

Who or What Are You Building Your Life on | 5 Day Devotional

Day 1

Matthew 13:1–3, 18–19

Devotional

Jesus begins the Parable of the Sower by talking about a farmer scattering seed. Later, he explains that the seed is “the message about the kingdom” and the soil is the human heart. The first kind of soil is “the path,” where the seed never really sinks in. Birds (which Jesus says represent “the evil one”) quickly snatch it away. This is not describing ignorant or unintelligent people. It is describing hearts that are hard and closed. The path is ground that has been walked on, pressed down, compacted. Nothing can penetrate it easily. In the same way, a heart can become hardened by past hurts, pride, cynicism, disappointment, or simple indifference.

“Do not understand” here is not just “didn’t get the theology.” It includes “didn’t welcome it, didn’t consider it, didn’t let it sink in enough to matter.” A closed heart creates space for the enemy to steal away what could have brought life. The path soil warns you: hearing Jesus from a distance is not enough. You must allow his word to be planted, to be taken seriously, to be wrestled with. Otherwise, you are functionally building your life on something else, no matter what you say you believe.

Application

Reflection: How many times do you hear God’s word (in church, in Scripture, through others) and move on without really thinking about it? How often do you decide what you believe based on your feelings or preferences instead of what Jesus says?

Action: .Set aside just 5–10 quiet minutes today. Ask God honestly: “Is my heart hard in any area?” Then sit in silence for a moment and pay attention to what comes to mind. Choose one teaching of Jesus you already know (for example, loving enemies, forgiving, seeking first his kingdom). Write down how your life actually lines up—or doesn’t—right now.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, show me where my heart has become like the hard path. Expose any pride, hurt, or stubbornness that keeps your word from sinking in. Soften my heart by your Spirit. Help me not only to hear your word, but to welcome it, to understand it, and to let it change what I build my life on. Amen.”

Day 2

Matthew 13:5–6, 20–21

Devotional

The second kind of soil looks promising at first. The seed springs up quickly. There is visible growth, visible excitement, visible response. But Jesus says the soil is shallow. There is rock beneath the surface, so roots can't go deep.

This is a picture of a person who responds emotionally and enthusiastically to God—maybe at a camp, retreat, service, or crisis—but never develops depth. There is joy without endurance, enthusiasm without discipleship, feelings without formation. The “sun” that scorches the plant is not random suffering; Jesus says it is “trouble or persecution because of the word.” In other words, following Jesus begins to cost something—socially, emotionally, morally. And where there is no root, the cost feels too high.

Roots are unseen, slow, hidden. They develop through regular habits: prayer, Scripture, obedience when it's hard, community, repentance. Shallow faith says, “I'll follow Jesus as long as it feels good and works for me.” Rooted faith says, “I will follow Jesus because He is Lord, even when I don't feel it and when it costs me.” This kind of shallow soil can look very Christian on the surface—occasional church attendance, general liking of Jesus—but when pressure comes, there is nothing solid underneath. The question “What are you building your life on?” is answered with, “My comfort, my convenience, and my feelings.”

Application

Reflection: How many times do you start spiritual habits (prayer, Bible reading, serving) with excitement and then quickly drop them when life gets busy or difficult? When following Jesus becomes costly, what kind of excuses do you tend to make to step back or stay quiet? What areas of your life remain “rocky ground” where you resist letting Jesus dig deeper and change you?

Action: Choose one small, consistent habit to deepen your roots this week (for example: read one chapter of Matthew each day, or pray for 5 focused minutes each morning). Commit to it for 7 days, regardless of mood.

Prayer: “Father, reveal where my faith is shallow. Show me where I have loved enthusiasm more than endurance. Grow deep roots in me through your Spirit. Teach me to follow you when it's not easy, not popular, and not convenient. Let my relationship with you go beyond moments of emotion and become a lifelong, rooted commitment. Amen.”

Day 3

Matthew 13:7, 22

Devotional

The third soil is different. The seed actually grows. There is a plant. There is some life. But something else is growing too: thorns. Jesus names them clearly: "the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth."

This is not the person who outright rejects Jesus, and not the one who burns out immediately. This is the person whose life becomes too crowded—too full of competing priorities—for Jesus to actually shape anything. The word is present, but it is "choked," suffocated, strangled. Worry keeps your mind constantly spinning on your problems and your plans, leaving little space to seek God's kingdom. Wealth promises control and happiness, but it quietly enslaves.

