



Reflections and Revelations Newsletter
(August 20, 2009)

WHAT TYPE OF SOIL ARE YOU?

Luke 8:11-15 (NKJV): ¹¹“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹²Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. ¹³But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

There are times when God says it is time for a new thing. This is one of those times. In a recent Bible study, we were sharing where we view ourselves in the four soils as described in Luke 8. What God spoke to one of His daughters was such a life changing word we wanted to share it with all who will receive this newsletter. In her own words:

I recently made a personal decision that something in my life had to change. As the Lord so graciously showed me, I learned that the only thing I can truly control in life is me. Anything outside of that circle is open to outside influence other than my own. Throughout this realization process, I made the decision to dive into the Word for myself. There wasn't going to be anymore running to others for a word or a prayer. I decided that I needed to learn what God says about the issues and circumstances of my life. So, I began making it a point to read His Word every day until I would hit that one verse or passage that would jump off the page to me and speak directly to my soul.

Eventually, this brought me to the different types of soil that Jesus referred to in Luke 8. As I looked at the different types of soil, I immediately knew where I was personally. I knew that before I had made that decision a few short weeks earlier, and still even sometimes during those weeks, my heart was the third type of soil. This is the soil that when the seed falls upon it, the soil is basically thorny weeds. There was growth in this soil but it was the wrong type of growth because the weeds were still growing too and they would always eventually choke the life out of the new growth. But, what the Lord showed me was that since I had made the decision to seek out His Word to get His truth in my circumstances, I had crossed over to the fertile soil. I pondered on this for quite awhile. I kept reading it over and over asking the Lord to show me what Jesus meant when He was describing this type of fertile soil.

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Jesus said in Luke 8:15, (NCV) “And the seed that fell on the good ground is like those who hear God's teaching with **good, honest** hearts and **obey** it and **patiently** produce good fruit.”

Jesus said a lot of things here so I asked the Lord to break it down to my level of understanding. The word that jumped out to me first was “patiently.” This said to me that in order to produce what Jesus referred to as good fruit, there is a process involved. But then the Lord immediately showed me that the key to producing good fruit is actually found in the word “obey.” In other words, just to hear God’s Word is not enough because in reality, all of the other types of soil hear God’s Word too. BUT – we must hear God’s Word with a good and honest heart. And when we hear it like that, then we must take it a step further and **OBEY**. And even further, we must obey it patiently, therefore, not expecting any results.

Then, the Lord took me to a couple of verses in Proverbs.

Prov. 14:17 (NCV)

“Someone with a quick temper does foolish things, but someone with understanding remains calm.”

Prov. 14:29 (NCV)

“Patient people have great understanding, but people with quick tempers show their foolishness.”

Then, God showed me how all of this fell right in line with Him trying to teach me about being calm even when I feel anger rising up. Each action I have begins within my mind and my heart. The more of God’s Word that I receive with an honest heart the more understanding I will gain within my heart, which in turn, drives out the foolishness. Then, as I trust and obey that Word, the fruit is then allowed to grow, without any weeds. And then because I heard His Word with a good, honest heart with only pure intentions, the fruit then begins to grow and eventually multiplies.

The obedience cannot be done while expecting results because then the heart wouldn’t truly be good and honest. Why? The motives would then go back to dishonest things such as selfishness for what we want to see happen as a result of our obedience. So...how do we receive God’s teaching and maintain a good, honest heart? Some of the thoughts I had were:

1. **Continual self-sacrifice** – basically dying to our flesh continually as Paul described in Galatians.

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Galatians 2:20 (KJV) – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, 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.”

2. **Humility** – allowing the Holy Spirit to correct you when you’re wrong. Not taking this correction with defense but really being willing to listen to what He’s telling you.

Proverbs 15:33 (NCV) – “Respect for the Lord will teach you wisdom. If you want to be honored, you **MUST** be humble.”

3. **Trust & Faith** – God is our Creator!! He cannot and will not lead us into harm. Sometimes, He allows us to walk into harmful situations, but only because He knows it is going to bring our hearts back to being good and honest. Each experience helps us grow into more understanding and maturity in Christ. Eventually, we are able to take our place in the body of Christ being mature and multiplying fruit for His kingdom.

Ephesians 4:14-16 (NCV) –

“Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. They make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path. **NO!** Speaking the truth with love, we will grow up in every way into Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love.”

I John 4:8 (NCV) –

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

My prayer within the first few weeks of searching God’s Word for my life was always, “God, please teach me to be like You.” Since He has opened my eyes of understanding to what Jesus was saying about the fertile soil, my prayer is now, “God please help me to become a being of love as You created me to be, producing only good fruit.”

Through our bible study tonight, the Lord showed me that there are two aspects of good fruit.

1. **My heart** – I am responsible for the seeds that are within my own heart through the decisions and choices that I make.

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2. **Someone else's heart** – I am responsible for planting the seeds of good fruit in others to give life and further His kingdom.

But what He really drove home for me was that if the fruit within my heart isn't the "good fruit" that Jesus described in Luke 8:15, then anything I try to give to someone else won't taste right to them and will not be able to further His kingdom.

And furthermore, He also spoke it so clearly that if I'm not producing the good fruit, then when I try to take my place in the body of Christ I could also be bringing thorny weeds along with me that can eventually destroy part of His body!

WOW! So this takes me back to the very first thing He showed me. If I imagine a circle around me, the only thing I can control within that circle is myself. Anything outside of that circle I cannot control. My place in the body of Christ rests within the condition of my heart and the act of obedience to the Word of God. And my faith in His word alongside that obedience is what allows the soil to be fertile so the enemy cannot come and steal the truth (the seed of God's Word) away from me. The more fertile the soil, the further the seed will be planted. Then the (fruit) growing begins!!

Thank you Father for your Word!

J.M.

As one can read, what she shared was a great blessing to us! As a result of her sharing, I was able to walk away with a new perspective on the soil of our hearts. Even though I had previously studied this verse quite intently when we were going through **Luke 8**, what did not occur to me then was that, as with all things of God, it seems there must be balance. In other words, even mature Christians can have thorny patches in their lives. Those are the seasons when we are going through a challenge. Those challenges cause us to press into God, so we CAN produce mature fruit!. However, too many thorny patches causes us to choke out the Word. So, what we discovered tonight is if we don't have any thorny patches, we may begin to think more highly of ourselves than we ought! Therefore, we need a few thorny patches along the way to keep us humble!

Father, we thank You for the revelation knowledge You imparted into us this night! Father, I thank You for speaking through the voice of your precious daughter and giving me a fresh look at Your Word! We thank You that You have given us this opportunity to share Your Words with others. We pray, Lord God, that Your Holy Spirit would touch

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each and every heart that reads these words and that by the power of Your grace, lives will be transformed for Your glory! In Jesus' name. Amen!

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