



**THE SOIL TEST**  
**6<sup>th</sup> January 2008**  
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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 8:1-21

**MAIN POINT:** Our growth and change this year will be determined by our responsiveness to God's Word.

**KEY IDEAS:**

- Our growth in godliness and Christ-like character is determined by the soil of our hearts.
- God holds us accountable for how we respond to His Word.
- Merely hearing is not enough. Hearing is worthless if it does not lead to doing.

**1. The Hard Soil**

- Pictures people with hard hearts who are totally unresponsive to God's Word.

**2. The Shallow Soil**

- Pictures people who "believe" for a while but in times of testing their faith shrivels and they wither away.

**3. The Infested Soil**

- Pictures people who make gestures towards Christ but have divided hearts and thus divided loyalties. Spiritual issues are not a priority and thus the draw of what the world offers lures them away from Christ.

**4. The Good Soil**

- Pictures people with hearts that are open and receptive to God's Word, allow it to take deep root within them. The seed produces a rich harvest of fruit.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR ENSURING OUR HEARTS IS RESPONSIVE TO GOD'S WORD:**

**A. Take Care How You Hear**

- a. Pray that God would give you the good heart described in v.15
- b. Pursue God in the week through the spiritual disciplines
- c. Purify your mind by turning away from activities that could easily distract
- d. Prepare your heart as you prepare for church

**B. Hear the Word of God and Do It**

- a. Use the resources at your disposal to make a difference
- b. From each message discern and determine at least one point of application.

**FELLOWSHIP STARTERS:**

*Truth Reigns...*

1. How has this passage helped you to see the importance hearing and doing?
2. What do you think is meant by the warning of v.18?

*Humility Grows...*

3. What sort of soil do you assess yourself to be?
4. What one thing do you plan to put into practice so as to prepare yourself so that you might "take care how you hear"?
5. What one thing do you plan to put into practice so as to "hear the Word of God and do it"?

*Prayer Covers...*

6. Pray for one another that God would give us good soil and fertile hearts, receptive to his Word, and that we would see growth in godliness in our lives, families, and church this year.

*Encouragement Flows...*

7. Take time to specifically encourage someone in the group for where you see them pursuing growth in godliness.