
It Begins with a Sure Foundation

Book Summary, Short Version

A true revelation of God's Word is the single most important element of a victorious Christian life.

The Word of God often refers to itself as a seed. There are a total of forty-four verses in the New Testament where the Greek word sperma was translated "seed." This is the same word from which we derive our English word "sperm."

To conceive and give birth, whether it's for a miracle you need in your body or for the vision God has given you, you must first plant God's Word like a seed in your heart. Conception, which eventually produces the fruit, cannot take place without first planting a seed.

I constantly meet Christians who pray and believe for God's intervention in their lives but remain frustrated with their results. Why? Because they have never conceived their miracles by planting the seed of God's Word in their hearts. That's like a woman who prays to get pregnant and then is confused when it doesn't come to pass even though she has never had a relationship with a man. The seed has to be planted for conception to take place.

In Mark 4, the Lord taught three parables that illustrate that the Word is to the kingdom of God what a natural seed is to a harvest. The first of these parables, the story of the sower, is the key to unlocking all the others (Mark 4:13). If we don't understand these truths, Jesus said, we won't understand any of His other parables.

There are many life-changing truths in these parables, but one fact must be understood to get the full benefit of this teaching: The Lord used the comparison of His Word to a law of nature, which is unchangeable, not an institution of man.

Here's what I mean: Nearly all systems that people have created can be cheated or manipulated. The legal system can be beaten, letting the guilty go free. The educational system can be beaten, passing students who haven't really learned the material. But the process of seedtime and harvest can't be changed.

What if a farmer waited until he saw his neighbors reaping their crops before he sowed his seed? Regardless of how sincere he was or the justification for not sowing his seed at the proper time, he would not reap a crop overnight. The law of seedtime and harvest cannot be violated.

This is why our Lord chose to compare the way His Word works to a seed. The germination process of the Word of God in your life takes time and can't be avoided.

In the second parable of Mark 4, Jesus said:

"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29).

The seed is the Word of God (Mark 4:14), and the ground is our hearts (Mark 4:15).

Our hearts were created by God to bring forth fruit when His Word is planted in them. Just as a seed has to remain in the ground over time to germinate, so the Word of God has to abide in us.

Jesus said in John 15:7, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."

What would happen if you planted a seed in your garden and then dug it up each morning to see if anything was happening? It would die and never produce fruit. You have to have faith that the seed is doing what God created it to do.

Some people put God's Word in their hearts for a day or two, but if they don't see fruit almost immediately, they dig up the seed through their words and actions and wonder why it didn't work. It must be left in the ground over time.

Then, there are also different stages of growth. Mark 4:28 says, "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Many people are impatient, wanting to bypass the growth cycle and get the full ear right now. I've actually had to tell people what they were believing God for was not going to happen, not because the vision wasn't good, but because they were expecting a complete ear of corn immediately.

For example, a Charis Bible College student came to me who had never held a job, had been in a mental hospital, and had lived on welfare his whole life. When he heard the teaching on prosperity and vision, he started dreaming big. He had a plan to buy and renovate an old hotel. The total cost would be over 4 million dollars.

It really was a grand plan. I complimented him for the fact that he was dreaming and told him to keep dreaming big. Then I told him that it might work for someone but that it wouldn't work for him. Why? Because this person had never believed God for a dime before. There has to be "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

You may think that was too harsh, but it was the truth. It's possible that he could have won the lottery or the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes. It's possible, but that wouldn't have been God. God's kingdom operates on laws, like the laws that govern the fruit-bearing process of a seed. God will not give you the full ear of corn if you haven't seen the first blade. That's the way God's kingdom works.

This is precisely the reason most people don't see God's best come to pass in their lives. They have lottery faith. They think that since God loves them, He will just grant their request regardless of whether they put the miracle of the seed to work or not.

Jamie and I are great examples of that. When I was a young man and a novice in the ministry, I hated receiving offerings. I was hoping that someday, God would just give me a bunch of money, and I could minister without ever receiving an offering. Well, that is not the way God works.

God ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). Even ministers must live from the fruit of what they sow. Over many years, as I taught the Word of God to hundreds and thousands of people, the seeds of those words took root. The fruit of God's Word and our efforts came in the form of changed lives and a desire in the hearts of those who had experienced this change to help others.

Then, when I finally understood how seedtime and harvest worked, I shared with them what God was doing through our ministry and gave them an opportunity to give. They responded and we were able to reach more and more people with the good news. Through their gifts, not only were they touching the lives of others, but also at the same time, they were planting financial seeds for their own futures.

When I made the decision to go on television in January of 2000, the Lord spoke to me. He said that my ministry was just beginning, and if the ministry ended now, I would never fulfill what He had called me to do. Well, that was

pretty powerful, considering that by that time, I had been in ministry for over thirty years. All that we had been doing, even though we had seen the fruit of thousands of changed lives, had just been planting seeds. God wanted to take this ministry to a new level so that He could get the message of His unconditional love and grace to the world.

Since then, the ministry has exploded. I believe this is happening for two reasons: 1. Because of the seed we have planted, and 2. Because it's the time in history when the world is ripe for the message God has placed in my heart. There is no other way to say it. It is just my time, as it was for Esther.

In Esther 4:14, we read, "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

The fruit of all the seed we have planted and that you have planted is coming to bear on the huge challenge of reaching the world. Opportunity abounds, doors are opening, and it will take every one of us working together to see the vision fulfilled. God has built a strong foundation for this ministry through His Word, and we are now building upon that solid foundation.

This law of seedtime and harvest operates in every area of our lives. If we will plant God's Word in our hearts, then allow the seed to germinate and the plant to grow to maturity, we will reap the fruit of a harvest. That is God's best!

I cannot tell you strongly enough how important it is that you know God's Word and that you plant the seed of His Word in your heart long before you need the fruit of the harvest. It could mean the difference between prosperity and poverty, or even life and death. I believe this is so important that it's the very first class I teach to new students at CBC every year. Getting this series will be like attending the first week of CBC.

Understanding the power of God's Word is of vital importance in the life of a believer. It will help you go beyond the "touchy-feely," emotion-based thinking that many mistake for faith. It's not about what you feel; it's about what has been planted in your heart and what will come to full fruit. It's the foundation to receiving the promises of God!

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