

Surviving Pitfalls

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being aware of pitfalls in spiritual warfare and staying committed to one's faith in order to effectively serve God.

Duration: 57:32

Scripture: Proverbs 17:22, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 6:10-12, Ephesians 6:14-20, Ephesians 6:24, Philippians 3:14, Colossians 3:13, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:19, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Pitfalls"

Description

In this video, the speaker shares about his transformative trip to India, which changed the course of his life and the ministry of OM. He emphasizes the importance of being strong in the Lord and putting on the whole armor of God to stand against the devil's schemes. The speaker encourages the audience to mark their Bibles and highlights the power of forgiveness, urging Christians to practice it even in the face of adversity. The video concludes with a reminder that Jesus Christ is Lord and invites the audience to personally declare Him as their Lord.

Transcript

These other books are just sermons in print. We can't accept everything we read in them. We've got to look in the scriptures and see if these things be so.

As you probably know, in these days at OM, we're not just bookworms, but we're also tape listeners. I said tapeworm in a meeting once and the people looking at me thought I had one, especially when I turned sideways behind a microphone. He couldn't see me at all.

But how I praise God for the Walkman. I usually have mine with me. You've probably got yours.

I love these new earphones because some Christians, they don't like to see with Walkmans. Christians oppose everything. Anything new Christians are against.

They were against electricity when it came out. They were against cars. They were against beards.

I still am, especially for women. But look at these newfangled earphones. Look at this.

You can't even see these. These are evangelical earphones. I want to listen to some country western while I'm preaching because I get tired of listening to my voice.

That's great. I think I'll leave that. Well, you know I believe in tapes.

All the tapes we had at 50 Pence are gone, but there's a lot of good tapes at the book display, including some of the seminars from this morning. And I wish somehow I could have shared with all of you this little seminar on how to be an encourager. So I was quite encouraged to see they have copies of that.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter six. How do we avoid the pitfalls as we run the race for God, as we get involved in world missions, in evangelism in our own country, in serious Christian living? Ephesians six indicates that we're involved in serious spiritual warfare. And the reason some of us have tried to sharpen our sense of humor is because what we do, we take actually so incredibly seriously.

I would not be here this weekend. I've just come back from Kathmandu. I've just come back from the Gulf, from Switzerland.

I would like a weekend home, especially go down and take another look at my little granddaughter. And it's amazing how in the, you know, as it goes down one generation after another, they get more attractive. There's great hope even for, you know, some of you.

So don't, you know, don't get depressed, but press on and believe God for the best. I believe that we are locked in a great spiritual conflict with the forces of darkness. I believe in general, Christians are not serious enough.

The greatest problem that hinders young people when they come on OM is their superficial attitude toward life and the word of God in prayer, their general flippancy, their inability to redeem the time, and the lack of real cutting edge dynamic discipline. And I thank God for all the changes that are being made in OM. And we want to be a movement committed to change and Love Europe represents change, but we are not going to throw away the baby with the bathwater, especially if it's my granddaughter.

And we are committed to discipline living. We are committed to serious discipleship. We are committed to spiritual warfare, intercession, world evangelism, sacrifice, forsaking all and obeying God, whatever the cost, wherever he leads, whatever the price.

We know that at the same time, we are incredibly human. Gordon Bailey's poetry reminds me always of the writings of A.W. Tozer, though completely distinct, because it has a cutting edge. I've read many of Gordon's books.

It has that cutting edge to expose superficiality, to expose playing evangelical games. And we hope that every one of you will go away from this weekend with a greater seriousness of purpose and yet not deny the human factor that life at times is funny, that we are funny, that a gift of God is a sense of humor and that can be mightily used for his kingdom. But when we read Ephesians 6, we don't see too much humor.

I'm sure there is some for those who are more discerning, but we see an awful awesome conflict. And I want us to just read a few verses because as usual, we are battling the clock and we have a lot to share. Verse 10, Ephesians 6. I want you to take out two pieces of paper.

Some of you already have one piece. One is for me called Operation Feedback. It isn't fair.

I have an hour or two to speak to you and you can't say much to me, though I've had some wonderful personal conversations. So you can write anything you want on paper. I'd especially appreciate it if some

of you would write, please don't come back next year because in my heart I would like to give this wonderful conference a break and not have to have George Brewer three or four years in a row.

But anyway, you write whatever you want. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

I want you to mark that in your Bible. How many of you mark your Bibles with a pen or a pencil? How many of you do that? Revolutionized my Bible study. I'm glad to see you're into that.

