven? Listening skills, listening to your wife. Six? Come on.

I'm a five. Good. Some hands went up.

I remember my wife saying she was going on about something. We have a lot of things that we're different about. And she talks about things that I find really boring.

Anyway, she was sharing something and she caught me. She said, are you listening? And I said, of course I'm listening, darling. You know, that caught my attention when she said, are you listening? Of

course I'm listening.

So she said, well, what did I say? You know, let's not get into the details. This beautiful scripture has helped revolutionize my life. It's helped keep our marriage going these 45 years.

It helped bring my wife out of depression. I know more extreme forms of depression do not end that easily. I have friends three or four years depressed, linked with chemical imbalance.

All the psychiatrists in the world with all the medicine, they've been able to resolve many, many cases, but not all. And it's where it's an area where in the church we really need to be compassionate. We really do.

It protects, it trusts, it hopes, it perseveres. There's our theme for the week. It perseveres.

I'm sure you all know the story when Winston Churchill gave that great speech to the graduating class. He wasn't a great scholar, Winston Churchill. He stood up years later as a famous man in front of this graduating class, and this was his speech.

Did you read it? Never give up, and he sat down. That stuck in my head more than any other speech of Winston Churchill. Well, I never read any other speeches of Winston Churchill, but at least it stuck in my head.

Praise be to God. Love never fails. Where there are prophecies, they will cease.

Where there are tongues, they will be stilled. Where there's knowledge, it will pass away, for we know in part, we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child.

Remember David Seaman's books, Give Up Your Childish Ways, what a book, what a book. I had the privilege of meeting him not long ago, a very elderly man. I had the privilege of being in touch with a lot of elderly people, people older than most of you.

I phoned them. Long after they can no longer go to church, I get them on the phone. Sometimes someone has to interpret even what they're saying, and it's a privilege sometimes to get to their funerals.

I got to the funeral of Ken Taylor. He's 88. I don't know if you classify that as elderly or not, but I knew Ken.

I had the privilege of fellowship with this man who gave us the living Bible in Tyndale Publishing House for 48 years. I want to tell you, this idea that Christians are not different from non-Christians, that some survey tried to tell us in America, they've adapted that, by the way, it's not true. And I have known for 50 years thousands and have met thousands of transformed people.

I don't believe these people could fool me. Maybe some of them. Jesus changes people's lives.

My own wife is a transformed person. Even as I look at my own life, there is no comparison between what I am in Christ and what I was or what I know I would have been without Jesus Christ. Just look at our newspapers.

There are transformed people. They are not categorized just by having the name Christian or not having the name Christian. That is not the issue.

The issue is do they have a Christian worldview? Are they walking in Christ? Are they living in the reality and putting into practice their Christian principles? And when they are, someone said maybe only three or four percent of America is living that way, then they are different. And that's what the Romney Conference Center is all about. That's what OM's all about.

That's what true biblical Bible preaching churches are all about. And we need to be a little less shy and a little more bold to share that we know, despite all of our struggles and weaknesses, and we want to apologize when we sin or fail, that God's people are different. And their marriages are different.

And the way they spend money is different. Sometimes the kind of car they drive is different because they sold an expensive car to buy a cheaper car to give the money to world evangelism. God doesn't lead everyone that way.

But we shouldn't let the pendulum swing to the other direction so that we can never sacrifice. We can never like move into a smaller home in order to money for the kingdom. My own parents, when they were young in Christ, left the house they loved with all their heart, 243 Manhattan Avenue, and were able to release half of the money from the sale of that house, which would be worth five hundred thousand today.

So if they had been left, if they had been led to keep that as an investment to give later on, I would not criticize them. But they felt led to release that money at that time when our work was just being born, when we were deeply in debt. Today, we sometimes receive gifts of one point seven million, like a Korean businessman wrote out last year to help buy the new ship.

But in those days, every ten dollar gift was a miracle. And my parents took that step of faith. My mother was a struggler like me.

She found it hard to go down that street ever again. They moved into a house half that size. And my sister and her husband just sold their huge house, an old house they got cheap.

They had six or seven children. They just sold it and moved in to the old house, which supposedly I was part owner of without knowing. And I just stayed in that little small house, which is also in Bergen County worth a fortune in these days.

God leads different people in different ways. But the word of God says it's more blessed to give than receive. And when we really love people and we're really concerned for people, then I believe we want to give.

