

“God Only Expects Seeds”
II Corinthians 5:4-10 and Mark 4:26-34
(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+5:4-10)
(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+2:26-34)

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Grandiosity is not a Godly virtue!

Sometimes we berate ourselves for not being good enough. I'm not good enough for God. I'm not a missionary to some far off place. I am not building a great ministry. I cannot speak well. I just am not good enough for God.

Sometimes we berate others for not being good enough. We expect that they should be doing great things for God. When they do not, for one reason or another, then we shun them as failures.

- We dream of doing great things, and then we remember our everyday lives and become depressed.
- We have a vision of the perfect spouse, and then we remember who it is that we are married to.
- We think God wants us to be involved in doing wonderful, marvelous, publicly acclaimed works. Then, we remember how little we do for God.

When we are captured by grandiosity in either its manic or depressive phase is the very time we need to remember Jesus' parables of the seed and the harvest. God does not expect us to be great saviors of the church. We already have a Savior! God only expects us to plant small seeds of faith.

- God blesses the small acts of kindness.
- God affirms the small decisions for righteousness.
- God loves the widow who gives out of her great love a small gift by the world's standards.

God's standards are not the world's standards. God values the seeds as much as the large trees. God values the potential God knows is present in your life.

C. S. Lewis wrote in numerous places of the importance of the small decisions in our lives. He would remind his readers that the small choices would move a person down a particular path. When upon that path a major choice needed to be made, the small choices already presupposed what the person would decide. We grow by our small decisions. The world is affected for good or for evil by the small seeds that are sown.

Small Choices Can Have Huge Effects

A rabbi and a priest got into a really bad automobile accident. Both cars were totally demolished. Amazingly, neither of the clerics was hurt. After they crawled out of their cars, the rabbi saw the priest's collar and said, "So you're a priest. I'm a rabbi. Just look at our cars. There's nothing left. But, thank God, we are unhurt. This must be a sign from God. God must have meant that we should meet and be friends and live together in peace the rest of our days. The priest replied, "I agree with you completely. This truly must be a sign from God." The rabbi continued, "And look at this. Here's another miracle. My car is completely demolished, but this bottle of Mogen David wine didn't break. Surely God wants us to drink this wine and celebrate our good fortune." Then, he hands the bottle to the priest. The priest agrees, takes a few big swigs, and hands the bottle back to the rabbi. The rabbi takes the bottle, immediately puts the cap on, and hands it back to the priest. The priest asks, "Aren't you having any?" The rabbi replies, "No, I think I'll wait for the police."

Small choices set up much larger choices!

Sometimes our small daily decisions are premeditated and sometimes they are simply unconscious. Our core beliefs, our habits, our psychological needs, and our family patterns often set up the small daily

choices in our living. We often forget that these small choices have much larger ramifications. Let me share with you a true story from the "Metropolitan Diary" section of *The New York Times*. (June 10, 1984)

"One cool September night at Yankee Stadium in New York, a foul ball was hit into the lower left field stands. It was heading right toward a boy of about nine who had obviously come to the game that night hoping for just such a moment. He had a pair of cheap binoculars around his neck and was wearing an oversized Yankees cap and a small Little League glove which had the hardly-broken-in look of a mitt worn by a kid you let play right field in the late innings of hopeless games.

"The foul ball was arching directly toward this boy's outstretched hand, but suddenly a man of about 35 wearing an expensive knit shirt and horn-rimmed glasses reached over the boy, jostling him aside, and caught the ball. In the jostle, the plastic binoculars were broken, and the boy, despite his mother's comfort, was clearly crushed. Everybody in the left field stands had seen this, and, after a second or two of stunned silence, someone shouted, 'Give the kid the ball!' Then another cried, 'Give the kid the ball!' A couple of rows joined in unison, 'Give the kid the ball!'

"Horn Rims shook his head and put the ball in his pocket. That inflamed the whole left field crowd, and with one voice they took up the chant, 'Give the kid the ball!' It spread to the center field stands, then to right field, until the whole outfield, including people who did not even know the story, were shouting, 'Give the kid the ball!' Players began to glance up from the field to the stands to see what was going on.

"Horn Rims remained stubbornly firm. Finally, a man got up out of his seat, walked over to Horn Rims and spoke some words patiently and gently to him. Horn Rims hesitated, then reached into his pocket and handed the ball to the kid. 'He gave the kid the ball!' someone exclaimed. Then the whole stands thundered, 'He gave the kid the ball!' Applause rippled around the stadium.

