

# The Conditions of Success

by R.A. Torrey

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*The conditions of success in personal work are a personal, experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior, a life clean within and without, a surrendered life, a deep realization that men out of Christ are lost, love, perseverance, practical knowledge of the Bible, prayer, and baptism with the Holy Ghost.*

**Scripture:** Luke 19:10, John 12:32, Acts 1:8, Acts 8:29, Romans 10:17, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:22, 1 Timothy 1:15, 2 Timothy 2:21, 1 Peter 1:23

**Topics:** "Soul Winning", "Conditions for Success"

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## Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes that the conditions for success in personal work and soul-saving begin with a personal, experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior. He outlines the necessity of a clean life, absolute surrender to God, and a deep realization of the lost condition of those outside of Christ. Love, perseverance, practical knowledge of the Bible, prayer, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit are also essential for effective soul-winning. Torrey stresses that true success in personal work comes from a heart transformed by Christ and a life dedicated to His service.

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## Transcript

I. PERSONAL EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST  
AS SAVIOR.

The first condition of success in personal work,  
and in all soul-saving work, is a personal  
experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior.

It was because the Apostle Paul could say:

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all  
acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world  
to save sinners; OF WHOM I AM CHIEF." 1\_Timothy  
1:15.

that he had power in bringing other men to that Savior. It is the man who knows Jesus as his own Savior, who will have a longing to bring others to this wonderful Savior whom he has himself found; and it is the man who knows Jesus as his Savior who will understand how to bring others to the Savior whom he has found. There are many today who are trying to save others, who are not saved themselves. There are others, who, while they are probably saved men, have such a vague knowledge of Christ as their own Savior, that they cannot hope to make the way of salvation clear to others.

A personal, experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ as a Savior includes three things:

1. A knowledge that our own sins have been forgiven because Jesus bore them in His own body on the Cross;
2. A knowledge that the risen Christ is delivering us daily from the power of sin;
3. An absolute surrender of our wills to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master.

## II. LIFE IS CLEAN WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

The second condition of success in personal work is really involved in the first, and is a life clean within and without. {15}

In 2\_Timothy 2:21 we read,

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he

shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

If a man is to be used of God, his life must be clean -- not only his outward life as the world sees it, but his inward secret life as it is known only to God and to himself. One who holds on to any sin of act or thought or affection cannot expect to have power with a holy God, and consequently cannot expect to have power for God.

Many a man and woman of great natural gifts, and unusual knowledge of the Bible, are trying to do work for God and meet with little or no success.

People wonder why it is that their work is so devoid of results, but if we knew their secret life as God knows it, we would understand their failure; there is sin before God. It has often been said, and well said, that "God does not demand a beautiful vessel for His work, but He does demand a clean one." Many are working on in disappointment and failure, working hard but accomplishing nothing, because God sees sin in their inner life which they will not give up.

### III. PERSONAL WORK IS A SURRENDERED LIFE, A LIFE WHOLLY GIVEN UP TO GOD.

The third condition of success in personal work is a surrendered life, a life wholly given up to God.

Paul was mighty as a worker for Christ because he could say,

"For me to live is Christ."

The miracle of the five loaves and two fishes (Matthew 14:17-20), is deeply significant. The disciples said unto Jesus, "We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me." We are told with a good deal of emphasis upon the definite article, He "took THE five loaves and THE two fishes," that is, He took all that they had. It was not much, but they brought it all. Then He blessed it and broke it and there was an abundance for all. But if one of these insignificant barley loaves had been kept back, or one of these little fishes, there would not have been enough to go around. We, too, may not have much, it may be only five barley crackers and two little fishes, but if we will bring them all, absolutely all, to Christ, He will take them, bless them and multiply them; but if we hold back one cracker or one fish, He will not bless and multiply. Here lies the secret of failure in many a one who would work for Christ; there is one cracker kept back, or one little fish. We talk very lightly of absolute surrender to God, but it means more than most people who profess it seem to realize. I would ask each

reader of these pages, have you brought all to Christ -- absolutely all -- absolutely ALL?

#### IV. MEN OUT OF CHRIST ARE LOST.

The one who would have success in personal work must have a deep realization that men out of Christ are lost. Jesus had this. He said,

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was LOST." Luke 19:10.

