

Settle for Nothing Less



If You Want God's Best (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing on this week's challenging theme, "If You Want God's Best."

In my two introductory talks, I've pointed out that the word "if" at the beginning of our theme confronts you with a choice: Do you want God's best, or don't you? That's a decision you have to make.

I've also pointed out that on God's side, He wants the best for you and He has also made full provision for you to have it. Thus, the will of God and the provision of God are two established facts. There's no question about them. The only thing that remains to be determined is your response to God's provision.

In my remaining talks on this theme, I'm going to share with you certain specific ways you need to respond to this choice which is set before you. The advice I'll be offering you is based on three things: first of all, the Scripture, the Word of God; second, on my own experience, which extends over more than forty years; and third, my observation of others. I've been associated over the years with many, many Christians and I've observed some who seem to be what I would call "hundredfold people," some who were "sixtyfold" and some who were "thirtyfold." And I've tried to learn from observing them. I've particularly observed what I consider to be the hundredfold people and I've asked myself, "What is there in their lives, in their character, in their way of relating to God and to man that makes them hundredfold people." So I'm going to share with you for the remainder of this week and next week some of those principles that God has taught me.

I want to begin today with what I consider to be the first and the basic principle and when I tell you what it is, I think you'll be surprised. You may not see the point of it immediately. Remember, the theme is, "If You Want God's Best." Then these are the things you have to do. So, number one requirement: If you want God's best, want God's best. Can you see that? If you want God's best, the first thing you have to do is make up your mind that you do want God's best. This is the basic key decision. And that you will settle for nothing less. Let me say that again. You have to want God's best and you have to decide that you will settle for nothing less than God's best. God will not force this choice on us. It rests with

us to make this decision.

Now, I want to illustrate this principle from the story of two twin brothers: Jacob and Esau. And I want to bring out of their story, briefly recapitulated, what I consider to be this key principle. There's some very remarkable statements made by God in Scripture about Jacob and Esau, some surprising statements. For example, in Malachi, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, the Lord speaks to Israel, who are the descendants of Jacob, and He says this:

> "'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' [The answer is: Yes, indeed, his twin brother.] ...'Yet [the Lord says] I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated...'"

Notice that. They were twin brothers but God says, "I loved Jacob and I hated Esau." God's attitude toward the two brothers was totally opposite. He loved one of them and hated the other and this is commented on still further by the apostle Paul in Romans, chapter 9, verses 10-13, where he says this concerning these two twin brothers:

> "Not only that, but Rebecca's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. [Not only were they born of the same mother, they were born of the same father, they were absolute twins.] Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls, she [that's Rebecca] was told, 'The older [that's Esau] will serve the younger [that's Jacob].' [So that Jacob was preferred before Esau before they were even born although they were twins. And then he quotes that passage in Malachi:] Just as it is written: 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"

Now that passage of Scripture raises two very important questions. The first one is: What did God see in Jacob that He approved? And the second one: What did God see in Esau that He disapproved? Because He loved Jacob but He hated Esau.

Let me briefly sketch their characters for you, as unfolded in Scripture, starting with Esau. Esau was a good guy. That's I think the American phrase, the British would say, "He was a nice chap", strong, active, manly, a hunter. He did no one any harm. He was the favorite of his father. And he was no match for his shrewd twin brother, Jacob, who outdid him every time they had a confrontation.

What about Jacob? Well, Jacob was shrewd, determined, unscrupulous. He never got the worst of a bargain, which nobody really likes. He obtained the birthright from Esau for a bowl of soup. When his brother was hungry, he persuaded him to sell that priceless birthright for nothing more than a bowl of soup. If ever there was a bargain, that was it! He deceived his father to obtain the blessing, and he gained a fortune at the expense of Laban, who was both his uncle and his father-in-law. So by no means would any of us consider Jacob a nice guy or a good chap. By contemporary standards, the world's standards today, most people would prefer Esau. But God didn't.

So we come now to this key question. Why did God prefer Jacob? And I'm going to offer you one basic reason, which I believe is the key to it all. The reason is this: Jacob appreciated what God had to give, Esau was indifferent. Let me say that again, Jacob appreciated what God had to give, Esau was indifferent.

Now, in Hebrews, chapter 12, we get a scriptural estimate of what God thinks of indifference and His views of indifference are very different than that of most Christians. Hebrews 12:15-17, commenting on Esau's behavior, the writer says:

> "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears."

So notice how Esau is described. He's described as godless and he's put on the same level with the sexually immoral. And he's described as godless because for a single meal, a bowl of soup, he sold his inheritance rights and the Scripture says, "Esau despised his birthright." I want to point out to you that by God's standards to be indifferent concerning what God has to offer is godless and God hates it.

Now, let's look at the opposite side. Let's look at Jacob's attitude to what God had to offer and you'll have to follow the story right through. I'm going to take just one key incident, when he was on his way back to his own land and he met the man at night who was also an angel (a messenger from God) and how he wrestled with this man all night. And let me say this is so typical of Jacob that he was a wrestler. This is the account in Genesis 32:24-28:

> "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'"

The meaning of Israel, as there interpreted is "struggling with God." How typical! Jacob was a struggler. He was a wrestler. But he had one key principle, he wanted God's best. He said to this angel, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." I believe that was the key to God's favor toward Jacob. God did not condone the flaws in Jacob's character, God never does. But because Jacob would not settle for less than God's best, God was gradually able to deal with him and to make out of him the kind of man he wanted him to be but He had to have that point of starting that Jacob would not settle for anything less than God's best.

And I want to ask you, in closing this talk today: Will you make the same decision? I will not settle for anything less than God's best.

Radio Program

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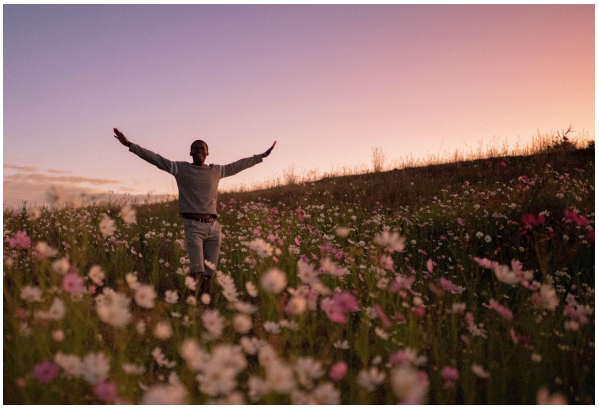

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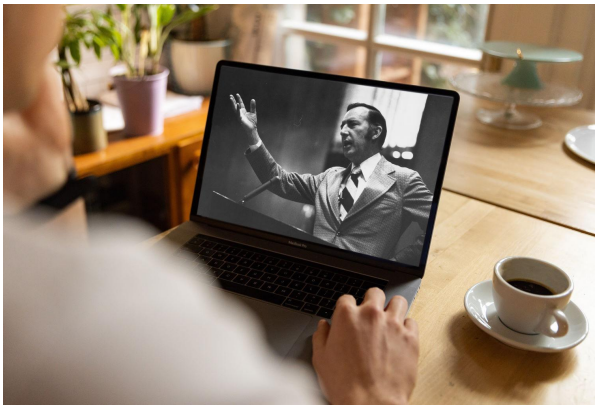

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