If you're witness to Muslims, you may have a separate unmarked Bible because they don't understand marking your Bible. They don't understand in general how we treat our Bibles. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, stand therefore. That puts responsibility on you.

Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, having the shield of faith with which you'll be able to quench, to stop the fiery arrows or darts of the wicked one. Satan, take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying always. Did you get that? Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all things.

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth and boldly make the mystery of the gospel known, for which I am an ambassador in bonds. That in this I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. Tonight, at the end of this meeting, I'm going to give a call.

I'm going to give a call for you to make a deeper, more serious commitment of your life to Jesus Christ. I might as well tell you now, then it won't be a surprise. You can think about it for the next half an hour.

Because I believe the average Christian young person today has a shallow, apathetic commitment to Jesus Christ. I believe the average evangelical does not understand spiritual warfare, does not understand what it is to resist Satan, does not have a knowledge of the word of God, does not know how to agonize in intercessory prayer, as Jesus Christ taught us when he spent a whole night in prayer. And I believe part of the answer to this is a recommitment of our lives to Jesus Christ.

I don't think that's the total answer. The only total answer I know is Jesus Christ himself. But the Lord Jesus gave us teaching.

The Lord Jesus gave us his word. The Lord Jesus gave us his disciples. And they made other disciples.

And we are the disciples of the disciples of the disciples down over 2,000 years. Isn't that exciting? Same message, same book, same Christ, same baptism, same Holy Spirit. Hebrews says Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forevermore.

Those of you who are already on OM, I want to give this word to you. You don't have to accept it from me. You accept it from the Lord.

I am very concerned for Operation Mobilization, because any movement when it gets this size will pay a price. I just got the official statistics from our communications department, the first time in several years,

about the number of people we now have in this movement, because we haven't been very much on counting numbers. But we had to produce this statistic so we don't exaggerate.

We now have 586 single men, 485 single women, 700 married people, and 557 children, and they're coming at us a baby a week. Operation Multiplication. And yet I can tell you, some of our keenest, some of our most committed intercessors, prayer partners, have gone to be with the Lord.

I hardly ever go through a week without hearing of some other prayer partner going to the Lord. I was on the phone tonight with Lindsay Brown, who canceled his trip to Switzerland as one of the leaders of ITs in Europe because he's at his mother's bedside. A woman saved a few years ago, an intercessor who will probably be with Jesus in the next few days.

We've just heard of Alan Redpath, one of OM's closest friends, who was standing right with us a year or two ago. He has just gone to be with the Lord. Where are we going to find the intercessors? Where are we going to find this kind of caliber prayer partner to stand in the gap and to make up the hedge to engage in the spiritual warfare that we must engage in if we are to reach a world of 5,000 million people? Surely we need to take seriously this challenge from the book of Ephesians and every other book, of course, in the Word of God.

We're told that Satan sometimes comes as an angel of light. We're told that Satan is a roaring lion, seek ye whom ye may devour. This is not my terminology.

I don't even like to talk about the devil. I don't even like to think about hell. I'm not a natural Christian.

I'm a natural non-Christian. I'm a natural hell-bound, hell-bent, big-mouthed, over-energized sinner. And I wasn't reared in an evangelical home.

You can't blame my parents for the extremism I got into. There was a little old lady, a little meddling old lady, praying for me, put me on her hit list some 36 years ago, sent me a piece of dynamite through the post, the Gospel of John, almost blew a hole in my brain. Then Billy Graham comes to New York City, one of these wild emotional evangelists.

I was a skeptic about all this. None of my friends were into this kind of thing. We were into dancing.

We were into women. We were into nightclubs. We were into business, money.

We were normal, according to the world. Somehow, a young person who went to school with me who I didn't like, I didn't like a lot of people, I was filled with hatred. I fought with my fists from the age of four.

I had my own little gang when I was only 10, 11, and this little kid moved into town and got on the opposite gang. I hated him. Another fellow lived across the street from him.

I hated him as well. I went to his house filled with hatred and wrote in big black paint so everybody could see it, S-H-I, not P for ships. And I'll never forget this fellow asking me to go to a Billy Graham meeting.

But I went. I was infatuated with this chick or girl and I thought she could use some religion. I had some religion.

I was the president of my youth group. I was teaching the young people how to rock and roll. The pastor was a liberal and didn't really believe the Bible and hell and sin and all that business.

He thought I was great. He made me his assistant. You can have religion and be lost.

But that night I went to that Billy Graham meeting and I heard the gospel and I heard about heaven and I heard about hell and somehow something rang in my heart and I trusted Christ as my savior and I was born from above and I started to read this book and I started to base my life on this book and when I read about hell in this book I believed it even though I didn't like it. When I read about Satan in this book I believed it although I didn't like it. To this day I still struggle with these things.

