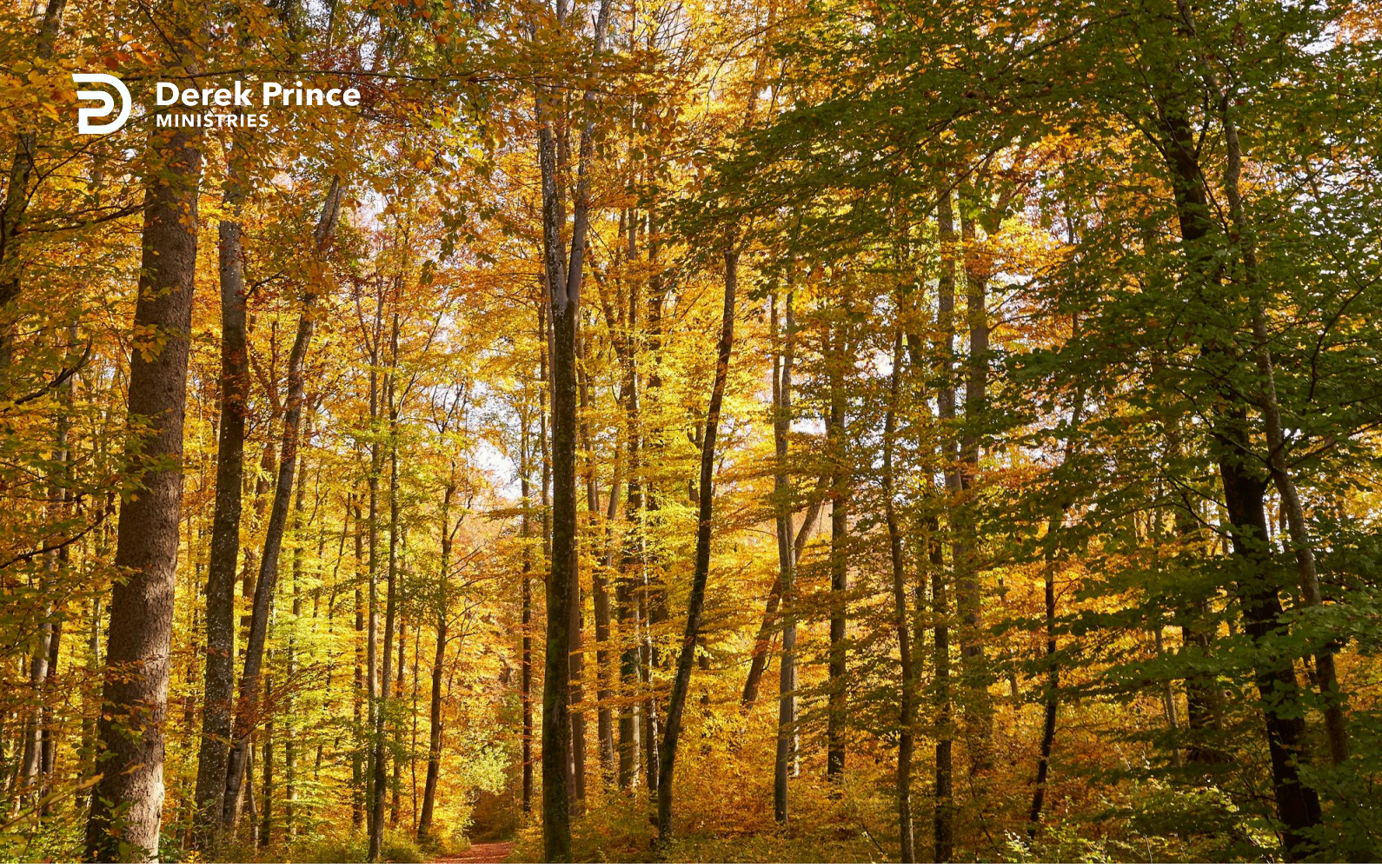


Response Determines Effect



Foundations (Day 23)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday we read in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 that God's Word is active in those who believe. However, the Bible also makes it plain that the manner and the degree in which it works in any given instance are decided by the response of those who hear it. For this reason James says:

> "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness [naughtiness], and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21)

Before the Word of God can be received into the soul with saving effect, there are certain things which must be laid aside. The two things James specifies are "filthiness" and "wickedness," or naughtiness. Filthiness denotes a perverse delight in that which is licentious and impure. This attitude closes the mind and heart against the saving influence of God's Word.

On the other hand, naughtiness particularly suggests the bad behaviour of a child. We call a child "naughty" when he refuses to accept instruction or correction from his senior but argues and answers back. This attitude is often found in the unregenerate soul toward God. Several passages of Scripture refer to this attitude.

> "But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? (Rom. 9:20). Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it." (Job 40:2)

This attitude, like that of filthiness, closes the heart and mind to the beneficial effects of God's Word.

The opposite of filthiness and naughtiness is described by James as meekness. Meekness carries with it the ideas of quietness, humility, sincerity, patience, openness of heart and mind. These characteristics are often associated with what the Bible calls "the fear of the Lord"; that is, an attitude of reverence and respect toward God. Thus we read the following description in the Psalms of the man who is able to receive benefit and blessing from the instruction of God

through His Word.

> "Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way... Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses ... The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." (Ps. 25:8-9,12,14)

We see here that meekness and the fear of the Lord are the two attitudes necessary in those who desire to receive instruction and blessing from God through His Word. These two attitudes are the opposites of those which James describes as "filthiness" and "naughtiness." The question is, which attitude are we going to adopt? What will be our response?

Devotional

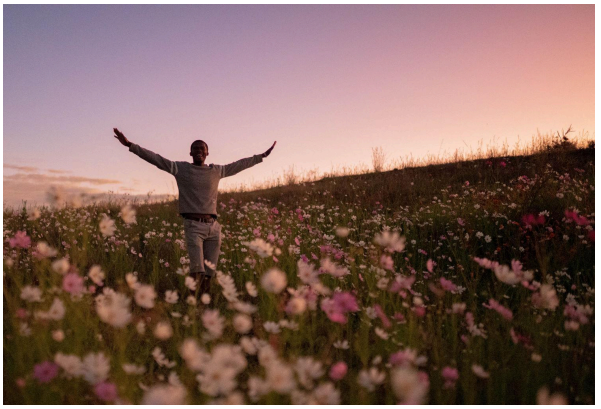
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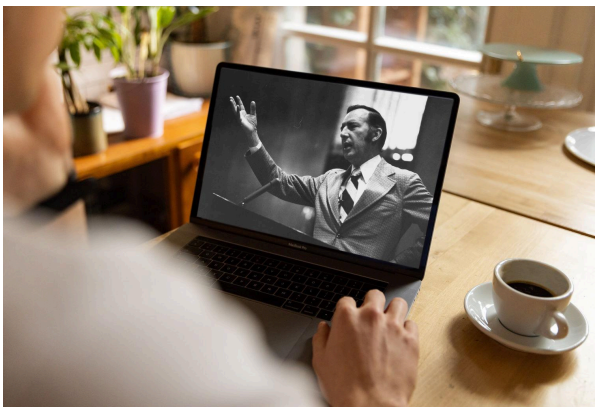
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