When He looked upon men living in sin. He knew and realized the utter ruin of their condition. The same thing was true of Paul. We read in Acts 20:31 that he "ceased not to warn every one night and day WITH TEARS." He knew that if one had not a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ he was eternally lost. This overwhelming conviction that men and women out of Christ are eternally lost, seems to be very rare in our day, and this is one great reason why so few have real power in soul-winning.

How can we get this realization?

1. First of all, by studying what the Bible has to say about the present standing and condition and future destiny of those who are out of Christ.
2. By believing what the Bible says upon these points without trying to tone it down, and make it fit in with the popular notions of the day.
3. By dwelling upon these truths about the lost condition of men out of Christ until they take

hold upon our hearts and we realize their meaning.

These things are not pleasant to think about, but they are true, and we ought to think about them until our souls are on fire to save men from the awful condition of utter ruin in which they now are, and from the destiny of eternal shame and despair to which they are hurrying.

#### V. LOVE.

The fifth condition of success in personal work is love. Nothing wins like love. In the first place it leads to untiring effort for {17} the salvation of others. If I really love men, I cannot bear the thought that they should be lost forever, and I will be willing to work day and night to save them from such an awful destiny. In the second place, love attracts others to us.

There is nothing so irresistible as love. It is Jesus Christ lifted up on the Cross, a revelation of God's love and of His own love to man, that draws all men unto Him (John 12:32). Men will not put you off if they really believe that you love them, but they will never believe that you love them unless you really do. We need not only to love to men, but love to Christ. It was the love of Christ that constrained Paul to his untiring efforts to bring men to a knowledge of Christ. The great men and women of Christian history have been

the men and women who have had a great love to Christ, men and women whose hearts were all aglow with love to the glorious Son of God.

But how can we get love? First of all, by dwelling upon Christ's love to us.

"We love him, because he first loved us." 1\_John 4:19.

We shall never appreciate Christ's love to us until we see it against the black background of our own sin. It is the one who is forgiven much who loves much (Luke 7:47). The one who has never been brought to a deep realization of his own sinfulness before God will have no warmth of love to that Savior who, by His own atoning death on the Cross, redeemed him from the awful depth to which he had sunk. The Apostle Paul realized that he was the chief of sinners, and that Jesus loved him and gave Himself for him, so he was full of love to Jesus Christ.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners OF WHOM I AM CHIEF." 2\_Timothy 1:15.

"I am crucified with Christ, nonetheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF

FOR ME." Galatians 2:20.

If we are to have love to Christ and love to men, the Holy Ghost must impart it. The first fruit of the Spirit is love:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

Galatians 5:22.

If we will look to the Holy Spirit to do His whole work in our hearts, He will soon fill them with love to Christ and love to our fellow men. {18}

## VI. PERSEVERANCE.

The sixth condition of success in personal work is perseverance. No work requires so much patience and perseverance as soul-winning. Men are not usually won to Christ in a day. You must hold on to men day after day, week after week, month after month, and if need be, year after year. You must not give up even though you seem to make absolutely no headway at first, and even though you seem to do more harm than good. When you start out to lead a man to Christ, keep after that man until he is saved, no matter how long it takes.

Study how to get at men who are unreachable. Men who cannot be reached in one way can in another.

There are very few men in the world to whose hearts there is not an open door somewhere, if only we will search diligently until we find it.

If we cannot get in at the door, perhaps we can break up the roof and get in that way. Any one who wishes to win souls at the rate of one every fifteen minutes had better go into some other business. Take time; never give up; and do thorough work. I waited and watched fifteen long years to get my chance with one man. Never a day passed for all those fifteen years that I did not speak to God about that man. At last my chance came, and it was my privilege to lead him to Christ. He afterwards became a preacher of the Gospel, and is now in heaven. I was with him the day before he died, and shall never forget that day as long as I live. When you undertake to bring a man to Christ, never give up.

#### VII. PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE.

The seventh condition of success in personal work is a practical knowledge of the Bible.

"Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction with is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, FURNISHED COMPLETELY UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK." 2\_Timothy 3:16-17 RV.

In the Bible is all the truth we need in dealing with men. The Word of God is the only instrument that God has appointed for the salvation of men,

and the only instrument He honors is the Word. It is the Word that produces conviction of sin. It is the Word that regenerates. It is the Word that produces faith: {19}

"Now when they heard this, they were PRICKED IN THEIR HEART, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37.

"Being BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1\_Peter 1:23.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD." Romans 10:17.