I studied under atheists, agnostics, communists at the University of Mexico. I almost overthrew the Christian faith completely when I was a student at Bible college. I thank God for men that have ministered to the intellectual side of us.

Men like Dr. Schaeffer, Josh McDowell, C.S. Lewis and a host of others who help answer the hard questions and hallelujah there are good answers to hard questions and as believers in Jesus Christ we're not committing intellectual suicide. This is not some late adolescent religious escape trip because she felt guilty uh reading pornography as a baby. So I was saved and suddenly I was thrust into this into this body of people called evangelicals and fundamentalists and charismatics and they all you know different ones went by different names which is so confusing for the young believer as I was but I held fast to God's word and I fed upon it and I memorized it and then I got some of these great books especially the writings of Billy Graham and Oswald J. Smith and it changed my life.

I believe brothers and sisters with all my heart that men and women without Jesus Christ are lost and on the road to hell. I don't like that and I can relate to you if you struggle with it. There are excellent books like Dick Dowsett's book, God's that's not fair, but I believe we have to accept the scripture over human reasoning.

Men are lost. I've just come back from Kathmandu. I wish I know I'm not supposed to do that but I'll do it anyway.

I wish I could just take you right now with me on my early morning run through the back streets of Kathmandu. Just seems just a couple of days though it was a couple weeks ago. I know you'll never be the same.

Just on that one walk through Kathmandu you would see poverty in the raw. You would see the absolute degeneracy of Hinduism. If you are Hindu, I'm sorry if that offends you, but it is a degenerate unbelievably overwhelmingly pagan pagan system and we have the freedom to say that just as people have the freedom to say Christianity was all wet or Jesus Christ was not the son of God.

You cannot be put in jail for saying that and you would see poverty and you would see a lot of things that you would never forget. I never planned to be a missionary to India. When I was at Bible college, Bhakt Singh visited the Bible college.

He gave glowing reports of the Holy Spirit working in India and I thought that's not the place for me. I was interested in only going places where others were not working. My burden was the Soviet Union, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan was high on my list.

I was a little interested in Spain because it was semi-closed under Franco. I knew Spanish or was learning Spanish so after Mexico I went to Spain, but India I thought they got enough Christians in India. But Dale Roton and I who had been teamed up from my early days in college were praying and I asked Dale when

he was working in Turkey, starting the work there, he now coordinates the ship ministry.

It's his wife really who wrote this unique book. I said Dale, go to India after you visit Afghanistan where we wanted to pioneer in church planting. Go to go to India because we know there's a lot of Muslims there, though we know there's a lot of Christians in India.

Maybe they're not reaching the Muslims and Dale went to that agonizing trip. I'll never forget reading his letter. He got a cinder in his eye and stayed there for 24 hours and he had horrendous pain and difficulty on that trip.

But he wrote these letters back to me, sort of like a spy in the land. At the same time an Indian brother named Thomas Samuel came to Europe to work in our early operation mobilization summer efforts. And after I read those letters I thought we've got to send some teams.

And so we plan to send the first few teams overland and beat up old British lorries all the way to India. Incredible story in itself. This is our jubilee year.

I just made five videos in one night in five different languages with five different interpreters because that's India. A multitude of languages, a multitude of people and they will be taken down from Kathmandu, they already have been, to be shown and played throughout India as they celebrate OM India with over 300 full-time workers, the silver jubilee of that work. But I felt I should go out myself.

And that one visit, sort of a lightning trip, Delhi, Lucknow, Bareilly, Benares, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, completely changed the course of my life. It changed the course of OM. The whole ship ministry was born out of the vision for the subcontinent.

Because I went later on to the subcontinent by ship and that's where the vision to have our own ship increased. To carry large numbers of workers out to India and all kinds of other things is not time to talk about. The Bible says in the words of Jesus Christ, the harvest is plenteous, the labors are few.

And in a sense I come to you with this Macedonian call from the book of Acts, chapter 16, where they call for Paul to come over and help them in Macedonia. That's not a call to become a missionary. They were already missionaries.

That is a call to come and help in a particular situation. Just before I get back on track with this message, I give this plea for many of you, please to consider the possibility of giving two years of your life in the subcontinent. Pakistan is a wide open door, especially for single people.

India is a wide open door for short term. It's closed basically to career missionaries, slight openings for tent makers. The job will have to be mainly done there by nationals.

