

Power for the Christian Life

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of moral power and discipline in the Christian life, and warns against the cult of softness and ease that can lead to a lack of discipline and a failure to follow God's plan.

Duration: 43:35

Scripture: Acts 20:19-20, Acts 20:28-29, Acts 20:31-32, 1 Corinthians 4:12, 1 Corinthians 4:16

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of young college men receiving a specific message. He highlights the need for discipline, warfare, self-denial, and unity among believers. The speaker quotes Jonathan Edwards, who believed that every person should give their life to Christ and be willing to give their life for Him. The sermon concludes with the speaker urging the audience to surrender their lives to Christ and reminding them of the abundant blessings and promises that come with following Him.

Transcript

I want you to turn to the book of Acts. You know, if you try to get your theology out of the book of Acts, you'll probably end up very confused, because God has given us the epistles, basically, for our New Testament doctrine and teaching. But if you go to get the pattern for life and the example of the outworking and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the book of Acts is a good place to go.

I'd like you to look at Acts chapter 20. Now, we have the situation with Paul and the Ephesian elders, beginning at the 17th chapter, 17th verse of the 20th chapter. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.

And when they were come to him, he said unto them, You know from the first day that I came unto Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations, which befell me by lying in wait of the Jews. And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed 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. Now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witness it in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

But 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 have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more.

Wherefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take ye therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver or gold or clothing or apparel. Yea, yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things how that so laboring you ought to support the weak. And to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

And they all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him. Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should not see his face no more. That they should see his face no more.

And they accompanied him unto the ship. It's a great chapter, isn't it? Recently I was speaking at Bible College. And I read about four major scripture passages on the life of the Apostle Paul.

And spoke on the subject of the life of Paul. And I don't think we have a picture of discipleship and evangelism any better than in the life of the Apostle Paul. And I want to just briefly again this afternoon to some extent, refresh your minds concerning the life of Paul.

For Paul is our example. An example of a man, a human being who lived out the indwelling life of Christ. Whereas today we mainly talk about it, Paul lived it.

Whereas today we write books about it, he walked it. I think of the words of Paul, and I don't want you to lose your place there in Acts chapter 20. Found in the book of Thessalonians, where he says, Now anyone who takes an intelligent study or makes an intelligent study of the New Testament will see that the message of the New Testament and the drive of the New Testament is aimed at producing moral quality in the lives of those who read it.

You can use another term if you want, you can call it holiness, you can call it sanctification, you can call it whatever you want. But you must see and realize that God's plan and desire for you is to conform you to the image of Jesus Christ. It isn't to fulfill the Great Commission, or it doesn't fulfill the Great Commission, when we run around the world spreading lukewarm Christianity.

I think I'd rather express it in the words of A.W. Tozer that I've written in my Bible after the Great Commission. He says, And that's true. What the regions beyond need today is not a greater quantity of semi-dedicated, half-hearted Christians who after the first persecution want the first ship home.

Or the first, I won't say it. What the world needs today is to see men like the Apostle Paul. You must realize that the Apostle Paul was not some special creature in terms of innate power.

He was a human being and it says very clearly after one of the most vivid descriptions of his life, that perhaps we should look at in 1 Corinthians because I want to give you plenty of scriptures to think about. Keep Acts 20 and go to 1 Corinthians 4 where we have a description of Paul's apostolic ministry. And before I read beginning at verse 9, I need to read to you verse 16 where Paul says, Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Now if Paul could say this to the Corinthian church, the carnal Corinthian church that was caught up with all kinds of egocentric ideas and practices. If Paul could say this to the Corinthian church, he certainly can say it to us. Be ye followers of me.

Then we read the verses that he's referring to. Verse 10. Verse 9. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were, appointed to death.

For we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake. Ye are wise in Christ.

We are weak, but ye are strong. Ye are honorable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place.

And labor, working with our own hands, being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we suffer it. Being defamed, we entreat.

We are made as the filth of the world and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ.

Isn't that terrific? It's a terrific summary of Paul's strength. My ways which be in Christ. As I teach everywhere in every church.

Now some are puffed up as though I would not come to you. But I would come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Now that's a favorite word today in Christian circles. Power.

