

Let's follow the parable of the sower:

Matthew 13:4-9: <sup>4</sup>“And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. <sup>7</sup>And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

When asked why He spoke in parables, Jesus answered:

Matthew 13:13: “Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”

Here are a few questions to ask ourselves:

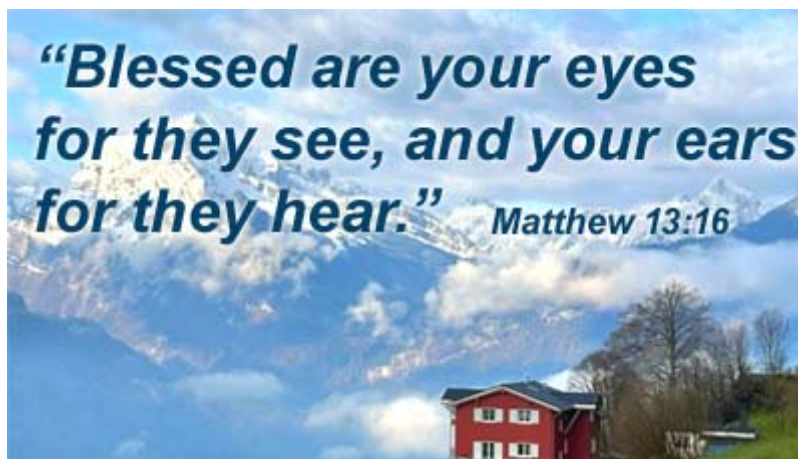
- Do I let the events of the world control me, so that the Word of God has no place in my life?
- Do I only superficially welcome the Word of God in my heart, so the challenges of life overcome my faith?
- Do I let the world's lusts of the flesh draw and overpower me, so my heart is far from God?

Or, better yet,

- Do I daily sow in my heart the Word of God, so I grow to abide in Christ day after day?

Which “Do I” best describes me?

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When asked by His disciples to explain the parable of the soils, Jesus said:

Matthew 13:19-23: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

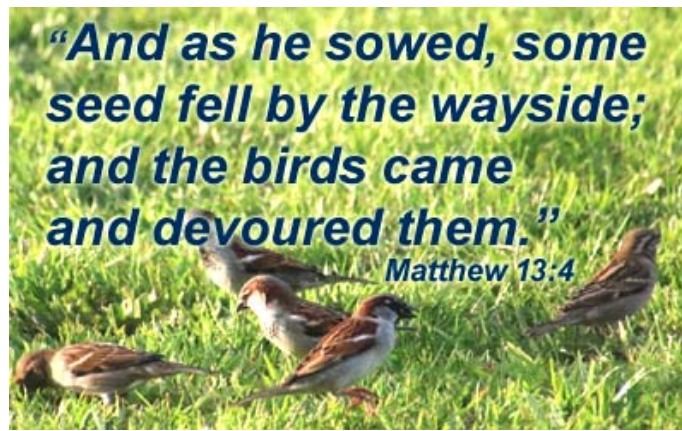
Likewise Jesus also said:

Matthew 5:6: "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

How good is the ground of my heart, and how wholeheartedly do I receive the Word of God to grow in Christ?

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What does the wayside indicate in this parable?

Matthew 13:19: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."

What causes a person to not understand the truth?

1 Corinthians 2:14: "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

As such:

1 Corinthians 2:13: "We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."

Where then does our answer come from?

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The reason why Christians are so described in:

Acts 17:11: "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so."

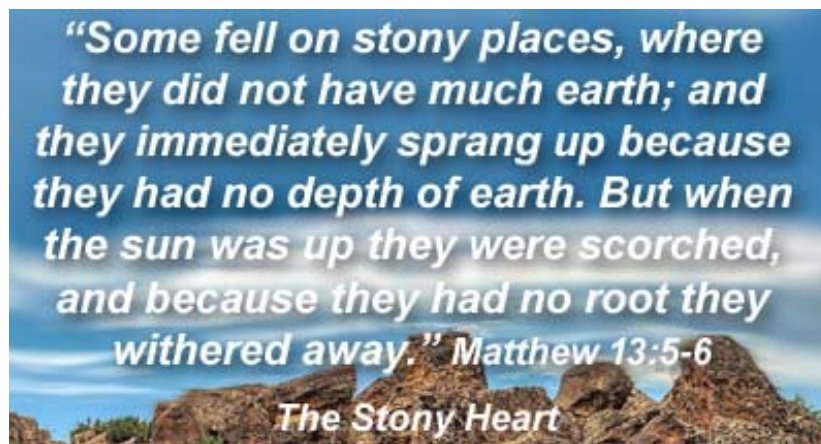
Therefore:

James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

What's more?

Colossians 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

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How did Jesus explain the seeds on stony ground?

Matthew 13:20-21: "He who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, immediately he stumbles."

