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(Part One) Seed beside the Road: Hardheartedness and Spiritual Warfare  
 (Part Two) The Rocky Soil: The Temporal Believer and Christian Suffering  
 (Part Three) Soil with Thorns: False View of the Greatest Good  
**(Part Four) The Good Soil: Understanding that Leads to Fruitful Production**

**Review:**

1. The parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-23; Mark 4:2-25; **Luke 8:1-19**).
  - a. This parable will aid in understanding all other parables and the word of God in general (Mark 4:13); it shows the believer that right attitude, right motives, and right love for God are necessary for right understanding. (Removes the need to make the Word mean what you want it to)
2. **The Seed beside the Road: Hardheartedness and Spiritual Warfare**
  - a. A hardhearted person will reject the Word of God, whether that person is a believer or not. (Arrogance about truth)
  - b. While Satan is able to blind the minds of unbelievers, the unbeliever can still find truth if he turns to the Lord (2 Cor. 3:16, 2 Tim. 2:25, 26).
  - c. Is it just for God to deny salvation to someone capable of believing, if he did not hear the gospel?
    - i. God places everyone in a time and environment that is optimal for seeking Him (Acts 17:26, 27), gives everyone an intellect designed to seek truth, gives everyone evidence of His existence (Rom. 1:20), gives everyone a moral law written in the heart (Rom. 2:15), and raises the intellect for anyone who seeks Him (2 Cor. 3:16).
    - ii. However, God also gives everyone the freedom to choose what they love and pursue (John 3:19, 20; Rom. 1:24; 2 Thess. 2:12)
  - d. Satan's method of removing the word of God:
    - i. Spiritual warfare is engaged in the realm of ideas (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
3. **The Rocky Soil: The Temporal Believer and Christian Suffering**
  - a. This believer is excited about God's blessings but does not reciprocate God's love.
  - b. Suffering involves loss or denial of a good. The value given to the good determines the attitude toward the loss (Phil. 3:8; cf. 1 Cor. 3:15).
  - c. Suffering and joy are compatible due to love for God and hope in the eternal (2 Cor. 7:4, 8:2; Heb. 10:32-34; 2 Thess. 1:4-7; Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 8:16-18; 2 Cor. 4:7-12, 17).
  - d. Suffering for Christ should be viewed as a privilege and a gift from God (Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29; 1 Peter 2:18-21, 3:14, 17, 4:1, 12-14, 19, 5:8-10).
  - e. The right attitude in suffering always brings glory to God. It reveals God's worthiness to be served, praised, and loved. One way of pursuing good for God is in pursuing ways in which to glorify God; ways that reveal His worthiness to be praised (Hab. 3:17, 18; Job; 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

