

PART 1 THE GOOD SOIL

Tilling the Garden of Your Heart — Keep Your Garden!

Theme

God's Word is the seed. Your heart is the soil. Your responsibility is to cultivate and guard the garden so that the Word can produce lasting fruit.

This teaching uses the picture of a garden to examine the condition of our spiritual lives. Jesus' parable of the sower makes it clear that the same seed can produce very different results depending on the condition of the soil.

1. THE SEED IS GOD'S WORD

Jesus said:

"A sower went out to sow."
— Mark 4:3

The seed represents **the Word of God**.

Luke 8:11 says:

"The seed is the word of God."

The issue is not the quality of the seed. **God's Word is good seed.**

The question is:

What condition is the soil?

Jesus described four conditions:

1. **The Wayside — hardened soil**
2. **Rocky Ground — shallow soil**
3. **Among Thorns — crowded soil**
4. **Good Soil — receptive and productive soil**

The good soil receives the Word, keeps it, and produces fruit with patience.

2. BECOMING GOOD SOIL IS A CONTINUAL PROCESS

Good soil does not simply happen.

A garden must be **worked**.

It must be cultivated, protected, watered, and maintained.

That gives us an important spiritual principle:

You cannot neglect your heart and expect your spiritual life to remain fruitful.

Genesis 2:15 gives us a picture of this responsibility:

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

The words used in the teaching are:

TILL IT — KEEP IT

Tilling involves cultivation.

Keeping involves guarding.

The teaching material identifies the process of tilling with **steady plowing, scattering seed, and proper cultivation**—a process that requires consistency for growth.

3. TILL THE SOIL OF YOUR HEART

Think about what happens to an actual garden.

If the soil is never worked, weeds eventually appear.

If it is never cultivated, it becomes hard.

If nothing is planted, nothing can grow.

If it is not cared for, what was once productive can become unproductive.

The same principle applies spiritually.

Your heart needs continual cultivation through God's Word.

Proverbs 12:11 says:

“He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits has no sense.”

There is a connection between **diligent cultivation and fruitfulness**.

So, ask yourself:

- What am I allowing to grow in my heart?
 - What am I planting through what I read and listen to?
 - What needs to be removed?
 - What areas of my life have become hard?
 - Am I consistently cultivating my relationship with God?
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4. KEEP — GUARD — YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:23 gives us a direct command:

“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

The NLT expresses the same thought:

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.”

Your heart is a garden that must be guarded.

You cannot control everything that happens around you.

But you can take responsibility for what you allow to take root **within you**.

That means paying attention to:

- What you believe
- What you continually think about
- What you receive
- What you speak
- What attitudes you cultivate
- What influences you permit to remain

5. WHAT GROWS IN THE HEART EVENTUALLY COMES OUT

Jesus said:

“What comes out of a man is what defiles a man.”

— Mark 7:20

He then described things that can come from within, including evil thoughts, deceit, envy, pride, and foolishness.

This gives us another important garden principle:

What is growing inside eventually becomes visible outside.

The fruit does not suddenly appear.

There was something growing beneath the surface first.

Therefore, spiritual maturity requires more than correcting outward behavior.

We must allow God’s Word to work on the condition of the heart.

6. KEEP THE WORD

Luke 8:15 describes the good soil:

“Those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

Notice the progression:

HEAR → KEEP → BEAR FRUIT

Hearing the Word is important.

But hearing alone does not produce the harvest.

The Word must be **kept**.

Jesus said in Luke 11:28:

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

The goal is not simply to hear more Scripture. The goal is to become fruitful through the Scripture we hear and keep.

7. GOD WANTS A WATERED GARDEN

Isaiah 58:11 gives us a beautiful picture:

“And you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

A healthy garden shows evidence of life.

It has growth.

It has fruit.

It has vitality.

Spiritually, God desires our lives to become like a **watered garden**—continually nourished and guided by Him.

8. THE GARDENER IS NOT ALONE

Genesis 3:8 gives us a picture of God walking in the garden.

Today, the believer has the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said:

“He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”
— John 14:16

And Jesus identified Him as:

“the Spirit of truth.”
— John 14:17

The believer is not expected to cultivate the garden of the heart alone.

The Holy Spirit is present to guide us, teach us, correct us, and help us keep what God has entrusted to us.

The teaching connects this with 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, which identifies the believer’s body as **the temple of the Holy Spirit**.

9. YOU ARE GOD’S GARDEN

This is an important shift in perspective.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:9:

“We are only God’s coworkers. You are God’s garden, not ours; you are God’s building, not ours.”

Paul also explains that one person may plant and another may water, **but God gives the increase**.

That keeps us humble.

We have a responsibility—but God is the One who produces the increase.

Our responsibility is to:

Plant.

Water.

Cultivate.

Guard.

Remain faithful.

God brings the increase.

10. CHARACTER MATTERS

The teaching identifies three character qualities that help us live out this principle.

RESPONSIBILITY vs. UNRELIABILITY

God has entrusted each of us with responsibilities.

We should faithfully carry what God has given us to do.

DECISIVENESS vs. DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS

A good garden requires decisions.

We must decide what stays and what goes.

