



There Is MORE for Your DISCIPLESHIP

Are You Good Soil?

Key Passage: Matthew 13:1–23

Supporting Scripture: James 1:22; Nehemiah 8:10

Opening Question

Think about something you have tried to grow, build, learn, or develop that required consistent effort.

What happened when you stopped cultivating it?

1. THE SEED IS GOOD — BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SOIL?

Jesus tells a story about one seed falling on four different types of soil. The seed was the same, but the results were completely different.

The question isn't whether God's Word is good.

The question is: What kind of soil is receiving it?

Take a moment to read **Matthew 13:18–23** together.

Discuss

1. What stands out to you about the four different types of soil?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose **soil** as the picture for our hearts?
3. What does it look like for someone to regularly hear God's Word but never allow it to take root?



4. James 1:22 says, *"Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says."*
What is the difference between hearing God's Word and actually allowing God's Word to change us?
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2. THE FOOTPATH — "I HEAR, BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND"

The footpath represents someone who hears the message but doesn't understand it. The Word is heard, but it never takes root.

Sometimes we can sit in church every week, hear sermons, sing worship songs, and still never move beyond simply consuming information.

Discuss

1. What are some things that can keep God's Word from moving beyond our ears and into our lives?
 2. Have you ever experienced a season where you were **hearing God but not really responding to Him?**
 3. What does "digging deeper" into God's Word practically look like?
 4. What is one biblical truth you know intellectually but need to become more intentional about **living out?**
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3. SHALLOW SOIL — "I'M EXCITED, BUT I'M NOT ROOTED"

Jesus describes people who receive the Word with joy, but because they have no depth, they don't last when difficulty comes.

Following Jesus doesn't exempt us from difficult circumstances.



The question isn't whether the heat is coming. The question is whether our roots are deep enough to survive it.

Discuss

1. Why do you think it is possible to be genuinely excited about Jesus but still lack spiritual depth?
2. What are some signs that a person's faith may be more **shallow than rooted**?
3. Think about a difficult season you have experienced. What helped you remain rooted—or what caused you to struggle?
4. Why does **community** matter when life gets difficult?
5. Who are the people in your life who know your name, know your story, know your struggles, and will walk with you when the heat gets turned up?

GO DEEPER

What is one spiritual root I need to strengthen right now?

Examples:

- God's Word
- Prayer
- Worship
- Community
- Obedience
- Accountability
- Time with God
- Trust

4. THE THORNS — "I KNOW JESUS, BUT SOMETHING IS CHOKING MY JOY"

Jesus says the thorns represent the worries of this life and the lure of wealth that crowd out the Word.

The sermon made an important distinction:



Happiness is circumstantial. Joy is rooted in the presence and promises of God.

Read **Nehemiah 8:10**.

Discuss

1. What is the difference between happiness and biblical joy?
 2. What are some "thorns" that can begin competing for our attention, affection, and trust?
 3. Why can good things—even legitimate responsibilities—sometimes become unhealthy when they take God's place?
 4. What happens when we allow circumstances to determine our spiritual health?
 5. Is there anything currently taking up so much space in your heart that it is making it difficult to experience God's joy?
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5. PROXIMITY MATTERS

One of the most powerful ideas from the sermon is that **the soil doesn't cultivate itself**.

Someone has to work the ground.

Someone has to remove the rocks.

Someone has to pull the thorns.

Someone has to cultivate the soil.

Discipleship happens through intentional relationships with people who know us well enough to speak truth into our lives.

Discuss

1. Why is it difficult to allow people to get close enough to see the "real you"?
2. Who has permission to challenge you when they see something unhealthy developing in your life?
3. What makes it difficult to receive correction from someone who loves you?
4. Have you ever had someone tell you something you didn't want to hear—but ultimately needed to hear?



5. What does it look like to create a relationship where someone can say:

"Hey... that's not you."

"Hey... that's not Jesus."

"Hey... I think there's something in your life that needs to be dealt with."

DISCIPLESHIP CHECK

Do I have people who:

- ☐ Know me
 - ☐ Know my story
 - ☐ Know my struggles
 - ☐ Pray for me
 - ☐ Encourage me
 - ☐ Challenge me
 - ☐ Tell me the truth
 - ☐ Point me toward Jesus
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6. GOOD SOIL — RECEIVE. CULTIVATE. PRODUCE.

Jesus says the good soil represents those who hear, understand, and produce a harvest—thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times what was planted.

Good soil doesn't simply **receive** the seed.

It produces **fruit**.

And that fruit **multiplies**.

Discuss

1. What does "good soil" look like in the life of a disciple?
2. What kind of fruit should we expect to see when God's Word is taking root in someone's life?
3. Why is multiplication important to discipleship?
4. Who has God placed around you that you might intentionally invest in?



5. What would it look like for the fruit God is producing in your life to begin producing fruit in someone else's life?
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THE BIG QUESTION

The church can provide:

- Sermons
- Worship
- Conferences
- Retreats
- Seminars
- Small groups
- Counseling
- Discipleship resources

But none of these things can cultivate the soil of your heart for you.

At some point, we have to take responsibility for the condition of our soil.

Discuss

Which of these areas do you need to take greater responsibility for right now?

- ☐ Getting into God's Word
 - ☐ Prayer
 - ☐ Getting connected to community
 - ☐ Allowing people to know the real me
 - ☐ Receiving correction
 - ☐ Obeying what God is showing me
 - ☐ Removing unhealthy "thorns"
 - ☐ Digging deeper spiritually
 - ☐ Investing in someone else's discipleship
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PERSONAL RESPONSE

Take 2–3 quiet minutes before answering.

1. What kind of soil best describes my heart right now?

Footpath: I hear, but I'm not understanding or applying.

Shallow Soil: I'm excited, but I'm not rooted.

Thorns: I know Jesus, but something is choking out my joy.

Good Soil: I'm receiving, cultivating, producing, and multiplying.

2. What does God want to cultivate in me?

3. What is one thing I need to DO this week?

4. Who is one person I need to invite closer into my life?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Don't leave this discussion with simply something you **learned**.

Leave with something you will **practice**.



Choose ONE:

DIG DEEPER

Spend intentional time in God's Word each day this week.

PULL A THORN

Identify one distraction, habit, priority, or worry that has been crowding out your relationship with God.

GET ROOTED

Take a step toward deeper community and allow someone to know what is really happening in your life.

RECEIVE CORRECTION

Ask a trusted, godly person:

"Is there anything you see in my life that I may not be seeing?"

PRODUCE FRUIT

Identify one person you can intentionally encourage, disciple, pray for, or invest in.