What causes a person to have no root in himself?

Hebrews 4:2: "For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed."

As such:

Hebrews 11:6: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him."

The reason why:

Ephesians 4:18: "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."

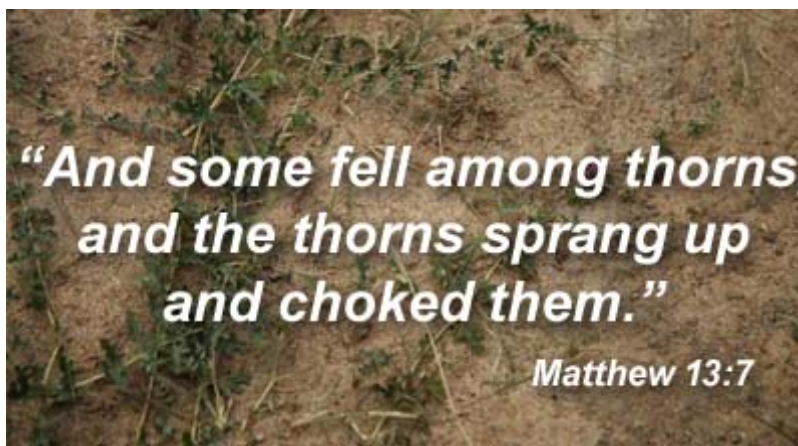
However, as true believers:

1 Corinthians 2:12: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."

Therefore:

Colossians 1:9: "Ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

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How did Jesus explain the seed among the thorns?

Matthew 13:22: "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and he becomes unfruitful."

As such, what are the cares of the world we must avoid and reject?

Galatians 5:19-21: "The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Why?

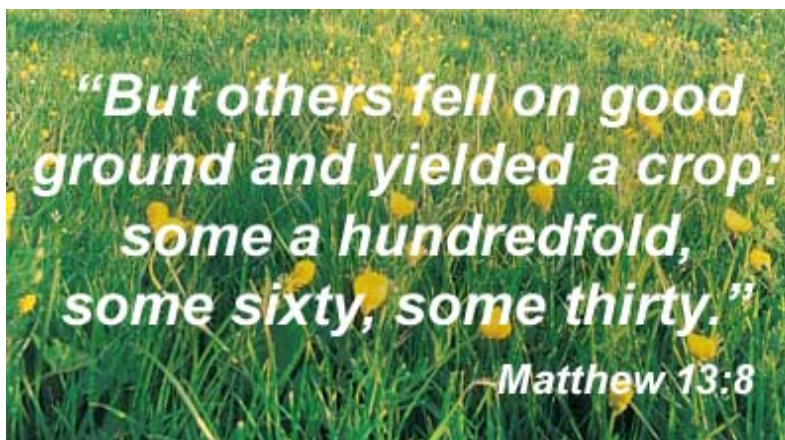
James 4:4: "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Therefore:

Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Luke 21:34: "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly."

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Here's how Jesus explained the productive ground:

Matthew 13:23: "He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the Word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

What is our only and true reliable source of knowledge to feed on, so we become good ground for Christ?

Hebrews 4:12: "The Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The reason why:

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

As such Jesus clearly declared:

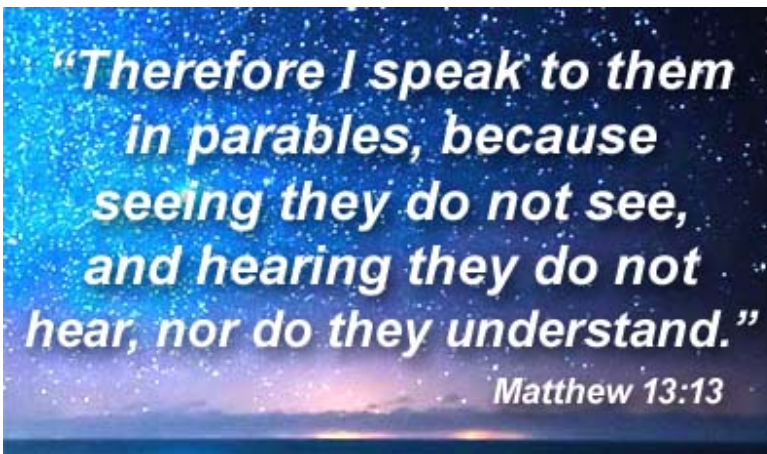
John 6:63: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life."

John 8:31-32: "If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

How much fruit do I bear for Christ?

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What causes a person to be deaf and blind to the Word of God, and how must we avoid it?

2 Timothy 3:1-5: "Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

Why?

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What's more?

John 10:27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

If we are to follow Christ as Lord, how must we then live?

Luke 9:23: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Why?

Matthew 10:38: "He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Therefore:

Colossians 2:6-7: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

Is Christ Lord of my life?

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