And it's my conviction that a majority, especially of young people, are very much confused about what power is with God. And when you look at a verse, and you quote it, like we like to quote this verse. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

You should read the context, or else you become a little bit like the Jehovah Witnesses. Who come to the doors, taking every possible verse out of context, and able to construe almost anything by it. And when you look at this verse in the context, you realize it is not what many people think today.

Many people feel today that if we have the power of God, we're going to have all kinds of great things happen. We're going to see these Muslims falling down and all repenting and following Christ by the hundreds. And we're going to have all kinds of things happening.

But that's just the opposite of what we see in this context. In this context, we see the Apostle Paul going through all kinds of difficulties that all of us would have prayed for deliverance from. And we see that the power that the Apostle Paul is referring to is moral power.

It is not firstly power that sort of falls out of heaven and hits a man on the head. It's power in the life of a believer to stand against the trials and persecutions and difficulties that will come upon any man who dares to follow Christ. And that is the primary power that God wants to put in your life.

That doesn't mean that God doesn't work in convicting power on the sinner's heart. He does. But that is not what he's referring to primarily in this passage.

He's referring to the kind of power that comes in the disciple so that when the hard times come, when the fruitless times come, when the struggles come, when the trials come, he can stand fast, unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord as he described in 1 Corinthians 15. Because we see here what Paul went through. Now our day and the religion of our day is aimed at getting more blessing for minimum work and minimum prayer.

And more deliverance from any little disease that might bother us, a cord on the end of our toe and anything else people want to get rid of it. And they'll do almost anything to do it. If I have a campaign here and I put up a big sign that thousands are going to be healed, and don't misquote me, I believe that God heals.

But if I have a campaign like that, people will travel all over the world to get there. You let me put a sign up taken from the New Testament. Philippians 1.29, you shall not only believe on him, suffer for his sake.

You have been called not only to believe on him, to suffer for his sake. And I'll put a sign up and say, come all free, no offering to be taken. We give hardships, sufferings, trials, difficulties, testing.

And you watch the people flock. You'll have the meeting in the vestry, if you have any at all. And yet this is the rock bed of New Testament Christianity.

And it grieves my soul, the people that flood out of my own country, living on salaries the likes of which big men in the business world are not getting. Living in the lap of luxury, staying in the biggest hotels. I'm not referring to Billy Graham or any specific individual.

And then come to us and try to tell us about New Testament Christianity. I just will not believe. As I read this book, as I see the message of the New Testament, it's a message in which the very foundation stone is hardship, suffering, trials, difficulties.

And the power that God wants to give us is the power not necessarily to jump over them, go around them, but the power to go right through at any cost. And no matter how you study your New Testament, you'll

see it. If you read verses in context.

Paul's life was a long history of suffering. If you think for a minute that the Apostle Paul had a prayer meeting, when he got up from the prayer meeting, everything was solved, then you better reread your Bible because I don't know why he wrote most of the epistles. He said in his epistles that he was praying for all of these churches, and yet it's obvious from the epistles that the problems were not all being sorted out simply because the great Apostle Paul had prayed.

He explains in the first chapter of many epistles how he's been praying for them, and then he has to go on and write a whole epistle trying to undo all their problems. So you see, it's not just a matter of mouthing an interesting prayer and then expecting everything to suddenly become flat and even and smooth and lovely. Well, Alec was very sorry that one of the tapes from our leadership conference didn't come out.

Brother Frank Dietz was speaking on the subject of the cult of softness, the cult of softness, and most of us, whether we want to admit it or not, at least have half a membership card in the cult of softness. And we basically all of our lives choose the easy way. Subconsciously, you must realize, subconsciously, naturally, we choose the easy way.

And I'm convinced that modern psychology has proven that most of us act according to subconscious drive rather than logical, sensible, reasonable, conscious level thinking. We're driven by the various drives of our unconscious mind, by the inner self, and that's why we're always doing things and we sometimes wonder why we do them. Have you ever done anything and you say, Oh great, why did I do that? Why did I say that? Why did I go there? Why do I have this habit? Why can't I get rid of this particular thing in my life? And it's because this drive, this unconscious drive, is in control.

