

Review:

Lesson 1: Joyful & Teachable

Lesson 2: Spiritual Foundations

The Audience of Parables

Luke 8:1-15

One reason the teaching of Jesus was largely unprecedented for rabbis of his time is that his intended audience was largely unprecedented: fishermen, sinners, tax collectors, zealots and WOMEN. Jesus _____ religious teaching that way.

Discussion 1. Jesus surprised the religious leaders by choosing the followers he chose. Do you think anyone was surprised that YOU became a Christ follower? Why or why not?

What is the key variable, i.e., the deciding factor, which determines who will receive and be changed by the gospel message and who will not? According to Jesus, it is the _____ of the _____ into which the message is planted.

Discussion 2. Think about the people you know who have (thus far) rejected Jesus and his message. What kinds of things does the enemy use in our culture to harden people's hearts toward the gospel? Was there ever a time in your own journey when your heart was hardened toward Jesus and the gospel?

Jesus' stories revealed deep spiritual truths to his intended audience and, at the same time, concealed those same truths from those whose hearts were unwilling to receive it. This is the _____ of his parables.

Discussion 3. Do you believe the Holy Spirit in you gives you understanding of scripture you otherwise would not have? Can you remember a time in your life (before you were a Christ follower) when the deeper meanings of the parables were not as clear to you?

Those of us who are following Jesus have a daily responsibility to tend the soil of our hearts, driving our roots deep into Him and regularly _____ the attitudes and temptations that slow our spiritual growth.

Discussion 4. What kinds of spiritual disciplines help you tend the soil of your heart? What disciplines do you not yet practice that you believe might help you tend the soil of your heart?

Discussion 5. How does this lesson cause you to pray? How does it prepare your heart for worship?