

# STEPS TO GROWING SPIRITUALLY (PT3)

In *Luke 8:4-15* Jesus told a story of a farmer sowing seed. The seed represents the Word of God.

As a Christ follower our goal in life is to become more like Jesus and to grow spiritually mature by applying the Word of God into our lives.

However, in life we face all kinds of distractions that can be barriers that restrict our spiritual growth.

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

This soil is full of **weeds**, that eventually overcrowds the soil and chokes the good plants.

We can become so distracted and occupied doing more and pursuing more, that potentially we stop passionately pursuing Jesus.

- Joy has gone out of serving Jesus, because of an overcrowded lifestyle!

- We neglect applying the Scriptures into our lives and we become less passionate towards Jesus and His purposes.

The third barrier that keeps us from growing spiritually, is an **overcrowded life**.

**Antidote 3:** To grow spiritually, we must **IDENTIFY** and **ELIMINATE** **DISTRACTIONS**.

Jesus identifies three kinds of distractions in *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.*

### **i. CARES**

The problems, pressures and worries of life have a tendency to drain us and leave us physically and emotionally fatigued.

**Jesus is the antidote to our fatigue and lack.**

*Philippians 4:6-7 (tlb)* *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. <sup>7</sup> If you do this, you will experience God's*

*peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:13 (nlt) For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

## **ii. RICHES**

Becoming so busy working trying to sustain lifestyle choices that God's purposes are not our primary concern.

*Matthew 6:33 (nlt) He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.*

**Our motive for giving is more important to God than our money!**

The way we give reveals our affection for the object or person who we give to.

Our motive for giving should be in response to God's generosity He has shown toward us.

## **iii. PLEASURES**

Leisure, fun and entertainment becomes more attracting than spiritual disciplines that continue to strengthen us and grow us spiritually.

*Proverbs 21:17 (msg) You're addicted to thrills? What an empty life! The pursuit of pleasure is never satisfied.*

Weeds (distractions) are a sign of neglect.

Distractions can camouflage what we are neglecting that need our attention.

Is there any need for you or I to apply some spiritual weed killer to eliminate some distractions?

**What attitudes, behaviours or sin needs to be eradicated in our life?**

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

*Luke 8:8 (nlt) Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!*

This is the fourth soil Jesus mentions that will grow a crop unlike the other three soils we have highlighted.

*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.*

Are any of the following barriers hindering you from growing more to be like Jesus?

If so, apply the antidote that will produce the good soil of your heart so the seed of God's Word will take root and grow into a fruitful spiritual life

**Barrier # 1: A closed mind.** Your heart has hardened towards Jesus because of pride or hurt.

**Antidote: Be receptive to Jesus and His Word.** Cultivate an open attitude toward Jesus by surrendering to Him.

**Barrier # 2: A shallow commitment.** You are reluctant to give more of yourself to the things of God.

**Antidote: Be committed to grow.** By applying the Word of God daily to influence our minds, hearts and actions.

**Barrier # 3: An overcrowded life.** You become too busy and occupied doing more and pursuing more, that you have stopped growing in your relationship with Jesus.

**Antidote: Identify and eliminate distractions.**

Apply some spiritual roundup to those weeds of distraction that is affecting our spiritual growth.

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

**What does your heart reveal?**