And I believe the greatest warfare is not the warfare of how many tracks we can give out in the streets of Paris. The greatest warfare is right within you. The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and the two are contrary.

And you can give whatever terminology you want. And you can polish it over with whatever theory you want, but it's there and I've seen it with every man I've ever met. This tremendous battle within.

Praise be to God. The word of God says there is victory. The word of God says if you walk in the spirit you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

And oh that some of us in these days might learn what it is to walk in the spirit. You know, I don't think you'll ever know whether you're walking in the spirit until you get out in some tough situations and until you get out of the cult of softness and get out of the padded life. Most of us are constantly padding our lives.

Our homes are padded, our diet is padded, the way we think, the way we walk, the way we talk, it's all padded. To avoid the collisions with life, and that's why we have so much mental breakdown. Because the padding will only go so far.

And the more you soften your life, the more padding you put, the harder it will be, listen, the harder it will be when that crisis comes. Mental illness is higher among the rich than among the poor. Higher among the elite than the uneducated.

Higher in Hollywood than in the villages of Bihar. Why? Because these people have all the padding of the cult of softness that's available. If a woman is having a problem in the kitchen, she buys some gadget to

solve the problem.

If she's having a problem in her diet, she just goes out and buys whatever she needs. If it's weight-losing pills, that's a shilling a piece, she buys them. But whatever particular need she has, she nags her husband and she gets it.

And since the husband has so much money, it's no particular problem. It's better to give her what she wants than hear her yapping around the house. And so the padding gets thicker and thicker and thicker.

And they feel a two-room house is a bit crowded and it's not enough privacy. Well, then we get a three-room house and that's not large enough. And so, some of my friends in the United States with 20-room homes, they still discover they're not happy.

And the more padding you put, the more ease, the more easy ways, the harder it will be when the real crisis comes that no padding will help. I don't know if I'm communicating. Way back 200 years ago when the men who went into America were rough and strong and physically able and had to work hard and the women suffered, these people didn't have these enormous problems of emotional illness.

They had no time to get all involved in all this thinking and introspection and all this that causes so many of these problems. They were hard-working. They were physically fit.

And things were hard. This is why the mission situation is becoming worse and worse because the gap between a disciplined soldier of Jesus Christ who wants to suffer and the kind of life that's coming today out of most of us is getting wider and wider and wider. So that years ago, that which was hardly suffering at all to a man who lived in Britain who was already having it hard living here, now the gap is so great between the life we live here and what we're going to have to live out there that it becomes impossible and so there's mental breakdown and all kinds of other problems.

The cult of softness, the love of ease is producing a gap between us and the kind of man that God would have us be so great that there are some men in missions today that doubt it can ever be bridged. And I know that that gap is so great in some young people that they will never be missionaries despite their desire to be so. And it's not all their fault.

They have been reared in a culture and in an environment that has made them unfit to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ and the regions beyond. We realize that one of the purposes of OM is that young people can see if they really are fit, if they really have the makeup and the stamina to take the missionary situation today, which isn't getting any easier. The villages of New Guinea are not being lined with silver coating.

In India today, in the villages, they're living the same way they lived 2,000 years ago. Can you imagine what it is to take a man out of the cult of softness, out of the kind of life we live, where basically we do what we want, when we want, we have sufficient money to get what we need, we have a soft home and a nice environment and plenty of food, what it is to take a man out of that environment and thrust him into an Indian village where people are living as they lived in 1 BC. You know, there's not even 10% of the missionaries in India today that are laboring in villages.

Can't, can't possibly adapt to that kind of life. And the only hope I see is that now, while we're young, while our lives are still being molded and still being formed, while you're still capable of doing something about it, to do something and to do something fast and to do something desperately. Or you will wind up in a situation where you won't change even if you want to.

I've had older men of God stand before me and kneel before me in prayer and weep because they wanted this way of life, but they knew it was too late. They knew their life would never change. They knew basically even they would never change.

The cult of softness had taken its toll and it's taken its toll in the evangelical church in a way that is absolutely horrifying. Recently I was reading in one of the famous missionary magazines about one of the African missions. Known to most all of you, I'm sure.

