

THE SOIL OF YOUR HEART

Josh Hawley, Pastor of Spiritual Growth
November 10, 2013

Luke 8:1-15

Jesus tells a parable that explains why people either trust, reject or don't last with Him. (verses 1-10)

- Jesus is traveling with His disciples and tells this parable to them “while a large crowd was gathering.”
- He describes a familiar, everyday life example.
- When we respond to the light God gives us, we get more.
When we reject what light we're given, we lose it.

Different heart (soil) conditions result in different responses to God. (verses 11-15)

- **Heart:** *includes our intellect, emotions, conscience, desires and will. The heart is the seat of our decision-making; it is the filter for every action we take.*
- A hard heart that has a closed mind toward God.

- A shallow, “*what's in it for me?*” attitude toward God.
- Misplaced priorities (worries, riches & pleasures) that crowd out God.
- An open & receptive heart toward God.

How can we cultivate an open & receptive heart?

- Respond to the light God gives us with obedience.
- Trust in God & cling to Him through the pressures and trials of life.
- Examine our priorities and make space for God.
- Stay faithful & don't give up as we “sow seed” (invest spiritually into the lives of others).

- I will read my Bible 4 or more times a week for 4 weeks
- I will ask for prayer from, or find, a LifeGroup this week
- I will seek to pray at least 5 minutes a day this coming week



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Lesson Aim: *To grow in our understanding of why people respond to Jesus in different ways and in our ability to cultivate an open heart toward Him.*

Prayer: Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your study time and/or discussion.

Icebreaker: Have you ever been responsible to help something (or someone) grow in any way? What was hard about it? What did you enjoy about it?

1. **READ Luke 8:1-8.** What are the different soil conditions that the seed falls on? Why did Jesus describe them?
2. **READ Luke 9-15.** How does the devil go about stealing God's messages from people today?
3. What things prevent people from putting down deep roots with God today?

4. What are some of the cares, riches and worries that tempt people from really growing as Christ-followers?
5. As followers of Christ, we're called to maintain receptive hearts to what God says in the Bible. However, there are times when we don't obey. Looking at your answers to questions 2-4, which of these do you struggle with the most?
6. Look over the notes from Pastor Josh's teaching under the section "How can we cultivate an open & receptive heart?" Which of these might help you the most right now as you consider your answer to question 5?
7. We have no control over the type of "soil" a person is, and only God can change the soil (heart) of a person. However, we can have positive influence for Christ in people's lives. In the following verses, what actions do you find that help us influence people?
 - **1 Peter 2:11-17:**
 - **Mark 2:15-17:**
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12:**
 - **2 Timothy 2:24-26:**
8. Is there anything that came up from this week's teaching or homework that you'd like prayer for?

Close in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads you.

This **LifeGroup** Study Guide is designed to help you apply Sunday's message. You can do this homework on your own; however we encourage you to check out our warm and friendly message-based **LifeGroups!** Get a copy of this Study Guide at theBridgeFresno.com by clicking on the "Messages" link.