

Garden/Heart Illustration

- **Garden – Your Heart**

- The condition of a garden is eventually revealed by what grows in it. The condition of our hearts is eventually revealed by the fruit of our lives
- **Proverbs 4:23** *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*

- **Soil – Condition of your Heart**

- **Luke 8:8** *"Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."*
- Good Soil – A receptive heart
 - Hears God's Word
 - Receives God's Word
 - Obeys God's Word.
 - Produces spiritual fruit.
- Cultivate Good Soil (The seed is not usually the problem. The soil is)
 - Stay tender before God.
 - Don't ignore conviction.
 - Respond quickly when God speaks.
 - Pull weeds regularly.
 - Confess sin before it takes root.
 - Break up the hard places.
 - Bring disappointments, wounds, and fears to God.
 - Book of Hosea 10:12: "Break up your unplowed ground."
 - Receive God's Word daily.
 - Read it, meditate on it, apply it.
 - Stay connected to the Gardener.
 - Prayer keeps our hearts soft and receptive.

- **Knowledge – Reading and studying the Bible**

- **2Timothy 2:15** *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and correctly handles the word of truth."*
- Studying God's Word takes time, attention, and consistency

- **Seed – Word of God**

- Truth doesn't just inform us; it transforms us.

- **Galatians 6:7–8** *"A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."*

- **Weed – Sin**

- **Hebrews 12:1–2** *"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith..."*
- Weeds usually don't look dangerous at first. But if left alone, they spread quietly, take root deeply, and begin to choke out everything God is trying to grow
- What are weeds?
 - The works of the flesh

- Ex. Pride, bitterness, jealousy, lying, gossip, lack of self-control, drunkenness, laziness
- **Weeding – Confession and agreement with God**
 - Confession is bringing our hearts into agreement with God's truth.
 - **Psalm 139:23-24** *"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."*
 - Identify & pull out by the roots
 - Don't ignore tiny weeds (sin)
 - Don't ignore large weeds (sin) if you're overwhelmed
 - Ask for help (community & support)
 - Battle the flesh -ME
 - Don't plant your own weed seeds
 - What are you watching, listening to, entertain thoughts
 - Don't water the weeds
 - Rehearse the offence, feed bitterness
- **Water / Sun / Pruning / Deep Roots – Applying God's Truth**
 - James reminds us to be doers of the Word, not hearers only
 - Water / Sun
 - Prayer, Confession, Repentance, Abiding in Christ, Obedience to God's Word
 - Deep Roots
 - **Jeremiah 17:7-8** *"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.... they will be like a tree planted by the water... It does not fear when heat comes... and never fails to bear fruit."*
 - **Colossians 2:6-7** *"As you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and strengthened in the faith"*
 - Pruning
 - **John 15:2** *"Every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."*
- **Fertilizer – The Holy Spirit**
 - Power to grow, resist sin, and walk in God's ways
 - He works in both the quiet and the difficult places of our lives—often in small, steady ways that we only recognize over time.
 - He transforms us
 - Our thinking, our attitudes, our desires, our actions
- **Growth – Spiritual Maturity**
 - Transformation
 - He transforms our thinking, our attitudes, our desires, our actions
- **Harvest (Fruit) – Spiritual Fruit**
 - **Galatians 5:22-23** *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."*
 - **John 15:16** *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit—and that your fruit should remain..."*