

THE PARABLE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Luke 8

Everyone who makes a profession of faith in Jesus is either progressing or regressing in their spiritual life. They are either growing or not growing. Either gaining ground or losing ground as a follower of Christ. Sometimes the question is asked why it is that some succeed to great effect, while others effectively crash and burn, or slowly wither away. The answer is that these are people who did not choose to take advantage of what God had given to them.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains why some press on in the Christian faith and why others do not.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. The Highway Hearers.** This is really a description of people that you may share the gospel with and they just don't respond. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him" (TLB). No matter what you say, no matter what clever argument you use, they are just unaffected.
- 2. The Rocky Road Hearers.** These people come with you to church. They respond to the invitation. They pray the prayer. They are so fired up. They buy the biggest Bible you have ever seen. They start quoting Scripture. When you have a time of worship, they sing louder and they lift their hands higher than everyone. They talk to everybody about their newfound faith, but then they fall when temptation comes, because their faith is shallow.
- 3. The Thorny Hearers.** The seed planted in this soil is in a constant battle with weeds. The seed goes in, but it is choked out. This is the depiction of the soil that receives the Word of God, but the seed is choked out by other things and distractions. This process is usually gradual, and the individual may not even realize it is happening. Do not fall in love with the world's ways or goods; instead fall in love with Christ.
- 4. The Fruitful Hearers.** These are the ones that got it right. Luke 8:15 says, "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance" (NASB). Having heard the Word, these hearers keep it. One of the keys to growing spiritually is getting as much of God's Word into you as possible.

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES

harvest.org

RELEVANT REMINDERS

- Which one of the four hearers are you? God gives us a free will. In that free will, we have the choice to either accept or reject Jesus Christ. We also have the choice to continue to follow Him or not to follow Him. God will give you everything you need to go forward spiritually but you must take advantage of what He has offered.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

Is your relationship with Christ growing or drawing back? The success or failure of the Christian life depends on how we hear the Word of God. When you hear it, you are made responsible for that. If you have really met God, you will have a hunger for Scripture. If you do not have a hunger for God's Word, there is something wrong with you. Healthy people are hungry people. They are hungry for God's Word. When trials come or persecution comes, they don't think of failing. They just dig in. The Christian life is hard, but it's worth it.