Spiritually, we must make firm decisions that align with God's Word rather than continually wavering.

INITIATIVE vs. UNRESPONSIVENESS

A gardener does not wait for someone else to notice every weed.

A mature believer learns to recognize what needs attention and takes appropriate action.

Character is part of cultivating the garden.

11. THE ADULT QUESTION

The question is not simply:

“Am I saved?”

The question for this teaching is:

“What condition is the garden of my heart in today?”

Is the soil:

- Hard?
- Shallow?
- Crowded with thorns?
- Or receptive to the Word?

And then:

“What am I doing to till and keep it?”

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take a few minutes and honestly examine your spiritual garden.

1. What needs to be cultivated?

What area of your relationship with God needs attention?

2. What needs to be removed?

What is competing with the Word?

3. What needs to be guarded?

What have you allowed into your heart that could damage your spiritual growth?

4. What Word am I keeping?

What has God already shown me that I need to continue practicing?

5. What fruit is being produced?

Can I see evidence that God's Word is producing something in my life?

PART 1 KEY STATEMENT

“TILL YOUR GARDEN — KEEP YOUR GARDEN!”

God has given us His Word as good seed.

Our responsibility is to cultivate the soil of our hearts, guard what He has entrusted to us, and remain faithful to His Word.

Hear the Word.

Keep the Word.

Cultivate the heart.

Guard the garden.

Bear fruit.

And remember:

“You are God’s garden, not ours.”

— 1 Corinthians 3:9

God gives the increase. Our responsibility is to faithfully tend the garden.

The Good Soil!

**Tilling the Garden of Your Heart
Keep Your Garden!**

God's Word is the seed. Your heart is the soil. Your responsibility is to cultivate and guard the garden so that the Word can produce lasting fruit.

1 THE SEED IS GOD'S WORD



"A sower went out to sow."

— Mark 4:3

"The seed is the word of God."

— Luke 8:11

- The seed represents the Word of God.
- The issue is not the quality of the seed.
- God's Word is good seed.
- The question is: **What condition is the soil?**

2 THE FOUR TYPES OF SOIL



Wayside

- Hardened soil
- The seed is snatched away.

Mark 4:4
Luke 8:12



Rocky Ground

- Shallow soil
- Grows quickly but withers.

Mark 4:5-6
Luke 8:13



Among Thorns

- Crowded soil
- Choked by life's worries, riches, and pleasures.

Mark 4:7
Luke 8:14



Good Soil

- Receptive and productive
- Receives the Word, keeps it, and produces fruit with patience.

Mark 4:8
Luke 8:15

3 BECOMING GOOD SOIL IS A CONTINUAL PROCESS

Good soil does not simply happen. A garden must be worked. It must be cultivated, protected, watered, and maintained.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress (till) it and to keep (guard) it."

— Genesis 2:15



TILL IT

- Involves cultivation
- Plowing steadily
- Scattering seed
- Proper cultivation
- Requires consistency for growth



KEEP IT

- Involves guarding
- Protect against negative influences
- Cultivate a life that aligns with God's Word (Proverbs 4:23)

4 TILL THE SOIL OF YOUR HEART



- If the soil is never worked, weeds appear.
- If it is never cultivated, it becomes hard.
- If nothing is planted, nothing can grow.
- If it is not cared for, what was once productive can become unproductive.
- Your heart needs continual cultivation through God's Word.

"He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits has no sense."

— Proverbs 12:11

5 KEEP — GUARD — YOUR HEART



"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."

— Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

— Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

Guard what you allow to take root within you:

- What you believe
- What you think about
- What you receive
- What you speak
- What attitudes you cultivate
- What influences you permit

6 WHAT GROWS IN THE HEART COMES OUT



"What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, ... wickedness, deceit, envy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

— Mark 7:20-23

What is growing inside eventually becomes visible outside.

7 KEEP THE WORD



"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

— Luke 11:28

**HEAR → KEEP
→ BEAR FRUIT**

8 A WATERED GARDEN



"And you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

— Isaiah 58:11

9 THE GARDENER IS NOT ALONE



"He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth."

— John 14:16-17

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

— 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

10 YOU ARE GOD'S GARDEN



"We are only God's coworkers. You are God's garden, not ours; you are God's building, not ours."

— 1 Corinthians 3:9

We have a responsibility to:

- Plant
- Water
- Cultivate
- Guard
- Remain faithful.

God gives the increase.

11 CHARACTER MATTERS

Responsibility vs. Unreliability

- Faithfully fulfil the roles God has given us.

Romans 14:12

Decisiveness vs. Double-mindedness

- Make firm decisions in line with God's will.

James 1:5-6

Initiative vs. Unresponsiveness

- Recognize needs and take action.

Romans 12:21

12 PERSONAL APPLICATION



- 1 What needs to be cultivated?
- 2 What needs to be removed?
- 3 What needs to be guarded?
- 4 What Word am I keeping?
- 5 What fruit is being produced?



KEY STATEMENT

TILL YOUR GARDEN — KEEP YOUR GARDEN!

God has given us His Word as good seed. Our responsibility is to cultivate the soil of our hearts, guard what He has entrusted to us, and remain faithful to His Word.