

## TAKE IT PERSONALLY

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*Like seed sown on good soil, hear the Word, accept it, embrace it,  
and produce a harvest beyond your wildest dreams.*

*Mark 4:20*

Before going any further, take a few moments to quiet your heart in prayer and give your heart to God. Read and personalize Psalm 139:23-24. Ask God to search you as only He can. Rest in the fact that He knows your precious heart. Trust Him to test you and reveal your anxious thoughts. Allow Him to open your eyes to any offensive ways within you, and then follow Him as He leads you in the way everlasting.

Jesus told parables, or what we'd simply call stories, as a personal invitation for others to dig into the deeper meanings of biblical truths. Read *The Parable of the Sower* in Luke 8:4-15. Then record the challenge Jesus gives in the second half of Luke 8:8 here:

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When Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," He wasn't talking about our physical ears or even our ability to hear sounds. He is instead referring to our willingness to apply His message to our lives. He's asking us to listen carefully and take His words personally.

Refer to Luke 8:10. To whom has the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God been given to, according to this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

As one of Jesus' disciples – or followers – the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God is available to you, and though these truths can only be made known by revelations from God, you can personally invite the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Word to you in its entirety. Please stop and pray for fresh insights into this passage now.

In Luke 8:10 Jesus cross-references Isaiah 6:9 and points out the sad truth that some people are simply not willing to apply God's Word to their lives.

“though seeing, \_\_\_\_\_;  
though hearing, \_\_\_\_\_.”

It is not God's desire to withhold His revelations. Jesus shares this piece of the Gospel to encourage the whole-hearted embracing of His teachings rather than a hard-hearted resistance to His movement in our lives. It is also included to remind us of what can happen to our own hearts if we allow them to become spiritually dull. May we purpose to have eyes to see and hearts to understand!

This same parable is told in Matthew 13. Look at verse 15 of that chapter. What promise does Jesus make to those who choose to understand with their hearts and turn to Him? \_\_\_\_\_

In what area of your life would you like Jesus to apply His complete healing? Are you turning to Him for that healing? \_\_\_\_\_

Let's apply our "FIT" principle to this passage as we trust Jesus to speak to these personal needs in our lives. Recall what each letter in "F-I-T" refers to:

God's Word is F \_\_\_\_ you,  
God's Word actively works I \_\_\_\_ you,  
God's Word ministers to others T \_\_\_\_\_ you.

God is for you, He longs to make a deposit in you, and His plan is to show Himself strong through you. Our response to Him and His Word will determine the magnitude of His movement in and through our lives. Luke 8:11-15 explains *The Parable of the Sower* and the four ways that people choose to respond to Jesus. Please re-read that section of the Scripture.

According to verse 11, what does the farmer's seed represent? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 12 explains what Jesus meant back in verse 5 when He noted the times that the birds of the air ate up the seed, or God's Word. Who is Jesus really talking about when He refers to "the birds of the air"? \_\_\_\_\_

The devil is real, and he has a very definite intent. What does the devil, also known as the thief, want to do with the seed in us according to John 10:10?  
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The devil's goal is to distract us from hearing God's Word with understanding, and therefore prevent us from applying the Bible to our lives. Satan is not so much worried about us hearing or reading the Bible; what gets his attention is when we take it personally and internalize God's Word.

What changes might you need to make to ensure that the enemy will not be able to distract you from receiving the deposit the Holy Spirit has for you?

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Luke 8:13 depicts another scenario when it comes to responding to the Bible. Why do some believers only believe for a while, but then fall away during a time of testing? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you explain “having roots” in Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

Our belief must go beyond what is nominal or superficial, and our roots must go deep. I pray that we would be deeply rooted and established in the love of Christ (see Ephesians 3:16-19)! How is Christ described in Revelation 22:16? \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus is our Root, and we are to be anchored in Him and by Him if we are to stand firm when the going gets tough. What does Isaiah 7:9(b) tell us about standing firm in our faith? \_\_\_\_\_

During our time of testing, what must our faith be accompanied by according to James 2:17? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you describe a time of testing you’ve experienced or are experiencing now? \_\_\_\_\_

What actions should you demonstrate during this season in order to make your faith complete (see James 2:22)? \_\_\_\_\_

We’re given insight into which source we should go to for strength when it comes to coupling our faith with actions in Luke 8:6. Look back at that verse. Why did the plants wither? \_\_\_\_\_

We, too, need spiritual refreshment and hydration if we are to thrive. What promise does Jesus give us concerning His living water in John 7:37-38?

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Are you daily drinking the water of life that Jesus is offering? Is your thirst satisfied? Do your priorities need to be rearranged so that you won’t wither?

A third response to the Word of God is found in Luke 8:14. Why is it that some people do not mature in their faith? \_\_\_\_\_

Are any of life's worries choking you? \_\_\_\_\_  
What will result if we allow the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for things other than God come in to our lives and choke out the Word according to Mark 4:19? \_\_\_\_\_

Choosing worldly worries over resting in Christ chokes us and God's Word in us, preventing the Holy Spirit from working through us. "But blessed are those who trust in the Lord!" Read Jeremiah 17:7-8 and describe the blessings available to those whose confidence is in Christ:  
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That's what to expect from being deeply rooted in God's good soil. What does the seed on good soil represent according to Luke 8:15? \_\_\_\_\_

We choose to be God's good soil by holding on to His Word; by taking it personally and allowing the Holy Spirit to grow us up into Christ-like maturity so that our faith might be multiplied through us into others. Note: *the quantity of the increase depends on the quality of our soil*. What does Jesus mean when He says we will bear fruit or produce a crop? \_\_\_\_\_

How, according to Luke 8:15, is that crop produced? \_\_\_\_\_

Patient perseverance is developed through the testing of our faith, and perseverance must finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. How, then, should we respond to the trials of life, according to James 1:2-4? \_\_\_\_\_

Bring your trials and temptations to God now in prayer, and ask Him to show you why He might be allowing these things in your life. Call on the supernatural strength of Jesus to carry you through this time of testing, even if you're not currently "considering it all joy". Try personalizing this prayer:

*Dear Jesus, though I am facing trials of many kinds, Your perfect Word says that the testing of my faith will develop perseverance, that perseverance will mature and complete me so that I will not lack anything, and that by persevering You will produce a harvest through me beyond my wildest dreams. Show me how to follow through and be Your good soil, God. Teach me to take your Word personally and apply it to every aspect of my life.*

In conclusion, read Hebrews 12:1-3, and take it personally!

