

4 Children 8 Objects Part 1

The good soil! Tilling process! Keep your garden!

This teaching uses the imagery of a garden to explore the Christian life, drawing from the parable of the sower and other scriptures to illustrate key spiritual principles. The small bag of soil symbolizes "good soil," representing a life that is receptive to God's Word, and bears fruit. Here's a summary of the main points covered:

1. The Parable of the Sower: Understanding the Soil

The parable (Mark 4:1-9, Matthew 13:1-9, Luke 8:4-8) describes a sower scattering seed, which falls on different types of soil:

- **Path:** The seed is quickly devoured, symbolizing people who hear the Word but let the devil snatch it away.
- **Rocky Ground:** The seed grows quickly but withers due to lack of depth, representing those who receive the Word with joy but fall away when trials come.
- **Thorns:** The seed is choked by worldly concerns, indicating people who are distracted by life's worries, riches, or pleasures.
- **Good Soil:** The seed thrives and yields a plentiful harvest, symbolizing those who receive the Word with a good heart and persist in their faith.

The focus is on becoming "good soil," emphasizing a life that accepts the Word and consistently bears fruit.

2. The Process of "Tilling" and "Keeping" the Soil

Drawing from Genesis 2:15, believers are likened to gardeners tasked with both **tilling** (**cultivating**) and **keeping** (**guarding**) their spiritual lives:

- **Tilling** involves three main actions: plowing steadily, scattering seeds, and proper cultivation. It requires consistency for growth.
- **Keeping** the heart involves guarding against negative influences and cultivating a life that aligns with God's Word (Proverbs 4:23).

3. Insights into the Garden of Life

- The garden represents the heart or spiritual life of a believer.
- Like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, believers are responsible for maintaining their spiritual "garden" by cultivating and guarding it.
- Isaiah 58:11 relates life to a watered garden, thriving under God's guidance. In contrast, without Christ, life lacks spiritual vitality.

4. Spiritual Implications and the Presence of God

- Mark 7:20-23 emphasizes that what comes from the heart can defile a person, underscoring the need to keep the "garden" pure.
- Genesis 3:8 highlights God's presence in the garden, symbolizing His ongoing relationship and fellowship with believers, who are likened to temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Conclusion

The teaching encourages a lifestyle of spiritual discipline—tilling and keeping the "garden" of the heart. This involves not only receiving God's Word but also nurturing and protecting one's spiritual life, ensuring it remains fertile ground for growth. The Holy Spirit's presence within the believer's "garden" is essential for guidance, correction, and fellowship, leading to a fruitful and abundant life in Christ.

One step further. Character qualities to consider.

The following character qualities suggest ways to align our actions with this truth:

1. **Responsibility vs. Unreliability:** As God's servants, there is a responsibility to fulfill the roles assigned by God. Each person has tasks that God and others expect them to accomplish faithfully. Romans 14:12 reminds us that each will give an account to God, making it essential to act responsibly in all things.
2. **Decisiveness vs. Double-mindedness:** Being decisive means making firm decisions in line with God's will, as opposed to wavering or being uncertain. James 1:5-6 teaches the need for faith and consistency when seeking wisdom from God. Being double-minded can hinder effective service.
3. **Initiative vs. Unresponsiveness:** Taking initiative means recognizing needs and taking action without needing to be prompted. Romans 12:21 encourages overcoming evil with good, implying a proactive approach to challenges. Initiative aligns with the mindset of contributing to God's work whenever the opportunity arises.

By developing these qualities, **one can build a strong character**, equipped to serve God and others effectively. Proverbs 24:3 supports this, suggesting that wisdom and understanding establish a stable foundation for one's life. It encourages us to pursue godly wisdom in all actions, ensuring that what is built—whether relationships, communities, or personal growth—is solid and enduring.

This passage from **1 Corinthians 3:4-9** highlights the importance of unity, humility, and recognizing God's role in spiritual growth. It emphasizes that the work of planting (sharing the message) and watering (nurturing growth) are valuable tasks, but ultimately, it is God who brings about the increase. The focus should not be on the human messengers, but on God who empowers and brings life.

1 Corinthians 3:4-9 (TLB)

4 There you are, quarreling about whether I am greater than Apollos, and dividing the church. Doesn't this show how little you have grown in the Lord?

5 Who am I, and who is Apollos, that we should be the cause of a quarrel? Why, we're just God's servants, each of us with certain special abilities, and with our help you believed.

6 My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos' work was to water it, but it was God, not we, who made the garden grow in your hearts.

7 The person who does the planting or watering isn't very important, but God is important because he is the one who makes things grow.

8 Apollos and I are working as a team, with the same aim, though each of us will be rewarded for his own hard work.

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

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