Now missionary leaders are just, just overwhelmed with the job of training their new recruits for the regions beyond. They don't know what to do. And they've said over and over again, the greatest problem is lack of discipline.

Well the word discipline and the word discipleship, you know they have something in common. They have something in common. Discipline is basically doing what you know you should do, not what you feel like doing.

This is why we don't pray much. We don't feel like praying. If you felt like praying, you would pray.

This is why we don't go out to the doors and evangelize and do this personal work and other things. We don't feel like doing it. Oh well, we might have some kind of nice experience and then we'll feel like doing it for a while, maybe even a year or so.

You know, youthful zeal will last a year or two. But oh, to stick at it. That's another story, isn't it? And so most of the things that God wants us to do, don't get done because we don't feel like it.

And we don't feel like it because our feelings have been catered to so long. And we live this way so long that it is literally a revolution. And that's just what it will take in your life.

So what do people say at this point? They say, well this is not for me. This full time work is not for me. I'm not going to be a missionary.

I can't do it. I have to have a little home somewhere in England. And I couldn't possibly.

And so we withdraw from the armies of God. We withdraw from the invasion. And we determine that we're going to set up our little shrine and our little castle somewhere in England.

And we discover after a few years, it catches up, 5, 10, 15 years. That doesn't work either because the warfare can be just as real in a little house in Birmingham as it can in a village out in Beehive. I want to tell you, young person, stop trying to escape reality.

Stop trying to avoid the hardinesses. Stop trying to avoid the difficulties. Stop trying to avoid the hard way.

And decide today to face reality at any cost. And reality in life means hardness, tragedy, difficulties, trials, and all that's involved. Billy Graham said recently that life at its best is full of sadness.

And I believe he's a man who's seen it. It's true. I know many girls.

Oh, this life's not for me. Discipleship. Oh, my husband going out to the regions beyond.

This can't be. And they think the answer is the normal life. What they call a normal life.

Got a nice home and my husband get a good secure job. He'll bring us 15 pounds a weekend. We'll put so much in this account.

We'll have our security. We'll have this and that. We'll have our two little children in a proper hospital where they can be taken care of.

They're all planned out. Nice and well padded. It's ideal.

But it doesn't work. I've counseled with dozens and dozens of people in the secular world. Businessmen.

My wife has done the same. It doesn't work. It's a dream.

It's a phony bubble and it'll pop in your face. One out of every nine women in the British Isles spends part of her life in a mental institution. One out of every nine.

What do you think your chances are? And they aren't coming from the ranks of the people who are overworked. They're generally coming from the ranks of the people who have padded their life very well. Don't seek the soft way.

Don't seek the easy way out. Don't seek the back door because at the back door the ditch is bigger than on the front. And if you go out the front door and you follow God's way, He'll take you through the ditch.

But when you go out the back door, there's no way across. This is the kind of power that Paul talked about. Power that took him through wildernesses often.

Power that took him through shipwreck. Power that took him through all the trials of the churches with all their problems because the New Testament church had its problems, plenty of problems. And he says in describing his life in the 11th chapter of Corinthians, after all of this description of this difficult life that Paul has, and he then describes, and that which came upon me, the care of all the churches.

This, I believe, is reality in discipleship. Determined in your heart by the grace of God to seek the Lord Jesus Christ no matter where it leads. No matter where it leads.

Oh, I tell you, I wish, I wish I had more ability to communicate this truth. I feel so often I'm such a weak, frail vessel to communicate what God is trying to say through so many of these passages of Scripture and through the life of the Apostle Paul. The power of God is not in word, but in power.

You knew what manner of life I had among you. Think of that verse 11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place.

Why couldn't Paul just pray and get a dwelling place? It's amazing how we Christian groups are praying for dwelling places all the time. And all the Bible schools in America, they're all building their castles. I call them mud pies.

They're spending millions, millions of dollars to put Bible school students in such luxury that all it does is produce more chocolate per pound. I want to tell you it's a curse on the earth. And it's not just the little boy of 28 who's saying this.

This is being preached now by some of the intellectual giants in the Church of Christ. They know, they know this is the need. We were amazed in O.M. recently when we received a letter from the InterVarsity

Christian Fellowship Committee in Chicago for the International Missionary Convention in Urbana.

