

LESSON 4

THE FOUR SOILS

MARK 4:1–41



1 What are some steps to having a productive garden?



Read Mark 4:1–41 and the following notes:

☐ 4:2 ☐ 4:3 ☐ 4:9 ☐ 4:14–20 ☐ 4:24, 25 ☐ 4:33, 34

2 What plants are you familiar with that yield thirty, sixty, or one hundred times what was planted?

3 Why would a good farmer throw good seed onto poor soil?

4 What is the main point of this parable (4:14–20)?



5 Today only a small percentage of the population are farmers, and many people are not gardeners. What are some other situations in which people expect a good return for their efforts?

Most readers of this parable quickly classify themselves as one of the four types of soils and move on. But rarely will good farmers judge their land that hastily. They will be careful to note the different types of soil on the land. They will be aware of gradual changes over time and then rotate crops accordingly. When we give our life this same level of attention, we soon see that our heart can be a combination of the soils in the parable. Some areas are more fertile and open to God’s will than others. Some areas deteriorate over time. It can be quite revealing to examine our life plot by plot, piece by piece.

6 Note the approximate times in your life when you would describe yourself as each of these types of soil.

Age	Hard	Rocky	Thorny	Good



7 Roughly divide your life into the following categories: family, friends, faith, finances, and future. How would you describe the soil of your life in each of these areas?

	Hard	Rocky	Thorny	Good
Family				
(spouse, children, parents)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Friends				
(neighbors, coworkers)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Faith				
(prayer, worship, evangelism)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Finances				
(income, debt, stewardship)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Future				
(career plans, hope, worry)	_____	_____	_____	_____



8 Choose one area of your life, and list two or three steps you can take to improve the condition of the soil there. How can you weed it? remove rocks? plot it? fertilize it?

MORE
for studying
other themes
in this section

- A** How is it that people today can hear the good news of salvation and refuse to accept it?
- B** Why did Jesus spend so much of his time telling stories when he taught the large crowds?
- C** How does putting into practice what we know help us to understand more about God's Kingdom? What will happen if we do not put our knowledge into practice?

D How did Jesus teach his disciples? How does he teach us today? How can you teach others about him?

E What do you know about the Kingdom of God from the parables in this chapter?

F Why were the disciples afraid in the boat? How did Jesus react to the storm? How could the disciples have interpreted Jesus' sleeping? What does it mean for you to have confidence in Christ?