

A Fertile Heart



If You Want God's Best (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living, which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. The title of my theme this week is an incomplete sentence, "If You Want God's Best…" The introductory word "if" immediately confronts you with a choice. Do you want God's best, or don't you? The uncompleted second part of the sentence leaves room for me to share with you certain things you will need to do if you decide that you really do want God's best. By the time I've completed this series of talks, I'll have listed for you eight things that you need to do.

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you, so please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note. Now, back to our theme, "If You Want God's Best."

Our personal relationship with God is never one-sided. It's not a one-way street. There are always two directions. There are always two sides to it. On the one hand, there is what God makes available to us; and on the other hand, there is how we respond to what God makes available. The kind of life we actually experience will be determined by the interplay of these two factors; that is, what God makes available to us and how we respond to what God makes available.

This is very clearly illustrated by one of the great parables that Jesus taught, the parable of the sower. And I want briefly to recapitulate the lessons of that parable and then apply them to our theme, "If You Want God's Best." You will probably remember the parable. It's about a man who went out to sow seed in a field and the seed fell on four different kinds of soil. First of all, some fell beside the beaten path and, because the ground was hard, beaten down by the feet of those that passed by, the seed never even entered the soil and the birds of the air came and ate it up and it produced nothing. The second area in which seed fell is described as rocky ground and the seed went down a little way and then its roots met the rock and it started to grow up too quickly but it had no dept of root and so, when the sun became hot, it withered and it, too, produced nothing. The third kind of soil was called "among thorns" and there the thorns grew up

together with the seed and eventually choked it. It didn't get enough air and enough nourishment and so it, too, brought forth nothing permanent of good. Then the fourth kind of soil is what is described as "good ground."

Now, I don't want to deal with the first three kinds of soil in these talks. I want to focus on what I regard as the climax of that parable, the objective to which Jesus is working which is the good ground. I trust that I'm speaking to people whose heart is good ground. I want to read to you what Jesus said about the good ground and the seed that fell on it and this is recorded in Matthew, chapter 13, verse 23, where Jesus says this:

> "But what was sown on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Notice this is the man who produces a crop and the two key factors in producing a crop are these: he hears the word and he understands it. And that's true of everybody who represents the good soil. But though all the people who represent good soil bring forth a crop, there's a very important difference in the kind of crop that they produce. Some produce a hundred times, some sixty and some only thirty times what was sown. In other words, for each seed sown, some produce a hundred seeds, some produce sixty and some produce thirty. So there are three levels of yield: a hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold. And it interests me to observe that the hundredfold is more than the sum of the other two. The other two, sixty and thirty amount to ninety. So one kind of yield produces more than both the other two together. And some how, I find this a principle that runs through the Word of God. The people who really make it through to full productiveness are much more productive than the people who are only partly productive.

Now, I particularly want to focus on the hundredfold. I regard that as representative of the people who want and achieve God's best and I want to read a comment that Jesus makes in another version of the same parable in Luke, chapter 8, verse 15, which is again an interpretation, an application of the same parable with particular reference to the good soil. And this is what Jesus says here:

> "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."

Now, in that description, there are two factors which are vitally important and both of them are related to our theme of wanting God's best. First of all, there's the kind of heart. It's described as noble and good. An alternative translation for "noble" is "honest." So, really the first requirement is honesty or openness or sincerity, not covering anything up, no double-dealing, no double standards. That's the first requirement.

And then the other aspect of the response is a three-fold response for these people: they hear the word, they retain it and, by persevering, they produce a crop. I think those three factors are extremely important and I want to emphasize them in connection with our theme, hearing the word, retaining it, and persevering. And I want to suggest to you persevering is a key to the theme that we're discussing, "If You Want God's Best."

The principle unfolded in this parable confronts each of us with a personal decision and I cannot overemphasize the importance of decision in the walk of faith. So many people don't realize that the course of our lives depends ultimately upon the decisions that we make, not on our feelings but on our decisions. And the decision that confronts each one of us, in the light of that parable, is this: How much do I intend to produce? Will I be satisfied with thirty times? Do I intend to produce sixty times? Or am I aiming for God's best, do I intend to produce one hundred times? And I want to suggest to you as you listen that you're confronted with the necessity to make this decision. The very fact that you're hearing this teaching automatically confronts you with a decision, Do you want God's best? Are you going to aim at a hundredfold or are you going to be content with sixty or merely thirtyfold.

Now, what you achieve will depend on the response of your heart. I pointed out earlier that there are two sides to our relationship with God. One side is what God makes available to us, the other side is how we respond to what God makes available. And that's what's going to be decisive in your life, how you respond.

And then, in the parable that we looked at in the interpretation in Luke, chapter 8, we saw there were three aspects to the successful response. First, hearing God's Word; second, retaining it; and third, persevering in what you're doing.

Now, in the talks that follow through the rest of this week and also next week, I'll be explaining certain things that are necessary if you want God's best. I'll be giving you certain specific applications of these principles. And what I have to say to you will be based on three things: first of all, on Scripture; second, on my own personal experience, which extends well over forty years; and third, on my observation of others. I've had the privilege of being associated with many,

many Christians from different backgrounds, different races and different countries and so on and I've tried to observe them. And I've particularly observed those whom I consider to be successful, hundredfold kind of people. And I've tried to learn from their lives the principles of success. And that's what I'll be sharing with you, principles of success. If you want God's best, what do you have to do? I'll be sharing out of Scripture, out of personal experience and out of my observation of the lives of other successful Christians.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. In my talk tomorrow, I'll be explaining that God has made full provision for each one of us to produce a hundredfold.

Radio Program

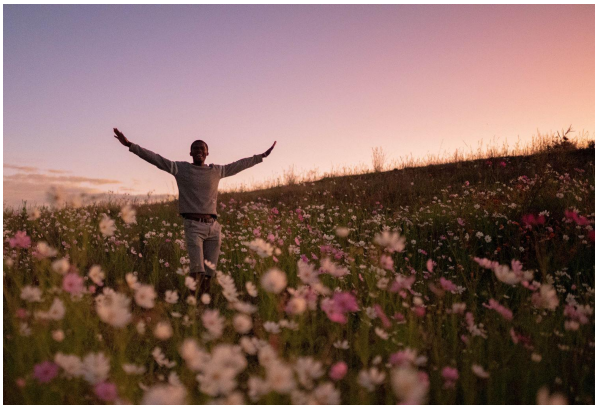
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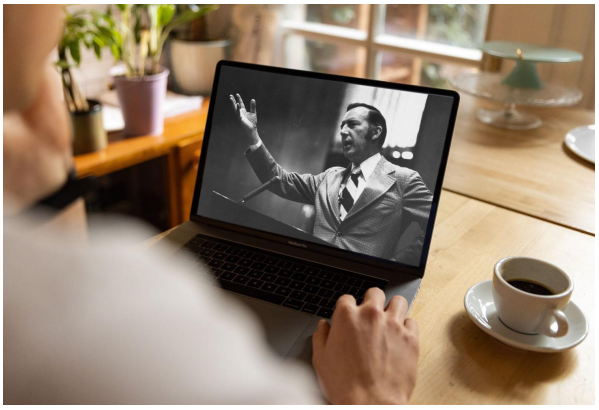
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