Those nationals have officially deputized me to look for more British and internationals to come and help, to give out literature, to drive trucks, to teach, to be a servant. We don't need people with too much talent, too much theology, too much ability. They sometimes threaten the nationals.

We need some ordinary people who will give two years of their life to the subcontinent. Even that door may close. We need people to consider places like Bangladesh, places like Nepal.

I wanted to mention a book called Don't Let the Goats Eat the Loquat Trees. Who is ever going to buy that book from this ignorant generation who don't know what loquat trees are like me? But I will tell you as I

began to go through this book, I couldn't believe it. This makes a James Bond thriller look like something that you'd prefer to leave home when you go on your summer holiday or love Europe.

This is exciting. This is well written. This is missionary work in the raw.

Don't let the goats eat the loquat trees. That's for you there in the front row, free. Give me a book review on it, please.

I just want to make sure he's awake. Pray for Nepal. Pray for India.

Pray for Bangladesh. Pray for Pakistan. In that part of the world, we have as many people as many people has lived in the entire world around 1830.

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that? One billion people, 1,000 million people, approximately in 1830. Now, 1989, one billion people in the subcontinent. One thousand million.

And I would say as Oswald J. Smith said, if you can't go, send others. One of the ways you can send others is perhaps get involved with STL who needs staff. Another way that you can send others is go see Tony Kirk and sign up as his secretary and help Quinta process all the Love Europe applicants.

Another way you could help send others is by giving financially, even if it's one pound a month. It would be an enormous help to what these brothers and sisters are wrestling with on the subcontinent. There's free literature about it in a number of different places here.

That's all I can say. I feel I fulfilled my commitment to God to share about what I have just seen again in that part of the world. What are some of these pitfalls as we go out to India, as we get involved with STL or in prayer or in the ministry of giving, or with Birmingham City Mission, or helping Billy Graham in London? Whatever we do for God, Satan will counterattack it.

I've listed just a few that I've absorbed from the Word of God, from 34 years of following the Lord Jesus, however feeble at times that has been. The first pitfall that you can expect is the pitfall of pride. It's the worst of all.

It's the most subtle of all. It's the hardest to recognize. And I'm sure tonight as I give a call to commitment, there are many who need to stand and say, Lord, forgive me for so often I am on an ego trip.

Some of you know, you know in your heart how quickly you get into self-centered living. Self is your biggest problem. It's generally not demons.

It's generally not the man next door, your pastor who you feel doesn't preach so well. Self is the real problem in most of our lives, and in most of our marriages, and in much of our Christian work. That's why Jesus again and again said, if any man or woman come after me, let him deny self, take up the cross, and follow me.

It's so simple, yet often so hard to do because pride is such a great obstacle. It may be religious pride. It may be intellectual pride.

Almost every year I've visited Cambridge or Oxford and how God has worked in those great universities. But I've noticed as I've gone to those great towns over the years, how often there's a great division between the university people and the ordinary town folk. Some of the town folk actually hate these

students, and the reason is all the wretched stinking pride those institutions generate.

And if you think those great institutions really represent what you're dreaming about, you're bordering on being an idiot. Spurgeon gave his evaluation of those institutions many years ago, and I think we need to re-read it. That doesn't mean you shouldn't study there, because I'm sure some of you should, or any other university, but it should mean that we are not deceived.

We are not deceived by the system that these institutions represent. They are spawned from the very mouth of hell, and until God's people rise up and speak against drugs, and against sin, and against injustice, and against manipulation, and against abomination in the area of philosophy, and psychology, and religion, we will never be the people that God wants us to be. Praise God for men like Spurgeon, and a few today who are willing to speak up.

The brainwash, the brainwash from our institutions is too much for most people to resist. And so we have a generation of mascots instead of a generation of prophets. And I hope that if you're studying at some university, you'll be giving an hour at least to God in prayer and in his word, so that can counter the brainwash you get from some of these books that are not even worth reading or studying.

And if you think I'm anti-intellectual, you're completely wrong, because hundreds of long-term OMs come out of these institutions, and they do not deny the benefits of secular education and secular training. And we do not teach that the world has nothing to offer, because man has a degree of dignity even after the fall, and we can learn much from fallen man, and we can learn much from secular books, and yes, even secular music, and the arts, and culture. And I wish I could give you my balancing message on the subject of culture, but there's not time tonight.

I haven't preached it yet. Pride is so subtle. Pride is so ingrown into our whole system, politics, government, yes, even religion.

Do you know the religious systems that now exist in our world, the politics that are ingrown in those systems, the commercialism that has taken over those systems? I'm not speaking of a faithful church on the corner that preaches the Word of God and loves Jesus Christ. I'm speaking about religious systems that now stand opposed to the Word of God. Now, forgive me if I get excited.

