



The Parable of the Sower

WEEK 3 DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

In the third message of the series entitled, *Parables*, we will learn to receive the seed of God's Word within us.

DISCUSSION

Read **Mark 4:2-9**. In this parable, Jesus is showing what the Kingdom of God looks like and how it operates in the world. The farmer represents Jesus. The seed represents the Word of God. The soil represents our hearts. Our heart is the deepest part of who we are. It's where the Spirit of God comes to dwell. The four soils represent four conditions of the human heart. Jesus is asking, "How's your heart? Do you have ears to hear?" Let's see what Jesus has to say to about the soils of our heart, and how we can move beyond just auditorily hearing God's Word with our ears—but truly hearing with our hearts.

Four Heart Conditions

1. Hardened soil | The calloused heart.

Mark 4:15: *"Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them."* These hearts hear the Word, yet it doesn't penetrate...at all. The Word gets sown, and the enemy comes quickly to carry away the seed of the Word. People with a hardened heart have most likely experienced a difficult circumstance in the past, and they determine there isn't a God or they are mad at God for not fixing their circumstances. Because they have calloused hearts, the seed of God's truth is stolen and they cannot receive His love. Yet, there is still hope for their eyes to be opened if they will turn from their ways and surrender to Christ.

- What are some ways we can minister to or connect with someone who has a hardened heart?

2. Rocky soil | The wounded heart.

The next type of soil Jesus explains to us is rocky soil. **Mark 4:16-17** says, *"Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away."*

This rocky soil speaks of wounded hearts. The seeds of God's Word spring up quickly, but their roots aren't very deep. When trouble and persecution come, they begin to wither. Someone with a wounded heart has experienced deep pain in their life. They still believe God exists, yet they hide from God and even lie to protect their wounded hearts. When our hearts become wounded, it's important to process with someone and get the pain out so we can heal.

- Have you processed trauma or disappointments in a healthy way in the past? Share your experience.

3. Thorny soil | The distracted heart.

In **Mark 4:18-19**, Jesus explains a third type of soil: ***"Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."*** Jesus shows life's three big distractors: worry, wealth, and wandering desires. The heart distracted with worry turns to worldly wisdom instead of God's wisdom. They try to fix their problems themselves instead of going to God. Wealth also has a way of crowding up our hearts. The deceitfulness of wealth tempts us to believe that things are for our fulfillment instead of our enjoyment. Wandering desires, or the "desires for other things," keep us focused on the temporal instead of the eternal. They think their new toy or experience will make them happy, but the only thing that can fulfill them is Jesus.

- Have you ever experienced a distracted heart?
- How is Jesus' fulfillment unlike anything else the world can offer?

4. Good soil | The receptive heart.

Jesus interprets the good soil in **Mark 4:20**: ***"Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."*** How do we know if our heart is good soil? When we hear God's Word, we should receive it and follow His voice. God scatters the seed, but we tend the soil. It's our responsibility to make sure our hearts are in good condition to receive God's Word.

- **Proverbs 4:23** says, ***Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*** What are some ways we can guard our hearts?

LIFE CHALLENGE

Think about the condition of your heart. Are there any weeds of disappointments, wounds, or distractions you need to process and pluck away? Take action to get rid of the weeds so you can receive from God and walk in freedom.

PRAYER REQUESTS & CLOSE IN PRAYER