

Pt 1: Getting a Grip on our Spiritual Life

"Before we can become what God wants us to become we have to grow spiritually."

If you're a Christ follower today, what condition would you say your spiritual life is right now? On a scale of 1 – 10, where would you rate your spiritual intensity for Jesus?

Please circle [Poor] [Average] [Good]
1 2 3.....4 5 6 7.....8 9 10

If you are not yet a Christ follower, but you are on a spiritual journey trying to find meaning and a purpose for your life. Again, on a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the possibility of following Jesus as the answer to your searching?

Please circle [Poor] [Average] [Good]
1 2 3.....4 5 6 7.....8 9 10

Jesus once told a story to a crowd of people who gathered to listen to Him. In the story Jesus identifies three barriers that prevent us from growing spiritually. In the same story, Jesus also presents us with three antidotes to grow spiritually.

Luke 8:1; 4-15 (niv)

If we want to grow spiritually we must ...

1. Decide to be _____ to God.

We must **'want'** to grow. Basically people don't grow because they don't want to! They are spiritually closed and unresponsive.

Luke 8:5 (nlt) *A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds came and ate it.*

Then in vs12, Jesus gives us the meaning of vs5;

Luke 8:12 (tlb) *The hard path where some seed fell represents the hard hearts of those who hear the words of God, but then the devil comes and steals the words away and prevents people from believing and being saved.*

A lot of peoples' minds are like this. They've got a hardened attitude and are closed minded. Sometimes our life can be like this seed that doesn't take root because of our unresponsiveness to God!

There are three causes that contribute to developing a closed mind...

i. _____ **contributes to people closing their minds to God.**

Obviously, if we're afraid of God and what He may ask us to commit to, we're not going to want to get close to Him.

ii. _____ **contributes to people closing their minds to God.**

Bitterness is a spiritual form of cancer. It eventually spreads and will ultimately kill us off spiritually if it is not attended to in the early stages!

iii. _____ **contributes to people closing their minds to God.**

If we don't think we need God, then we're not going to be receptive to God.

James 1:21 (gw) *So get rid of all immoral behavior and all the wicked things you do. Humbly accept the Word that God has placed in you. This Word can save you.*

2. Decide to _____ spiritually.

Spiritual growth is a choice. We need to be committed to exercise spiritual disciplines needed for us to grow.

If we don't, we're going to live a shallow and superficial Christian life.

Luke 8:6 (tlb) *Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. This seed began to grow, but soon it withered and died for lack of moisture.*

Jesus is saying this shallow soil represents a _____ commitment to God and His Word.

Luke 8:13 (gw) *Some people are like the seeds on rocky soil. They welcome the Word with joy, whenever they hear it, but they don't develop any roots. They believe for a while, but when their faith is tested, they abandon it.*

Until we let the Word of God penetrate the bedrock of our personality and lifestyle it's going nowhere.

Matthew 7:26 (niv)

We have to allow God's Word to sink into our heart and then to decide "What am I going to do about it?"

James 1:22 (ph) *Don't only hear the message but put it into practice. Otherwise you're merely deluding (cheating) yourself.*

1 Timothy 4:7 (ph) *Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit.*

The key to spiritual fitness is motivation and it will cost us time and energy.

Four commitments for Spiritual Growth...

- i. Commit to spending _____ with other people who want to grow spiritually too.
- ii. Commit to _____ spiritual disciplines to become spiritually fit.
- iii. Commit to _____ our God-given abilities in serving God to help other people.
- iv. Commit to _____ our experience journeying with God.

By following through on these commitments, we will develop a spiritual root structure that will be conducive to growing spiritually.

3. Decide to get rid of any unnecessary _____.

There are all kinds of distractions that will attempt to distract us and waste our time in decreasing our enthusiasm from growing spiritually.

Luke 8:7 (ncv) *Some seed fell among thorny weeds, but the weeds grew up with it and choked the good plants.*

Luke 8:14 (nlt) *The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.*

Jesus is saying this soil is full of _____.

Notice the word "choked" in v7 and the words "crowded out" in v14.

This is the third barrier that keeps us from growing spiritually - a _____ life.

We often confuse activity and productivity. They are not the same.

We can be very busy and still be unproductive!

In Luke 8:14 (niv) **Jesus points out three kinds of distractions - (weeds).**

- i. The _____ of life.
- ii. _____ can choke our vitality.
- iii. _____ can be a weed.

Weeds are always the sign of one thing – neglect.

What do we do with weeds?

Rip them out! Uproot them! Eliminate them! Get rid of them!

Maybe today some of you need to use some spiritual Roundup.

You need to be ruthless in eliminating distractions.

Application

Luke 8:15 (nlt) *And the seed that fell on the good ground is like those who hear God's teaching with good, honest hearts and obey it and patiently produce good fruit.*

When it comes to spiritual growth, the heart of the matter is really a matter of the heart.

What does your heart reveal?

What is it in your life that needs to be eradicated?

Think of one thing in your life that's pulling you away from God.

It may be good but it is a negative distraction.

Write it down below;
