

Parables
Week 1: The Parable of the Sower
Matthew 13:1-23

1. If you could ask God one question today, what would it be? Why?
2. Why does Jesus say that he teaches in parables? What questions does his answer raise for you?
3. How do you know if you're one to whom the "secrets of the kingdom" are being "revealed," rather than "concealed"? Does this seem "fair"? Why or why not?
4. What are the four different "heart" conditions that Jesus describes in the parable? Which one(s) are most applicable to your life?
5. What step will you take this week? (See the attached chart for some guidance)

Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13)
Four Conditions of the Heart

Soil	Heart Condition	Observations	Warning Signs and Questions	Prayer, Key Verse, Action Step
Path —seed won't germinate	Hard Heart Unbelief	No interest or rejection to Jesus and his teaching	“There’s no way the Bible could be true.” “I’m no longer interested in the God of the Bible.”	Pray for open heart 1 Peter 3:15-16 Practical acts of love and grace
Rocky —grows quickly above ground but rock blocks root development; sun scorches plant	Shallow Heart Without spiritual roots connected to a growing relationship with Jesus and obedience to his teaching, can't handle pain that may come with faith.	Movement toward God is situational and transactional—faith and obedience dependent upon usefulness. When spiritual growth results in challenge, more pain, or rejection from others, growth stops.	“Why isn't this working?” “I'm not getting anything out of this anymore.” “I've lost my sense of joy.” “My life has gotten worse since I began following Jesus.” “This is too hard. Why won't God answer my prayers?”	Pray for eternal perspective and understanding of self as a child of God. Colossians 3:1-4 Need help in breaking through “rocks” of earthly perspective—encouragement from others who have walked through pain
Thorny —plant grows but thorns eventually choke out the plant	Divided Heart Cares of the world and deceitfulness of wealth slowly choke out desire to follow Jesus.	Desire for wealth, status, approval of others is greater than desire to please God. Investment of time, gifts, resources into building personal kingdom greater than building God's kingdom.	“We're just too busy right now for church.” “I don't have time to pray, read the Bible, or be a part of a group or class.” Once we get past ____, I'll have more time for God.	Pray for desire from approval from others to die & love for God to grow. Romans 12:1-2 Need to “choke weeds” at the root—community to help focus and encourage
Good —plant grows and produces varying quantities of harvest	Fruitful Heart Faith in obedience to Jesus results in a healthy, productive life as a disciple who makes other disciples.	God is at the top and in the center of one's calendar and budget. Investment in discipleship environments and relationship is evident.	“I've given so much. Why isn't it working?” “Why can't my ministry be more like ____?” “Why can't my kids be more like ____?” “I'm so thankful that my ____ isn't like ____.”	Pray for continued dependence on the Lord, humility, and gratitude. Hebrews 10:24-25 Need ongoing equipping and environments to be encouraged and encourage others. Focus on clear next steps for investing resources (time, gifts, money) into the Kingdom.