

GROWING IN FAITH



Scripture

“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

- Matthew 13:3b-8

Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seeds

GOING DEEPER

1. Seeds along the path
 - Have you rejected parts of God’s message? Are there parts of the Bible that you tend to “leave out” of your belief system?
 - How do you incorporate God’s message or word in your everyday life?
2. Seeds on rocky places
 - How do you spend time on your “roots?”
 - Do you find that you like God’s message only when it works for you?
3. Seeds among thorns
 - What do you worry about?
 - Have you seen your worries choke out God’s word in your life?
4. Seeds on fertile soil
 - How do we cultivate the soil of our lives to allow God’s word to take root?
 - What are some concrete things that we can do everyday to ensure that the seeds of God’s Kingdom grow in our lives?
 - How’s can you discern when other’s are ready to hear and receive God’s word in their lives?

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Scripture

“The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

- Matthew 25:20-21

“To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.”

- Matthew 25:29

Parable of the Three Servants

GOING DEEPER

1. Investments

- What gifts has God invested in you?
- How have you multiplied those gifts?
- Is there an example of someone in your life who has multiplied God’s gifts in their own life that you admire, or could learn something from?

2. Differences

- How do your unique abilities pair with God’s gifts to you to bring about His work in the world?
- Are there examples in your life of how “different is good?”
- Do you struggle with comparing yourself to others? How does this hinder the multiplication of God’s gifts in your life?

3. Views

- What is your view of God? Do you view Him as a harsh task-master?
- What has formed your view of God over time? Have you allowed God to form your view of Him, or have you allowed earthly things to form your view of Him?
- Have you neglected a gift from God because of your incorrect view of Him?

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Scripture

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

- Matthew 13:44-46

Parable of the Hidden Treasure

GOING DEEPER

1. Hiding

- Do you treat your relationship with God like a priceless hidden treasure that you would sell everything to gain? Or do you take it for granted?
- What are some signs that we take our relationship with God for granted?

“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?” Mark 8:35 - 38 NLT

2. Selling

- Do you place value on things that are *truly* valuable?
- What are the things in life that are *truly* valuable?
- What are things that we place value on, that really aren't valuable?

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Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

"That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

- Matthew 18:32-25

Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor

GOING DEEPER

1. The Purpose of Discipline

- Can you give an example of a time in your life when discipline resulted in refining?
- Do discipline and love go hand in hand? How?

2. The Purpose of Grace

- What is the effect of God's grace in your life?
- How does the grace you offer to others effect them?
- Have you ever offered grace to someone in place of seeking revenge? What effect did that have on you?

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Scripture

'Those people worked only one hour, and yet you've paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.'

"He answered one of them, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair! Didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?'

- Matthew 20:12-15

Parable of the Vineyard Workers

GOING DEEPER

1. Have you ever been treated unfairly?
2. How has an "unfair" treatment benefited you?
3. How does knowing "the last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last." effect how you treat and view others?