

Principles for Powerful Living

The Cultivation Principle

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, May 7th

In Mt. 13:1-23 Jesus described how God's word (the good seed) falls on different types of soil (hearts). The "hard soil" (aka: "wayside") was the only area of the field that failed to respond in any way to the seed that was sown because it had not been cultivated (*prepared to receive the seed*). Due to the lack of any cultivation, the hard soil wouldn't allow the seed to even penetrate it and the "fowls" quickly devoured it. (Vs 4 and 19) In 2 of the 3 areas of the field Jesus described (*the rocky and thorny soil*) the seed was able to "penetrate" the soil (heart) and it even began to "germinate" (grow), but it was never able to propagate (*produce fruit*). (vs 5-7 & 20-22) Only on the "good ground" was the seed able to Propagate!
(grow to maturity and bear fruit.)

What makes some soil and soul "good" (*kalos* : beautiful, valuable) while other soil is tangled or rocky and therefore unproductive? The soil was the same in all 4 categories! The only difference between them was the amount of Cultivation that was invested in each. Last week we discussed what makes hearts hard. This week we'll examine how to "soften" them through cultivation!

THE PURPOSE OF CULTIVATION. 1 Cor 3:9

1. There are at least three distinct dimensions of the word "Cultivate":

A. Preparing: The Soil for the growth of plants.

- 1) Planning. "What do I want to **grow**?" (Produce) (Josh 24:15; 1 Kg 18:21)
- 2) Purging (Clearing) "What has to **go**?" (2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Cor 5:7)
- 3) Plowing: "What's '**below**'?" *Unseen that might hinder growth.* (Hosea 10:12)

B. Protecting: To Foster/improve growth by:

- 1) Study: (**Learn**) 1 Pt 3:7 *"Dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto her..."*
 - a) Learn what helps and what harms it (her).
 - 2) Care: (**Love**) Eph. 5:28,29 *"So ought men to love their wives...Nourish (ektrephe'o: feed, rear to maturity) and Cherish (thalpo: warm, brood, foster growth) them... even as the Lord the church."*
 - 3) Work: (**Labor**) apply what you learn to what (and who) you love. John 13:17 *"If ye know (ido: are aware of) these things, happy (Makaridos: supremely fortunate) are ye if ye do them."*
- Knowledge and love without application is useless. Jn 14:15, 21 *"If ye love me keep my commandments..."*

C. **Partnering**: Seeking the society of or making friends with. (Cultivating relationships)

- 1) We were created for relationships! Gen. 2:18 *"It is not good that the man should be alone!"*
Ecc 4:7-12 vs 9: *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor...."*
10 *"...but woe to him that is alone when he falls..."*

2. We Were **Created** To Cultivate! Adam's first job was to cultivate Eden! Gen. 2:15

"The LORD took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it (abad': to work or till) and to keep it." (shamar' : to hedge about, that is, guard, protect, attend to.)

A. Cultivation Requires **Effort**! (Work)

- 1) If this was true before the fall, *How much more is it true now?!?*

- 2) Sin affects the soil, as well as the soul! (Ro. 8:22) Work was not part of the fall (curse of sin), but the “stubbornness of the soil” was! Gen. 3:17,18 *“cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow (iṣṣābôn’: worrisome labor, grief, pain) shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . .”*
- a) Left to itself the soil & soul will grow wild and cluttered with thorns and thistles! (Entropy!)
- 3) God calls us to this work! 1 Cor 3:9 *“we are laborers together (synergos’: to work with) ye are God’s husbandry”* (geōr’gion: cultivable farm, from ge {soil} & ergon {to toil/work})
- a) The soil (and soul) won’t cultivate itself. Pr. 24:30-32
- b) Neglect will bring certain sorrow. Pr. 24:33-34; Jn 10:10

Conclusion:

“Good seed” needs “good ground” in order to Penetrate, Germinate, and Propagate.
Good ground requires Cultivation!

The only difference in the actual soil in Jesus’ story was the amount of Cultivation each section received!
 The fruitfulness of a farm, garden, or field will be in direct proportion to the amount of care and cultivation it receives. What’s true of a Farm is also true of:

- 1) Our Faith 2 Peter 1:5-10 *“add to your faith. . . .”* See also 2 Pt 3:18
- 2) Families Eph. 5:21-6:4 Vs 21 *“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”*
- 3) Our Friendships Pr. 18:24 *“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”*

Application:

If Cultivation involves intentionally Preparing, Protecting, and Partnering in order to produce fruitful crops (Faith, Family, & Friendships),

What are you doing to cultivate these important relationships with God and others?

Cultivation (like Consecration) takes time, energy and commitment.

Gal 6:7-10 *“whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

And let us not be weary in well doing:

for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all. . . especially . . . the household of faith.”

Because harvest time is coming! Ps. 126:5,6

“Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word. Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on; Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see. Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide; And run not before Him, whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord, And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul, Each thought and each motive beneath His control. Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love, Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.”

William D. Longstaff, ca.1882