When I first came to England, I got some orientation about calming down. A man put me in a black suit, took me to this conference in Swanwick. Do you remember? Gordon was one of the few here tonight who was there.

I was petrified, one of the first times I ever preached. And I go to this conference, and I meet way out characters like Gordon Bally. Don't generalize about British people.

Don't do it. This nation, this great nation, now my adopted home country, has produced a wide range of people, and now from many races and backgrounds. It is as mongrel as any nation in the history of the planet.

It took me a while ministering in Britain to just be a little more relaxed about myself. I was greatly helped by Alan Redpath because he's another one of these preachers, these British preachers, that never could remain calm. I used to watch him at Moody Church when I went there as a student.

He was the pastor, and he'd get going, you know, and you could see him putting the brakes on. Smoke would come up from behind the pulpit, and somehow, eventually, he would just pour out his heart. This isn't something we fake.

This isn't acting. It is part, of course, of our natural temperament. As one Englishman said to me when he first met me, you are rather intensive, aren't you? I never heard that word used in a spiritual way.

I don't think he meant it in a spiritual way. The pitfall of pride. Let Tozer expose some of it.

Let your roommate expose some of it. Give a little paper to your roommate tomorrow if you're in digs with somebody else and say, please list on this paper this week 10 areas where you feel I could become more Christ-like. You're gonna get depressed.

But, you know, sometimes as Christians, we can learn more from an enemy than we can from a friend because our friends don't want to offend us. You know, when I'm living with someone, and generally it's my wife is with me, but other times I'm traveling with people, and, you know, I like to just tell someone, look, if I have bad breath in the morning, would you tell me, you know, if I smell as I walk out the door, would you be a friend enough? Just, you know, just tell me, you know, you don't even have to say anything, just hint, you know. But so often our friends won't tell us anything.

They see pride in our life, but they don't want to say anything. That's why I believe in the message of Calvary Road, a book I was telling you about this morning. It talks about walking in the light.

Do you have anybody that you walk in the light with? I don't mean you have to jump up in front of your congregation, you know, next Sunday you're back home, and God's convicted you about the fact that every once in a while you fall into reading pornographic magazines. So, you know, they have a little breaking of bread, and one elder gets up and prays, and another one gets up and prays. You've heard both prayers before, but still you're learning.

So you feeling the great conviction, you get up and you pray, oh God, thank you for delivering me this week from all the pornography I've been reading for the last five years. As you see, several elders faint. You don't have to get up in public and confess that you've been picking your nose.

As Christians, we need to maintain, you know, a degree of manners. Actually, you know, Em, we've produced a leaflet on that. I think you can get it free of charge.

We can't even give it away free. Who wants a leaflet on manners? Do you have someone that will walk in the light with you? Do you have someone, as I had with Dale Roton, who after I preached a message and I thought the Holy Spirit was working in mighty power, he would take me into a corner and he'd say, he was so tactful, Brother George, God's hand was upon you. We preachers never have any struggle with pride.

But, Brother George, something like that he would say, I just felt the Lord could have used you so much more if you could be a little more truthful in what you were. Truthful? Are you calling me a liar? And I'd usually, after wiggling my feet, groaning, repent of exaggeration. One of the great evangelical sins.

The pitfall of pride is as deadly as anything we could talk about tonight. And I pray that you will deal with it even though it will be a lifelong battle. Secondly, the pitfall of lust.

I don't want to tarry on this. I hope you've all had a good message on sex in your church lately. It's so important.

I'm tired of preaching on it myself. When I preach on sex, people always think I have problems. I do.

How many of you, be honest, in your Christian union or in your church, you've had a good red hot anointed message on sex, you know, in the last six months? Raise your hand. Come on, I'm taking a survey. Peter Conlins, not the only one allowed to take surveys.

Come on, try it again. I know you're tired. You've heard a powerful message on sex from the Word of God in your church or see you in the last six months.

Raise your hand. Look at that. Hardly any hands.

Why is this? Why are we afraid to talk about sex? Is this the big no-no among God's frozen people? If you are involved in a ministry of counseling, you know that one out of four or five people you counsel has a sexual problem of some kind. That is a generalization, but I don't think it's far from the mark. Roy Hesschen backs that up in his book, *Forgotten Factors*.

We need to deal with impurity. We need to read books on it. We need to get into those 500 verses in God's Word about it.

We need to have someone we're sharing with and praying with. The Bible says, confess your faults one to another and pray for one another that ye may be healed. At 16 years of age, I am sorry to say I was a sexaholic.