The biggest missionary convention in the world where Billy Graham is generally the main speaker. And they wrote to us and they asked if I would go and be one of the main speakers at this convention. And I saw the letter and I almost fell over.

I wrote back and told them that I didn't think that this would be possible because I probably would be in India and a few other things. They wrote me back on behalf of the entire committee. And this is what they said.

The young people of our generation must have this message. These are the men who are probably closer to world missions than almost any men in that country. This was their statement.

The young college men of our nation must have this message. You must come. That's what they said.

Now if these men who have so many fingers on the evangelistic situation in the world today say that the young people of our generation must have this message, it seems to me it's about time that a few of us who are just beginning need to pay a little more attention. We must have this message of discipline. We must have this message of the warfare.

We must have this message of deny self, take up the cross and follow him. We must have this message of esteeming the brother as better than yourself. We must have the message of unity at any cost apart from compromise with truth.

Without it, we're doomed for failure. Because we're faced over here with a tremendous enemy, militant Islam, militant Mormonism, militant JWism, militant Hinduism, militant Catholicism. How many members of the legion of Virgin Mary will come out of Ireland this summer? How many? Hundreds, perhaps thousands again sweeping across Britain winning converts.

How many Muslims are sweeping into Africa to win Africa for Islam? We see the result for every one led to any form of Christianity including all the cults. Nine are receiving Islam. You see it even in Britain as militant Islam presses forward in back of our headquarters in Bolton.

They're building a mosque, moving into a mosque. Militant sects, militant cults, militant communism. Where is militant Christianity in 1967? Have you seen it? If you have, please introduce me to some of it because I'm just itching to see what it looks like.

I want to take a picture. I want at least to meet whoever's involved in it. And although the evangelical church is producing one book a day, one new evangelical book a day.

I tell you, I'll be very honest, in some ways I'm so sick of seeing books. So sick, books, books, books, books. Every time somebody drops a penny, somebody writes a book.

And every time I put anything in print of mine, there's only one or two things, I almost tremble. I think, well, what's the use? And an awful lot of people have to sort of pressure me and do a lot of things before I put something in print. Yet we know God is using these books.

We must maintain a balance. One new book every day at least, probably closer to two evangelical books. How many books on the life of the Apostle Paul? How many books on the Pauline epistles? How many professors going around teaching the Pauline epistles? How many conventions where we're going to have

instruction on the Pauline epistles and the life of Paul? But I have one question, young people.

Where are the Pauls? That's my question. Forgive me if maybe I'm an agnostic, but where are the Pauls? Where are men who live like this? Where are men who love like this? Where are men who suffer like this? Where are men who are ready to do anything for the cause of Christ like this? I just don't find them. And yet I'm convinced that this book is true.

I'm convinced that this message can produce this kind of man in its different context. Because God is not going to take away your personality and annihilate you. He's going to take you with your problems and your personality.

And He's going to make you and conform you to the image of Jesus Christ. And it will take all your life. But it's a wonderful thing and it brings more glory to God than we can ever imagine.

And this is the question. And this is what we have to face up to. If we're going to be realists.

We cannot stick our head in the clouds any longer. And go on singing our hymns. When we put our heads in the cloud and reality is down here, we're up here singing.

My Jesus, I love thee. We have so many wonderful hymns. Evangelical Christianity has produced the greatest number of wonderful hymns of any religious group in the whole world.

We're a religion of hymns. And there's an average of a new hymn book coming out every couple of weeks. With more and more hymns.

And they're more wonderful and some of them are more militant. And we sing them and we change them and we play with them and we organize them. And oh my, it's just a great, great fog of evangelical nonsense.

Because if you sing a hymn and you don't want it to be real in your life. And you're not ready to obey it and you're not ready to live up to it. It's just noise.

It's sounding brass and tingling cymbal. If you sing my Jesus, I love thee. And have something against a brother or sister in Christ next to you.

You're a hypocrite. You're not the kind of hypocrite that's headed for hell. But you're the kind of hypocrite that's going to face something at the judgment seat of Christ.

When you'll account for all of your works. And all of your ill feelings against the other brothers and sisters. And it's just wrong.