**Soil with Thorns: False View of the Greatest Good**

1. Seed among the Thorns: the Distracted and Preoccupied Heart.

- a. The teaching is accurate but the heart is occupied.
  - b. This fragmented believer will not be able to pursue God and temporal goods. Therefore, choking the Word by suppression or distortion of truth will occur.
2. Worries of the World:
- a. Worry involves a mind focused on issues that have a heightened level of importance. These issues are almost always in the realm of the unknown.
  - b. Not all worries are bad. Worry for things pertaining to God can be a result of loving God and seeking to please Him (2 Cor. 2:4, 11:28; Phil. 2:19, 20).
  - c. Since worries of the world can be legitimate, the key is to never let them be excuses for not serving the Lord. One must learn to use God's resources to deal with worries (Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:7).
  - d. Mary and Martha demonstrate both sides of the parable (Luke 10:39-42).
  - e. Worries are often a result of being too busy (Ex. 5:9).
    - i. We must order our lives in ways that promote undistracted devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-35).
3. Deceitfulness of Wealth:
- a. A person in pursuit of wealth is often blind to his wasted life (Eccles. 4:8, 5:10-16, 6:1-9; Psalm 49:5-12, James 1:11).
  - b. Wealth obtained can be source of pride and arrogance (Ezek. 28; Prov. 18:10, 11; 1 Tim. 6:17).
  - c. There is nothing wrong with working and making a lot of money. There is nothing wrong with being rich. There is everything wrong with working merely for the pursuit of riches. Money is not evil. Greed and covetousness are evil (Col. 3:5).
  - d. Wealth can make it difficult to see a need for salvation (Matt. 19:16-26; Mark 10:21-30; Luke 18:22-25).
    - i. Likewise, wealth can make it difficult for a believer to see a need for spiritual things (Rev. 3:17).
  - e. A desire for wealth opens the door to various other types of evil (1 Tim. 6:9-11).
  - f. Those who are wealthy might not be pursuing wealth, but they are given instruction to protect them from problems related to wealth (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
    - i. (1) Don't be conceited about your wealth, (2) hope in God and not in wealth, (3) do good, (4) be rich in good works, (5) have a generous attitude, (6) give generously, (7) do steps 1-6 with the view of storing up treasures in heaven.
    - ii. By the way, God gives all things to be enjoyed.
4. Hedonism: the Pursuit of Pleasure and Desires for other Things
- a. What you pray for reveals what you desire in life. Many Christians actually pray that God will aide them in their spiritual adultery (James 4:1-3).
5. The overall cure is to orient to the greatest good. "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" only works when the heart treasures God and eternal rewards (Matt. 6:19-34).
- a. Occupation with temporal worries, wealth, and pleasures of life indicate that God is not the greatest good.
  - b. If Jesus is teaching that the pursuit of temporal goods will choke the accurate teaching of the Word of God so that the one hearing will have no fruitful production in his life, then it stands to reason that accurate teaching does not include pursuing God for temporal blessings.

- i. Trying to build up enough faith to provide for the things we worry about is not the solution. The problem is not that we are worried. The problem is what we are worried about.
- ii. Trying to trust that God will make us wealthy is not the solution. The problem is not that we don't trust God enough. The problem is trusting God for a good that our hearts desire more than Him.
- iii. We should not seek His kingdom and righteousness because it is a formula to get temporal blessings. Matthew 6:25-34 was written to free us from worry, not to find a source for attaining what we worry about.

### **The Good Soil: Understanding that Leads to Fruitful Production**

1. The Good Soil:
  - a. The soil is good, and likewise, the heart is good (καλός) and good (ἀγαθός j) (Luke 8:15).
  - b. The first good refers to the condition of the heart that enables the understanding and acceptance of the Word of God.
    - i. This believer has a commitment to truth and has humility toward Scripture.
    - ii. The believer has an unselfish heart that understands salvation and Christianity is not all about personal blessing and comfort. The heart is able to see the good in suffering.
    - iii. The believer has removed thorns or desires for temporal goods that corrupt understanding.
    - iv. This results in acceptance of the truth.
  - c. The second good refers to the heart's desire to apply the Word which results in fruitful production.
    - i. There is a love and commitment to God that enables the believer to embrace suffering for God.
    - ii. The thorns that would occupy the believer's time and actions are removed.
    - iii. If we do not move beyond the understanding and acceptance of truth we end up deceiving ourselves (James 1:22).
2. Sins of Omission (James 4:17)
  - a. Fruitful production is not accomplished by removing all sins of commission.
  - b. The removal of sinful thoughts and acts is only a necessary precondition for application of doctrine.
    - i. Not every sinful aspect of one's life must be removed before application. A pattern of drunkenness does not preclude a believer from helping someone in need. A wrong attitude about the poor might prohibit a believer from fruitful application in helping the poor, even if the believer does the outward act of helping.
  - c. The Bible often combines commands of what we ought to do with commands of what to stop doing (Rom. 12:2, 13:12-14; Gal. 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:25-32; Col. 3:5-17; Hebrews 12:1; 1 John 1:5-10).
  - d. When we are evaluated at the JSJC, we will be rewarded based on what we did, not what we did not do.