Pornography, I lived in the age of romance, so I never went to bed, by God's mercy, with another woman. And I just know that if God can keep a character like me, these 34 years in the midst of struggle and sometimes failure, especially with the eyes, then He can keep you. He can change your life, whatever your problem may be.

Meditate on those Proverbs that talk about this. Read and think on verses like that verse in Timothy, where it says, flee, flee youthful lusts and many other related verses. Perhaps if you don't get any other book, you should pick up one of the books that deals with this subject.

There's also an excellent book, I don't know if I have it up here, but it's especially for someone that has fallen into sexual sin. *Rebuilding Your Broken World* is in that category, and a book called *When a Good Man Falls*. I saw it there on the table.

The third pitfall is the pitfall of the love of money. Money can be greatly used in the work of the kingdom. We need to release money through prayer.

I've written a leaflet on that, which you can pick up. We need to have a balanced view of money that we see in the New Testament and exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ. But the love of money is the root of so much evil.

God wants to set us free from materialism. That is completely linked with the life of faith. We are over-dependent in our culture.

We are over-dependent on material things. We are over-dependent on our insurance policies, on the treasures we have laid up in heaven. Hallelujah for a little group of wildcat British people that formed something called Wallington's Missionary Auctions and challenged God's people to give their antiques and other items to sell for world missions.

People may have laughed, but they have given now over two million pounds from selling these items. Some of them had a lot of sentimental value, selling them for the kingdom. That's practical Acts 2, Acts 4 Christianity.

And when I go to the States, I always tell them about this famous British organization, because we don't have anything similar to it that I know of in the United States. The Americans, they just lack that kind of sanctified true British imagination to think of something as wild as this. They do think of a lot of other wild things.

I would love to talk longer on the subject of materialism, because I believe unless we experience deliverance from that, it will be a pitfall all of our life. Tozer said materialism will not go out easily. It's not a matter of raising your hand.

It will go out as a tooth extracted from the jaw by a dentist. It means we're going to have to deal some heavy blows to that part of our human nature. The fourth pitfall I've listed is the pitfall of apathy.

Truly, apathy is the greatest sin of all sins in the church today. It's not really lust or materialism, immorality, or even pride. It's the lukewarmness.

It's the fact that people can hear message after message on Sunday and never change, never give sacrificially, never wrestle with the principalities and powers to do the Lord's will in a more revolutionary way in their community. How desperately we need revival. How desperately we need restoration and revolution.

Call it whatever you want, but we need to wake up. And we need to go forth. Someone said we need to evangelize or otherwise we will fossilize.

I hope it's not too late for you. Let's beware of the pitfall of apathy. Those of us who are on OM, it seeps in, especially this time of year.

We become callous to the night of prayer. We become chilly in our evangelism. We let walls go up in our relationships with our leader or our fellow worker and we fail to repent.

Isn't so much of our difficulty the failure to repent? God knows it will take us a lifetime to learn some of these great biblical principles. Peter shared with us last night. We on shared with us today.

Some of us have to make a more serious, fresh beginning. And it means repentance. It means being filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.

I may speak more about that tomorrow, but I love that command in Ephesians 5, being filled with the Holy Spirit. And I want to ask you as we bring this to a close and we give this invitation, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you sure you're filled with the Holy Spirit? People are a little hesitant to say yes to that. They feel that might be spiritual boasting.

No, it's just an acknowledgment of normal Christian living. As far as my, I know most of my life since my conversion, I've lived in various degrees of being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's just the normal Christian life.

That doesn't destroy the human factor. That doesn't mean you're not going to make mistakes. It doesn't mean you can't fall out of bed tonight.

Praise the Lord. It's a lot easier if you're on the floor. You don't have far to go.

Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. God works in different people in different ways. Some people have very emotional experiences with the Holy Spirit.

I'm afraid I'm in that camp, but some of the most Spirit-filled people I know, they hardly know when it actually happened in their life. The key is not rhetoric or vocabulary. The key is fruit, power, gifts, love, reality.

That's what we need today, rather than one more book on the subject. Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. It can happen tonight and may it happen again and again.

I can't resist my annual illustration from D.L. Moody, who always went on about being filled with the Holy Spirit and knew something of that reality. One secular encyclopedia said D.L. Moody was an overweight American evangelist who depopulated hell by two million souls. How are you doing? One day a lady said to Moody, why do you keep going on and on about being filled again and again with the Holy Spirit? And Moody looked her in the eye and he said, Madam, because I leak.