"Then an even stranger thing began to happen. When another foul ball landed in the left field stands, the man who caught it walked over to Horn Rims and gave it to him. Horn Rims, incredulously, thanked him and took it. The next foul ball was caught by a man in a muscle shirt who was sporting a Fu Manchu mustache. He turned and tossed the ball to the kid, who, to everyone's delight and surprise caught it. More enthusiastic applause from the crowd, who had come that night to see a baseball game but witnessed instead a city parable about justice and grace."

Planting God's Good Seeds Brings Unexpected Blessings

The small choices made in Yankee Stadium that night created a much larger impact than any of the involved persons would have ever expected. Planting small seeds is like that. We have no understanding of how the plant will grow once we plant the seeds. Sometimes, the planting is frustrating. Sometimes we want to quit. Seed planting can be upsetting. But, planting God's seeds always brings a blessing. Ralph Milton, a Canadian clergyman shares a time that he waited years before the blessing arrived.

"He was in the boys' group I led at church several dozen years ago. Neil was, by any standards, a heller. Red-haired, hyper-active, bright, manipulative, physically strong--Neil managed to effectively sabotage all my well constructed plans for meaningful and helpful activities with the boys' group.

My feelings about Neil were, to say the least, ambivalent. In my mind, I resigned from leading that boys group every Tuesday evening as I drove home. But for reasons I can't explain, I was there the next Tuesday again, and Neil was driving me wild again.

Recently I was speaking at a church anniversary dinner. Near the end of the evening a tall, good-looking young man with a shock of red hair came up to me. "Hi," he said. "Do you remember me? I'm Neil. "I was astounded. Neil is now a social worker. I found out later that his work is a genuine ministry, and that he has a deep and lively faith." You were really important to my life when you led that boys group," said Neil, "and I want to thank you." "But Neil," I said incredulously, "You and I were always struggling. You were my number one discipline problem. You were a heller." "I know," said Neil. "But I always felt you liked me. And you took me seriously." (by Ralph Milton from a *Dancing with the text* session)

God wants seeds planted!

God expects you to plant seeds. You can let go of the grandiosity roller coaster. God will provide the fertile soil. God will provide the sunshine, moisture, and nutrients to grow. God will bless the increase. God

just needs you to plant seeds. You and your family will grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually strong if you will daily plant seeds of God's hope and mercy.

- **Plant seeds of God's hope!**

You can daily make a difference in your life and the lives of everyone around you if you will plant seeds of hope.

It is so easy to dwell on the negative. We do not have to work very hard to plant seeds of despair, depression, denial, death, and destruction. We do not have to stretch very far to feel the thrill of gossiping about someone, tearing them down one word at a time.

But, to plant seeds of God's hope is like planting trees in a deforested area. We will plant God's hope seeds by focusing on the good, uplifting the possible, and always speaking good about someone when they are not around. Seeds of God's hope will make a difference if you plant them. God will bless those seeds and multiply them far beyond your own personal influence. Choose today that you will learn how to daily plant seeds of God's hope in your life. It may mean that you will need to play the rewind and erase button a lot in the next few days to retape the messages in your head. Choosing to plant God's hope seeds will grow greatly in your life, your family, and the world! Choose hope!

- **Plant seeds of God's mercy!**

You can daily change the face of this world, if you will choose to plant seeds of God's mercy. Mercy is having the power to do harm to someone and choosing to do good instead. Like the mustard seed that grows to an enormous shrub. When you plant the seeds of God's mercy God's goodness will flow into the world.

It is so easy to plant seeds of revenge, retribution, and resentment. The world will applaud your planting seeds against someone else. People love to see a conflict. The world loves to see Christ's church or Christian families torn apart by the seeds of hatred planted years before. There are a number of magazines that sell hundreds of thousands of copies each week that are based upon the lack of God's mercy. If we were to all of us learn to practice the art of planting God's mercy seeds each day, those magazines and television shows would cease to exist.

Dear friends, let us remember that while we were all living and breathing sin, Christ died for us. Let us remember the incredible mercy of God in that while God had every reason to resent us; every reason to seek retribution against us; every reason to seek revenge upon us, God did not choose those negative seeds. Instead, while God had the power to annihilate us, God chose to love and accept us. If God chose to plant seeds of mercy in our hearts, let us seek to daily share God's mercy in every small choice that we make. God's mercy can only grow in your heart as you share it with others.

Be one of God's seed planters!

My friends chose today to make the small, daily choices count for God. Choose hope! Choose mercy! Choose life with God and God will abundantly bless the seeds you sow. God's blessings will come as the inch worm song teaches us.

"Inch by inch, row by row,
gonna make this garden grow.
All it takes is a rake and a hoe and a piece of fertile ground.
Inch by inch, row by row,
Someone blessed these seeds I sow.
Someone warmed them from below, 'til the rain came tumbling down."

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