The result is tragic: "making it unfruitful." The plant lives, but it never bears fruit. There may be belief without impact, church attendance without transformation, Christian vocabulary without kingdom influence. Jesus fits into life as long as nothing more attractive or pressing conflicts with him. But when he competes with comfort, busyness, or entertainment, he loses. He doesn't get cut off entirely—he just gets choked, little by little, until there is no fruit. Again, the question returns: What are you building your life on? If your schedule, decisions, and energy are shaped more by worries and wealth than by Jesus' kingdom, your life may be spiritually alive yet fruitless.

Application

Reflection: How many of your daily decisions are driven more by worry (fear of missing out, fear of failure, fear of people) than by trust in Jesus? How often does following Jesus get pushed aside when it becomes inconvenient to your plans or preferences?

Action: Look at your week's schedule. Remove or reduce one activity that regularly crowds out time with God, and replace it with 10–15 minutes of unhurried prayer or Scripture.

Prayer: "Lord, show me the thorns in my life—the worries and the lies about money and success that choke your word. Reveal what has been competing with you in my heart. Give me courage to simplify, to trust you, and to put your kingdom ahead of my comfort. Make my life truly fruitful for you. Amen."

Day 4

Matthew 13:8, 23

Devotional

The final soil is the “sweet spot”: good soil that produces a multiplied harvest. The difference is not in the seed; it’s the same message about the kingdom. The difference is in the heart’s response. This person doesn’t just receive Jesus for personal comfort. Their life becomes a channel through which God blesses others. The mark of good soil is fruitfulness—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and also people drawn closer to Christ through them. Good soil doesn’t happen by accident. Soil becomes “good” through being broken up, cleared, and tended. In the same way, God often prepares hearts through repentance, surrender, discipline, and time. This is not about perfection, but about direction and priority. In this person’s life, Jesus is not another commitment among many; he is the foundation. The question “What are you building your life on?” is answered clearly: “On Jesus, His word, and His kingdom.” Everything else—school, job, relationships, money—gets reordered around him, not the other way around. The multiplication (30, 60, 100 times) shows that God does far more through surrendered people than they could ever do on their own. This is not reserved for a spiritual elite. Jesus offers this picture to the whole crowd as an invitation: your life can bear real, lasting fruit if your heart remains soft, deep, and uncluttered before God.

Application

Reflection: How many areas of your life right now clearly show “fruit” that could only come from Jesus working in you (changed character, restored relationships, people drawn to him)? How willing are you to let God rearrange your plans, comfort, and future so that your life can truly produce for his kingdom?

Action: Ask one mature believer you trust, “Where do you see spiritual fruit in my life, and where do you see room to grow?” Listen humbly and write down what they share. Choose one specific relationship (friend, classmate, coworker, neighbor) and intentionally look for a way this week to encourage them toward Jesus—through a conversation, an invitation to church, or a simple act of Christlike love.

Prayer: “God, make my heart like good soil. Break up what is hard, deepen what is shallow, and clear what is crowded. I offer you my plans, my time, my relationships, and my future. Use me to produce a harvest for your kingdom—far beyond what I could imagine. Let your life flow through me so that others come to know and follow Jesus. Amen.”

Day 5

Matthew 13:3–9; 18–23

Devotional

Reading the whole parable at once, you see Jesus is not just explaining why people respond differently to him; He is gently asking you, Which soil are you?

The path – hearing but not truly listening; the heart is closed, and the word is quickly stolen.

The rocky ground – quick joy, shallow depth; when faith becomes costly, it withers.

The thorny ground – real growth, but choked by worries and the pursuit of wealth and comfort; no lasting fruit.

The good soil – hears, understands, surrenders; produces a multiplied harvest.

Your “soil type” is not a fixed destiny. By God’s grace, a hard heart can be softened, rocks can be removed, thorns can be pulled, and soil can become good. But it requires honest evaluation and intentional response. Jesus invites you to build on him—on his word, his cross, his kingdom. When your heart becomes good soil to his truth, your life rests on a foundation that cannot be shaken, even when everything else is. The question is not only, “Where are you today?” but also, “Where do you want to be?”

Application

Reflection: What kind of foundation are you practically building on most—Jesus and his word, or something else (success, people, comfort, image)? How willing are you to let God change your “soil,” even if it means discomfort, repentance, or new priorities?

Action: Choose one clear, simple step that reflects building on Jesus as your foundation (for example: committing to regular involvement in a local church, setting a daily time with God, confessing a hidden sin to a trusted believer, or publicly identifying with Christ). Write it down and share it with someone who can encourage you.

Prayer: “Jesus, thank you that you keep sowing your word into my life. Today I choose to respond. Show me honestly which soil I have been. Where my heart is hard, soften it. Where my faith is shallow, deepen it. Where my life is crowded, clear it. Make me good soil that hears, understands, and produces fruit for your kingdom. Help me to build my life on you alone, knowing that in the end what matters most is where I stand with you. Amen.”