I don't know about you, but you're looking at one leaky Christian leader standing here tonight. But hallelujah, I know where the refills are. At the foot of the cross, as I acknowledge my sin, as I repent of the wrong attitude that may be corroding my spiritual battery, as I deal with not only outward sin but dispositional sin, as I apologize to my wife for some unkind word or to the man who's pumping petrol into my vehicle because I lost my temper when he pumped it all over the ground.

And I'm filled again and again and again. Fifthly, there's the pitfall of prayerlessness, which we all already touched on, and may tonight be a fresh call to prayer. And sixthly, there's the pitfall of discouragement, which I tried to deal with this morning, because discouragement for many of us is Satan's most subtle, regularized, fiery dart to hinder us and slow us down.

I can't even begin to explain how much discouragement I've fought over these past years. Do you think those of us in OM live on some great glory bandwagon because this movement is considered some great success story among other Christians? No. We live in a constant awareness of our weakness, of our failures, of the sins in our own movement.

We're in spiritual warfare. There's not much time to look at the credit points. There's too many battles to be won.

The best way for that is to look at the Savior, number seven. And finally, the pitfall of bitterness, the pitfall of an unbroken spirit, the pitfall of unforgiveness. I am so burdened for people who are finding it hard to forgive.

I've got a selection of books in my book room just dealing with forgiveness. There have been the most significant books on forgiveness ever written next to the Bible in the last 10 years. *Rebuilding Your Broken World* is one of them.

If you are finding it hard to forgive someone, it may be your father. It may be someone who did something terrible to you. I would love to correspond with you personally and send you some of these in-depth books about forgiveness.

But I know one thing, that one of the most exhilarating, mega-motivating things in my life has been that I, as far as I know, have never fallen asleep at night with anything against anybody. When Jesus Christ saved me, He put His Spirit within me, and that's a spirit of love, that's a spirit of mercy, it includes the fruit of the Spirit, and it's a mega-force for forgiving people. And I just pray that some of you who are in the grip of bitterness or unforgiveness will be set free by the power of God tonight.

Before that, hand on that clock goes a few more minutes, because it is so destructive. You mainly hurt yourself. You may feel, humanly speaking, you have valid reasons.

My heart cringed as that man was put in the electric chair in Florida a few weeks ago, and people cheered, and people said these terrible things, even if they believe in capital punishment, which some Christians do. There should be a sense of remorse and pain when anyone is put in the electric chair or dies or is killed in some other way. Corrie ten Boom forgave those who did such awful things.

The bottom line message of our faith, and it must permeate our leadership, is forgiveness. It's not nine times, 90 times, it's not seven or 70 times, seven. You know what the Word of God says.

Why don't we practice it? Why don't we somehow ooze with forgiveness when people punch us, when people stab us, when people speak against us, when people criticize us, or when people reject us? That's the biblical revolutionary faith our Jesus came to teach and to spread across this world. Beware of the pitfall of an unforgiving spirit. Beware of the pitfall of even a root of bitterness creeping into your soul.

Be big-hearted. Forgive. Try to forget, even though you may not be able to.

Be ready to continue to wrestle with these things, because living the Christian life is just that, a life. I have failed on all these points. I have fallen into every one of these pitfalls at one time or other, if we count the battle of the mind.

Yet somehow God, in His sovereign purpose and mercy, has chosen to use me a little for His kingdom. How much more? How much more He can use you? Brothers and sisters, let us dream dreams tonight. Let us have visions tonight.

Let us believe God for the greatest work of the Holy Spirit that this nation has seen in recent years, and believe that as we run this race, we will stay out of these deep ditches, and when we fall in any of them, we will get out as fast as possible, even if we have to walking in the light. Cry for help, and it's our pride that keeps us from crying for the help that we need. Cry for help, that He may reach down and pick you up, pull you out of that pit.

I want to give this moment for silent prayer. I want to give this call for recommitment. I believe you are a select group of people that God has brought here because He has selected you, and I believe this is not just some last-minute thing to make a recommitment of your life to Jesus Christ, to be filled with the Holy

Spirit or filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.

To determine in your mind that's the way Daniel got the victory. As I've been studying that book so intensively in preparation for Spring Harvest, the key is that Daniel purposed in his heart, Daniel determined in his heart to stand for God when the pressure came on, and you're going to be under pressure in the coming weeks, in your studies, in your home, in your witnessing, in your prayer life, and so tonight needs to be a step of determination. You need to purpose in your heart, and I want you to pray your own prayer right now, of surrender, of commitment, of confession, of repentance, and then ask God in simple faith to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit and to do a deeper, greater work in your life, to set you free from some of these things that are hindering you and holding you back.