If then we are to be used in soul-winning, we must know the Bible. There are five texts that ought to sink deep into the heart of every personal worker.

They are:

1. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD." Romans 10:17.
2. "The seed is THE WORD OF GOD." Luke 8:11.
3. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1\_Peter 1:23.
4. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD." EPHESIANS 6:17.
5. "Is not MY WORD LIKE AS A FIRE? said the Lord:

and LIKE A HAMMER that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jeremiah 23:29.

The personal worker who depends upon any instrument other than the Word of God is doomed to failure. But we must have a practical knowledge of the Bible, that is we must know how to use it for definite results. A great many men have a large theoretical knowledge of the Bible, but no practical knowledge. They do not know how to use the Bible so as to accomplish anything definite by its use. In an inquiry meeting one evening, I asked one of the best Bible scholars in America to speak to an inquirer and show her the way of life, and he whispered in my ear, "I don't know how to do that." A small practical knowledge of the Bible is better in personal work than a large theoretical knowledge. A practical knowledge of the Bible involves four things:

1. A knowledge how to so use the Bible as to show men, and make men realize, their need of a Savior.
2. A knowledge of how to use the Bible so as to show men Jesus as just the Savior who meets their need.
3. A knowledge of how to use the Bible so as to show men how to make Jesus their own Savior.
4. A knowledge of how to use the Bible so as to meet the difficulties that stand in the way of

their accepting Christ.

A large part of the following pages will be devoted to imparting this particular kind of Bible knowledge. {20}

#### VIII. PRAYER.

The eighth condition of success in personal work is prayer. God honors prayer. In nothing does He honor it more than in the matter of soul-winning.

The one who is to be much used of God in soul-winning, must spend much time in prayer.

There are four things for which we must especially pray:

1. We must ask God to bring to us, or us to, the right persons. We cannot speak with every one. If we attempt it, we will spend much time in speaking where we can do no good, that we might have used in speaking where we could have accomplished something for Christ. God alone knows the one to whom He intends us to speak, and we must ask Him to point him out to us, and expect Him to do it.

"Then THE SPIRIT SAID UNTO PHILIP, Go near, and join thyself to THIS chariot." Acts 8:29.

2. We should ask God to give us the right message in each case where we do speak with any one. We can learn much by studying what is the right message for any given class of men, but after all our study, we must look directly to God for the

right message in each individual case. Many cases will baffle us, but no case will baffle God. We need and must have the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit in each individual case. Every experienced worker could testify to many instances in which God has led him to use some text of Scripture that he would not otherwise have used, but which proved to be just the one needed.

3. We must pray God to give power to that which He has given us to say. We need not only a message from God, but power from God to send the message home. Most workers have to learn this lesson by humiliating experiences. They sit down beside an unsaved person and reason, and plead, and bring forth texts from the Word of God, but the man does not accept Christ. At last it dawns upon them that they are trying to convert the man in their own strength, and they lift a short but humble prayer to God for His strength, and in a very little while this "very difficult case" has settled the matter and is rejoicing in Christ.

4. We must pray to God to carry on the work after we have done everything in our power, and our work has come to an end. {21} After having done that which seems to have been our whole duty in any given instance, whatever may have been the apparent result of our work, whether successful or

unsuccessful, we should definitely commit the case to God in prayer. If there is anything the average worker in this hurrying age needs to have impressed upon him, it is the necessity of much prayer. By praying more, we will not work any less, and we will accomplish vastly more.

#### IX. BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST.

The ninth condition of success in personal work is the baptism with the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1:8 we read,

"But ye SHALL RECEIVE POWER, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

The supreme condition of power in the apostolic church was the definite baptism with the Holy Ghost. The supreme condition of success in soul-winning is the same today. Many in these days are trying to prove that there is no such thing as a special baptism with the Holy Spirit, but a candid and careful study of the Acts of the Apostles will show that there is. Very many in our day also know by blessed experience that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a present day reality. One ounce of believing experience along this line is worth whole tons of unbelieving exegesis, no matter how subtle and learned it may be. There are thousands of men and women in this and other lands who have been brought out of a

place of powerlessness into a place of power in the Lord's service, through meeting the conditions plainly laid down in the Bible for receiving the Holy Ghost. This baptism with the Holy Spirit is for every child of God, and the one who would be largely used of God in personal work must get it at any cost.

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