I think of how we sing some of these things. I'll never forget one time. I was in church and the man's chairing the meeting.

He was so loaded with money. And he was known for it. I had tea in his home.

And he had so much gold and silver. And he was showing me this cup and that cup and this silver. And something we ate on.

I could hardly lift the stuff we ate on. And we sang that night the hymn in the church. Take my life and let it be.

And we got to that verse. Take my silver and as my gold. And oh I tell you the volume was great.

It was a great church. They were a jovial crowd. He sang with all of us.

Take my silver and my gold. Never batted an eyelash. I'm sure he never even thought of all the silver around his house.

Sure he never thought of a few hundred thousand quid he had in his bank account. Probably never dawned on him, you see. A great damnable dichotomy has come.

In which our theology and our hymnology and our religious ritualism is in one compartment. And our life is in another. And they don't mix.

They don't mix. So that people can talk about dedication and commitment and being sold out and loving Jesus. And they can talk about the deeper life and the Holy Spirit.

And it's over here in their life. The way they eat, the way they talk, the way they spend their money, where they go, what they do with their free time. That's over here and the two have nothing to do with one another.

A.W. Tozer says, we are the great game players. We play the game of words. Like when you go out to watch a football match you see them kick the ball around.

It's terrific. Kicking the ball, kicking the ball. And the people there watching the game when the game is over, nobody's any different.

When the game is over, no one's had a moral change. When the game is over, no one changes their life or what they're going to do with their money or anything else. And the same way with us.

Come to our evangelical conventions and our meetings and our special conferences and most evangelicals are spending most of their time if they're doing anything trying to persuade other evangelicals to believe the same as them. That's the main activity. When you finally do get dedicated you give your time to persuading others to believe like you.

And meanwhile, 150,000 souls go out into hell a day. It's completely unrealistic. It's just the game of words.

And we're especially good at Bible college of this. A Bible college can be the most unrealistic place in the entire world. And we specialize in the game of words.

And we go, we have our game, we throw the words around, all kinds of phrases and all kinds of verses taken out of the context and we play the game of words and hymns and songs and everything else. But when the game is over, even though we're very excited when we get in the game, sometimes our tempers even get up and we're standing for truth at any cost. But when the game is over, we're just the same.

Morally, mentally, emotionally, we're the same. And we wonder why so many are taking the road of agnosticism. We wonder why so many are vomiting up our evangelicalism and taking the road of Bishop Robinson and all the rest.

Look, D.L. Moody had the answer. He said, lukewarm Christians will produce more atheists than all the unbelieving books ever published. It's true.

And until there's a move where unbelieving people can see living Christianity, nothing will ever happen. We've seen this happen. I think we've seen it happen in Switzerland through the ministry of Dr. Schaeffer, a man who not only has a great apologetic message for our day but who has a life.

And he has this little retreat up in Switzerland and all kinds of unbelievers and agnostics and atheists and people that have completely turned from evangelical faith or are just men out of the art world and all of those things, they come there and they listen to his tapes and they watch his life and they speak with him over the table and number after number of these men, militant unbelievers, have surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ because they've seen living Christianity, real Christianity. And this is going to do more than all of our books and all of our tracts and all the challenged newspapers even if we could fly them over Britain and drop them down by the ton. People in Britain today must see living saints.

They must see living witnesses. Not people who are emotionally on a tangent. Not people who are just throwing words around.

Not people who claim one thing and live another thing. But they must see disciples. They must see men that live this life.

This is evangelism. Oh yes, there'll be literature. There'll be witnessing.

There'll be preaching. All these are a part. But the basis is this kind of life.

Doesn't there have to be a spiritual revolution? You say yes, but can God really change me? Can God really change a generation of young people? Can God really raise out of this softness, out of this ease, out of this blindness, out of this egocentric cesspool that most of us are walking around in? Can He really raise up men who live like Christ? Can He really raise up men whose brother is better than Himself? Can He really raise up men like Paul who will throw their life to the wind and love suffering like a bosom brother? Can God do that in 1967? I say yes, because He has said the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. And it's God's power that can do this in you. God's life in you that can do it.

