



Growing Part 2: Soil Management

**“Grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

2 Peter 3:18

“As the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” Isaiah 61:11 (NIV)

“Jesus used stories to teach them many things. He said: ‘A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and ate it all up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn't much dirt. That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. But when the sun rose, the plants dried up, because they did not have deep roots. Some other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. Some other seed fell on good ground where it grew and produced a crop. Some plants made a hundred times more, some made sixty times more, and some made thirty times more.’”

“So listen to the meaning of that story about the farmer. What is the seed that fell by the road? That seed is like the person who hears the message about the kingdom but does not understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away what was planted in that person's heart. And what is the seed that fell on rocky ground? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching and quickly accepts it with joy. But he does not let the teaching go deep into his life, so he keeps it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching he accepted, he quickly gives up. And what is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching but lets worries about this life and the temptation of wealth stop that teaching from growing. So the teaching does not produce fruit in that person's life. But what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching and understands it. That person grows and produces fruit...” Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23 (NCV)

How to manage “the soil” of my heart:

1. Examine the soil of my heart.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

“Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.” Exodus 7:22 (NIV)

“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” 1 Corinthians 11:28 (NIV)

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Matthew 5:8 (NIV)

Growth step 1: Be honest with myself.

2. Improve the soil of my heart.

“Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.” Hosea 10:12 (NLT)

“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 11:19 (NIV)

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.” Psalm 86:11 (NIV)

Growth step 2: Be willing to make changes.

“I pray to you, O Lord, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.” Psalm 69:13 (NIV)

“Create in me a pure heart, O God...” Psalm 51:10 (NIV)

“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened...” Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)

