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A Hundredfold Christian

The theme of this book is “If you want God’s best. . . .” I have stated it this way, as an incomplete sentence, on purpose. The introductory word *if* immediately confronts you with a choice. Do you want God’s best, or do you not? The uncompleted second part of the sentence leaves room for me to share with you eight things you will need to do if you decide that you really *do* want God’s best.

However, before I share these eight principles of success, I would like to show you how to be a hundredfold Christian.

Our personal relationship with God is never one-sided or a one-way street. There are always two sides; there are always two directions. On the one hand, there is what God makes available to us; 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 what God makes available to us and how we respond to it.

This is very clearly illustrated by the parable of the sower. (See Matthew 13:3–9, 18–23.) This parable is about a man who went out to sow seed in a field. The seed fell on four different kinds of soil. First, some seed fell beside the beaten path, and, because the ground was hard and beaten down by the feet of those who passed by, the seed never even entered the soil. As a result, the birds of the air ate the seed, and it produced nothing.

Second, some of the seed fell onto rocky ground. The seed went down a little way until its roots met rock, and it started to grow up too quickly with no depth of root. When the sun became hot, the plants withered, and this seed, too, produced nothing.

Third, some of the seed fell onto thorny ground. The thorns grew up with the plants and eventually choked them. The plants did not get enough air and

nourishment and so this seed, too, brought forth no permanent good.

I do not want to deal with the first three kinds of soil. 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 you, my readers, are people whose hearts are good ground. This is what Jesus says about the good ground and the seed that fell on it:

²³But the one who received the seed that fell 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.

(Matthew 13:23)

Notice, there are two key factors in the man who produces a crop: first, he hears the word; and second, he understands it. This is true of everybody who represents good soil. However, even though all the people who represent good soil bring forth a crop, there is a very important difference in the level of yield they produce: some produce a hundred times, some sixty times, and some only thirty times what was sown. In other words, for each seed sown, some produce a hundred seeds, some produce sixty seeds, and some produce thirty seeds.

It is interesting to observe that the hundredfold yield is more than the sum of the other sixtyfold and thirtyfold yields put together. The people who really make it through to full productiveness are much more productive than the people who are only partly productive. This principle can be found throughout the Word of God.

I want to focus on the hundredfold yield, which is representative of the people who want and achieve God's best. In another version of the same parable, found in Luke, Jesus makes this statement about the good soil:

¹⁵But 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.

(Luke 8:15)

In that description there are two vitally important factors, both of which are related to our theme of wanting God's best. First, there is the kind of heart that is described as noble and good. An alternative translation for "noble" is "honest." So, the first requirement is honesty, which includes openness and sincerity. Honesty means not covering anything up or having double standards. That is the first requirement.

Second, there is a threefold response from these honest people: they hear the word, they retain it; and, by persevering, they produce a crop. Those three actions are extremely important; in fact, I want to emphasize that they are vital in acquiring God's best. Persevering, especially, is a key to acquiring God's best.

The principle unfolded in this parable confronts each of us with a personal decision. I cannot overemphasize the importance of our decisions in the walk of faith. So many people do not realize that the course of our lives depends ultimately upon the decisions we make and not on our feelings.

The decision that confronts each one of us is, 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 and intend to produce one hundred times? You are confronted with the necessity of making this decision. The very fact that you are reading this book automatically confronts you with a decision: Do I want God's best? Am I going to aim at a hundredfold, or be content with sixty- or thirtyfold?

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. The decisive factor in your life is how *you* respond.

In Luke 8:15, we saw there are three aspects to a successful response: first, hearing God's Word; second, retaining it; and third, persevering in what you are

doing.

Yes, the correct response from an honest heart will produce much fruit. And be assured that this is God's desire—to see you produce much fruit. I will discuss this in the following chapter.