So just pray right now, O Lord, help us right now, please, O God, to pray sincere prayers of faith, to take steps of faith, to go where you want us to go, to do what you want us to do, set people free from some of these things we've talked about, and enable all of us to purpose, to purpose, to determine in our hearts, to follow you in reality and discipline and integrity for your glory, that the world may be reached for the gospel. Help us as we pray, O living God through Jesus. You just pray your own prayer, and as you pray, if you mean it with all your heart, if you sense that the Spirit of God is striving with you to make a deeper, outward commitment of your life to Jesus Christ, you're not joining any organization, you're not joining OM, that's something you have to seek God about.

We're talking about reality right now, not geography. If God has spoken to you and you feel it would be helpful to give outward expression to that inward obedience in your heart, then I'd like you just quietly, without looking around, to just stand up before the living God, to be counted as His marathon runner, to be counted as His soldier, to make a fresh determination to stay away from these pitfalls and to survive any pitfall or diabolical attack that may come on your life. So you pray.

It can't take much time, and if you mean it with all your heart, I want you to stand and I want to pray a prayer of commitment and consecration and dedication for the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the power of God to be upon and in every one of you as you stand before the living Christ. If He could be nailed on the cross for us, surely we should at times be willing to stand up for Him and say, oh God, I'll go where you want me to go. I'll do what you want me to do.

Will you do that now? The Lord has prepared you. Other people are praying for you, and so if you mean it, whether few stand or whether many stand, you just personally before God stand up at this time. Anyone else? I know you can make a commitment in your seat, and if you're not willing to deny self every day and take up the cross and follow Him, even though it's in fear and trembling and weakness, as it is with me, then please just sit down, but I believe God has given you the grace to stand.

Our Father, you see everyone standing before you. There is a sense that this was ordered before the foundation of the world, though that is an exceedingly great mystery for poor characters like me, and we would ask you, oh God, to fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit, that we will have the power and the strength to do these things, to avoid these pitfalls, realizing our part as well as your part, and determining and purposing in our hearts to follow you in integrity, in honesty, commitment, in spiritual balance, in love, to encourage others, to live for others, to die to self. Oh Father, you know our hearts.

We surrender all to you. Fill us afresh, even now, with your Holy Spirit. The gifts, the graces, the fruit, the reality, the joy.

Oh God, you can do this, and we'll give you all the praise and all the glory through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Let us all stand.

Let us all stand, and let us sing, He is Lord, just as we close this night together. I think we know that chorus. I guess it's the one that ministers to me the most when we have a meeting like this.

With all of our hearts, He is Lord. And He is Lord. We shall bow every time Jesus cries.

Once again, make it more personal. He's my Lord. He's my Lord.

I'd like you just to sit down for a moment, and I want you to take a piece of paper. This is separate from the official feedback that you will give tomorrow. We want you to be thinking about that official feedback.

This is personal for just a few of us intercessors. We would like you to give your name and address. I will look at every one of these pieces of paper and pray quickly through them.

If the letter, the little piece of paper that comes to me, says personal, then I will be the one that sees it. Are you good at getting brief instructions at this late hour? It's not late really for a Saturday night. But if you put personal, you would like to share something with me that I can pray about that's a bit personal, write that on the page somewhere.

I will see all of these first. And then, the ones that don't say personal, a little team of us will use those in our ministry of prayer. And eventually we will send you just a reminder letter that you have made a serious commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ tonight, not to us.

You will not be added to any computer or any list. This is just a personal thing between you and a small group of us intercessors and counselors. And if it says personal, then only me.

We want to pray for you specifically. Satan will counterattack. The pitfalls are out there.

You know some of my weaknesses. Some of you will pray more intelligently for me. I want to pray for you.

I would like to know how I can pray specifically for you. I don't take a bundle of these and put my hand on them. God bless all these people.

I read every one individually. I have purposely cut back on numbers and meetings to give more time to intercessory prayer, sometimes many hours in one day. So I want you to do this.

You can give them to me up here after the meeting, or better yet, because of the number of people here, give them in at my special free literature table there in the back where you met Chris Little. Or you can give them in, I'm sure, to someone on the book table and they will pass it on to me personally before it goes to the team. I want to just pray for you as you do that.

You don't have to close your eyes. You write. You can stay behind and write for a few minutes.

Lord, I just pray that people would be open so that we and this little prayer team can pray intelligently. You know we are so mega serious about all this, and we know you answer prayer, and we are your people. We are called to fight and stand together.

So help people as they put their address and put a couple of requests on this paper that we may have specific prayer for specific situations. For we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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