



Group Discussion Questions

Responsibility for My Heart January 11 & 14, 2018

Group Discussion: Talk about the first garden you ever planted, whether it's flower or vegetable. Was it productive? How was the flavor? Any failures? Are you planning to plant one this spring? What's your favorite crop?

Read: Mark 4:1-20

Why do you think Jesus used a gardening seed planting story? How do planted seed thoughts get started in your heart or mind? Who plants seed thoughts in your heart most often? What's the latest seed thought that's been planted in your mind?

If seed on the sidewalk represents a hard-hearted person, have you ever known someone long ago and far away (not someone others might know!) that struggled with a hard heart? How does hard-heartedness destroy relationships with others or with God?

The seed on the rocky outcroppings represents shallow-heartedness. This represents someone who starts quickly or impulsively and then sets everything aside and doesn't finish well. Jesus says affliction or persecution stops people from developing a mature relationship with God. In our culture I think it's more disappointment or disillusionment. Has there ever been a time when you thought about giving up on God because life was frustrating or especially tough?

The third seed fell into the weedy area. The roots of the weeds choked the more fragile roots of the wheat. The weeds represent 3 different temptations: #1. The worries of the world, what are those? How are those especially difficult? #2. The deceitfulness of riches, what do you think Jesus is referring to here? #3. The desire for other things. Because this last one is so general Jesus invites you to put your own personal struggle in the blank. What struggle in your life is a desire for other things? What other things?

Finally, the fourth seed falls on the good soil. The good (thought) seed planted in the good (heart) soil leads to a good (lifestyle) crop. Make a list of what Jesus was referring to when He said this seed and soil produces 30, 60 and a 100 fold. Is he talking of personal self-satisfying lives or church life or kingdom life or all of them. What does this thought seed and heart soil produce?

Family Time: Take a cup of dirt and plant a seed and put it on the window sill of you kitchen or bathroom, somewhere you'll remember to water it. When it begins to sprout, talk to your kids about a topic. I'll chose love. Ask, "Why do I tell you I love you? Because I want to plant a seed in your heart and mind that grows and grows so that as you grow up you'll know more and more how important you are to me. Just like this seed needs water and sun to grow. The love in our family needs time and attention to grow."