And I believe much depends on whether you really want it. Much depends on whether you're willing to let go of your idols and let go of God, and God alone. You know, forsaking all is not some difficult thing once you get God's perspective.

Giving your life wholly to Christ, doing His will no matter what it is, is not hard once you have it in perspective. It's like holding a small coin in one hand. Just a ten naira piece a piece from India.

It's worth just a little more than a penny. And you're holding that in your hand and you think, if you go to the right place you might be able to get a cup of tea. And you think of how nice that cup of tea will be.

You're very thirsty. You haven't had one for a long time and you think there's the secret to the cup of tea. And you squeeze on it.

And another man comes over here and he's got a hundred rupee note. He's got a wallet and he's got a hundred rupee note. And he takes it out and you just look at that and you just, well, you better stick with your ten paisa piece.

You know, that seems like pure insanity to me. A man's offering me a hundred rupees and I'm holding on to ten paisa. Well, the illustration almost seems silly.

And yet I tell you, I believe there are young people here tonight, this afternoon. You're squeezing a little ten paisa piece. Your ego has you so fooled that you're holding on to a ten paisa piece, to some little crumple things in this world, a few little plans, a few ideas, your love for self, your desire to be wanted, the feeling of wanting to be important.

Oh, so many little ten paisa piece. You're holding on and God is offering you not a hundred rupee note. He's offering you an open checkbook.

An open checkbook full of promises, full of reality, full of blessings, full of fellowship. It's true, some of them can only be cashed in banks that lie across rivers of suffering and hardship and trial and difficulty. It's true, some of them can only be cashed in the land of deserts.

It's true that some of them might only be cashable in Afghanistan. In the first church of Afghans that hasn't yet been born, the checkbook is there. Oh, I pray, let go of your paisas.

Let go of your pennies and take God's checkbook. It's true, Jesus said, except you forsake all that you have. You can't be my disciple, but he said in Philippians, following it up, just as he had promised.

But as long as you're holding on to your own, as long as you're supplying your need through your own ingenuity, your own craftiness, your own driving force, as long as you're supplying your own need, God can't supply. It doesn't mean that it's not good to have a good hard-working job because oftentimes that's God's provision and you must seek out God's way concerning it. But oh, might we know the reality of discipleship in the 20th century.

Not even 20% of the people who come on OM really follow this way for their life. That's what the Word of God said. Only a few.

And even those who went on the team of the Apostle Paul, many of them didn't continue. That's evident by what he said in a number of places. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't stop preaching it.

That doesn't mean we should stop making it our target, and I believe I wrote them in the back of my Bible. The words of Jonathan Edwards, and this is what he said, and how often it's helped me. He said, I go out to preach with two propositions in mind.

First, every person ought to give his life to Christ. Second, whether or not anyone else gives him his life, I will give him mine. And it's my desire this afternoon that every one of you in this room would give your life to Christ and your King as your Lord and your Master.

But I want to tell you, and there's a few more I think who would say the same, if no one else gives theirs, I still want to give mine. And you must determine this in your church. You must determine this in your environment.

Some of you are in difficult environments. That your desire, yes, is that many would come to Christ, many would follow Christ, but determine in your heart that second proposition, even if no one else will, you will, by the grace of God. That's apostolic Christianity.

That's discipleship. May God grant you the reality of it. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, the Word is sharp, double-edged sword, piercing even to the marrow of the inner part of us, cutting into our subconscious mind, into our egocentric living, into our frowniness, into our hypocrisies, and showing us that, oh God, we need you. Showing us, Lord, that we cannot go without thee. That in the flesh we can do nothing.

And causing us to realize that you are the living God. And, oh, with you all things are possible. God, we know that the kingdom of God, your kingdom, is not in word, but in power.

Move in us through that power, which we believe is the indwelling Christ, the Holy Spirit God. Might we not quench it, hinder it? Might we yield and bend daily at every instinct, at every junction, at every roundabout? Might we take the right path, the narrow path, the hard path, by the grace of God? Lord, you know how easy it is to misunderstand some of these words that just flow. I'm only a clay bisseel.

So borrow, Lord, by your grace, straighten out, and cause each one to understand and to take that which must be applied. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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