



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Genuine Growth (Mark 4:1-20)

GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Has there ever been a time in your life where your spiritual growth/faith has been “short-circuited”? Explain

In what way do the worries of this life, the lure or deceitfulness of wealth, and desire for other things crowd out the soil of your heart?

QUICK REACTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?

What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?

In what way do parables encourage us towards a serious, persistent and perceptive faith? How do parables encourage us to do “the hard work” of examining ourselves without “easy answers or formulas”?

Do you think the soils; rocky, weedy or good are static in our life, or do you think they can become true of us at different stages of our spiritual life with Christ? How?

Why do you think Jesus gives us so little detail on what creates “good soil” in us?

Agree/Disagree? Dave said, Faith and spiritual growth is not about having more information, even the right information, but it happens through illumination.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:14-16; how would Paul and Jesus agree about the issue of coming to understand the truth about Jesus and growing in Him? How does this inform us in how we grow in Christ?

EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Read Mark 4:1-20]

(Yes, these questions can seem silly, however, good discussion and interpretation of the Bible begins with having a proper understanding of the basic facts; who, what, when, and where in the text.) Work through this quickly, the answers are fairly obvious.

Where does this story take place? (4:1)

How did Jesus start to teach the crowds? (4:2)

What are the four scenes described in this parable? (4:3-10)

How did those closest to Jesus respond to the parable He told? (4:10)

In what way did Jesus limit His explanation of the parable? (4:11-12)

What problem did this exchange bring up? (4:13)

To what was Jesus referring when He said, "The farmer plants or sows the seed"? (4:14)

What did Jesus want us to understand about God from this parable? (4:14-20)

What are some obstacles that prevent people from accepting the gospel or hanging on to their faith? (4:15-19)

What happens to those who hear the truth about Christ and accept it? (4:20)

QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

Knowing that most of the people in the crowd were farmers and Jesus used an illustration from farming, why did many in the audience not understand His message?

When and where do we need to listen carefully?

To what area of your life does this parable speak?

What kind of soil do you think represents you?

What can you do—and not do—to make the message "take root" in yourself or others?

How does Satan "take away the word" before it has a chance to take root?

What troubles or persecutions cause believers to fall away?

How can the worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the other desires of the world choke out the life of Jesus in us?

What can you do to increase fruitfulness as a follower of Jesus?

APPLY THE PASSAGE

What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

How can we pray for each other?