We want to bless them. We don't firstly think of ourselves, but we think of others. And God, through other scriptures, helps us to have a balanced view also of ourselves.

Praise God for this great passage. I wanted to finish by reading something that God put on my heart, which I put out on the Internet. And it brought me a lot of encouraging response.

It's tied in with what we have just looked at in 1 Corinthians 13. And it's tied in with something I shared the other night. And if you want, you can get a copy of this.

It's called Embracing the Pain. In one or two places, it's a little deep, a little complex, so you have to listen. We're going to finish in a moment.

So, I have a great burden on my heart. I want to share it with as many as possible. I am burdened for people who are really hurting.

There may be someone here, if you're honest, despite all the ministry and God's grace, you're hurting. There may be someone listening by CD or cassette. I'm burdened for people who are really hurting in a major way.

We all have our hurts, but there are so many who are hurting much more than others. By the way, there's a passage in Corinthians that says one of the reasons God may be allowing you to hurt or suffer is so that you can minister to others who are hurting and suffering even more. Isn't that a great verse? Often when we want to help or minister to such people, it's not possible because their hurts have created a barrier or wall and people can't get through it.

Some Christians have been hurt so much by other Christians that they will not even go to church. By the way, we are told now that there are hundreds of thousands in America in that category. They love Jesus.

They've been hurt in church situations. They will now not go. If you meet someone, don't quickly judge them.

Try to listen to them. Try to hear what they've gone through. You may find that they were actually a pastor because thousands of pastors, thousands have left the ministry hurt, beaten down.

Some Christians have been hurt so much by other Christians they will not go to church or fellowship with other believers. For them, it is all too painful. There are many great books and passages of Scripture that can help such people, but they might not know about them or be hesitant to read them.

I am reading such a book right now, Life of the Beloved by Henry Nowen. It has ministered to me in a powerful way. He speaks of finding the courage to embrace our brokenness and to make our most feared enemy into a friend, even claiming it as an intimate companion.

Shortly after reading this, I had a very painful experience with a friend who was deeply criticizing one of my closest friends. Isn't that a hard experience? One friend deeply criticizing a closer friend. It could have... and I was staying in this person's house.

It could have really upset me and ruined our time together, but instead I embraced it as allowed by God as part of what life is all about. I embraced it as allowed by God as part of what life is all about. Great joy and peace flooded my heart and I was free.

I know it doesn't always work that way, that others have hurts 100 times greater than mine, yet they are not too big for God. How can we, this is the key, how can we who are forgiven of our sins and delivered from hell not truly forgive with all of our being those who have sinned against us? We know that all sin and we teach and preach all have sinned and come shorter than the glory of God. So why are we so surprised when people sin against us? We all fail.

We all sin. Can we not see our own sins that we are so often part of the hurt and pain that we are now living with? Let me repeat that. Can we not see that our own sins are so often part, not all, but part of the hurt and pain that we are now living with? Oh, how easy it is for the self-life to blame others and to fail to see our part in the situation.

In some cases people are blaming God. That becomes even more complex. Whole books like Disappointment with God by Philip Yancey have been written to help deal with this.

My brothers and sisters, there's great hope. Here we are to the last verse again of Corinthians 13. There is great hope for all of us.

God has used us. He has a great plan for our lives. In our pilgrimage to become more like Christ, which should always be our greatest goal, let us embrace the pain and the hurt and allow it to make us better people for his glory.

Let us pray. Our God and Father, all of us probably here this morning, have hurts. Maybe they're gone now.

They're under the blood. But the memories pop up on certain occasions. People who hurt us suddenly come across our path.

We're not sure how we relate to that. And we thank you, Lord, that we can come with our disappointments, with our hurts. We can lay them at your feet.

Our God, we've been looking at one of the strongest, most dynamic revolutionary passages of scripture in the whole Bible, tied in with other scriptures between Genesis and Revelation. And we are convicted that we need to be more loving. We need to understand radical biblical love in a greater way.

We need to be able to put it into practice behind the wheel of our car, or in our kitchen, or in the clutter of our basement, or with our grandchildren, or with someone who doesn't like us, or the next time we get a knife in the back. And somehow we ask, O Lord, we ask, O Lord, for a greater grace awakening in our lives to be your men and to be your women, and to therefore impact our neighbors and our friends in a greater way because of all that you have done on the cross for us. We ask this in surrendering commitment through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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