

## Help! Why Am I not Growing?

### Luke 8:1-15

Very often we wonder why some people grow faster than others; or why there are some who hardly grow in their faith. Scripture tells us why some people mature and others don't. We have read that story many times; but I think we don't see ourselves in it when we read it. It's been around for two thousand years now. ***Wouldn't you like to know what keeps people from growing? Why some grow at a faster rate than others?*** Jesus tells us the reason using a very common illustration. Farming or gardening. You know that a seed will not grow the same way on any soil in which you plant it. The condition of the soil is very important; it will determine the productivity of the seed. So also the condition of your heart will determine your growth.

Jesus was a busy preacher, everywhere he went large crowds followed him to hear his teaching and witness miracles. Jesus taught in parables (an earthly story that contain spiritual meaning) Most of Jesus' parables were explained to those who wanted to know the meaning.

### Luke 8:1-15

This is known by the gospel writers as the parable of the sower or the parable of the soils.

#### The parable (v.5-8)

*-A farmer: Jesus, those who proclaim the message of the kingdom.*

*-The seed: the word of God (God's message)*

#### Four types of soil:

*-Path: trampled and eaten*

*-Rocky soil: no moisture, the plant withered*

*-Thorny soil: choked the plants*

*-Good soil: plant grew and produced fruit.*

#### ***The disciples wanted to know the meaning to this parable (v.9)***

The reason Jesus spoke in parable to separate those who really care about the kingdom from those who didn't. God's secrets of the kingdom was for his followers and not for the whole crowd; some in the crowds were not really after Jesus. ***Seeing, but they don't see (perceive). Hearing, but yet now understanding.*** The disciples are the only ones coming to Jesus seeking the meaning of the parable.

#### **The parable explained (v.11-15)**

*The Seed=God's word*

#### **4 types of soils**

**The path = hard hearts** (hear, but the word is taken away from their heart. They don't believe and don't get to be saved)

**Rocky soil = shallow hearts** (hear, receive the word with joy, no deep roots, they believe until they are tested, then fall away. Those who believe only when things are going well. This is a superficial response to the Gospel of Jesus). ***Why did they fall away? Because their hearts were shallow; the word of God didn't take roots in their hearts.***

**Thorny soil =thorny hearts** (they hear and believe, but they allow thorns to grow alongside the plants. **Thorns =life's worries, riches and pleasures.** These things will choke the word of God and will not allow to produce fruit in you. These are the Christians who never mature because the thorns in their lives don't allow God's word to produce fruit. *What things are choking the productivity of God's word in you?* You will never mature until you get rid of those thorns and allow God's word to germinate freely in your heart.

**The good soil = receptive hearts** (v.15) (they hear, believe and retain it and eventually produce fruit. These are those who get to mature. The word of God is fruitful in their hearts because they receive it and persevere.

The Seed was the same, the word of God. Growth and maturity as Christians only comes from God's word; letting it penetrate our hearts and produce the intended fruit God wants in us. But many times we don't allow God's word to change us.

**DO you want to know why you may not be growing in your faith?  
Because you have a heart problem. It may be hard, shallow or thorny.**

There are those whose hearts are hardened, for years they listen to the word of God preached but nothing happens to them.

Others hear, believe for a while, you see them in church, but then fall away because they didn't let the word of God develop roots in them. Others believe and it seems that they may mature, but they let other things (thorns) choke the progress of the word of God in their hearts. Then I see others who don't let nothing take the word away from them, they persevere and don't let thorns choke the progress of God's word in them. They get to grow and produce a crop for God's glory. Receptive hearts grow and mature.

***This parable is very encouraging to those who preach God's word.*** We keep on sowing it, and occasionally falls on receptive hearts and we rejoice when we see God at work in those hearts. I saw a very receptive heart on Friday night. She is so grateful she found a small group study and she has been learning so much and continues to go deeper in the study of the word of God. This is a receptive heart.

***I just got done sowing the seed, with what kind of heart will you receive it?***