



SOWING & GROWING

PREPARING FOR THE BRIGHT DAYS AHEAD

SERIES: Sowing & Growing TEACHER: Jim Firth DATE: 2/18/2024

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question #1

What did you resonate with?

Question #2

Was there anything you wrestled with?

Question #3

You are always going to be growing and getting better and better, so your best days are ahead of you. But there is a condition. What's the condition?

Question #4

We are created to have continual growth, discovery and forward progress. When we feel like we don't want to progress, what is that rooted in?

Question #5

Can you think of a time when you or someone else had a fear of progress and change in their own life but overcame it and then began to grow as a person?

Question #6

With God, we are being transformed with ever-increasing glory (sanctification), and we're becoming freer. Pastor Jim read an analogy about limpets from C.S. Lewis' book *Miracles*. How is the limpet's perspective on man limited? How are we sometimes this way when it comes to imagining the glorious future God has for us?

Question #7

What is the mistake in thinking our best life is an easy life?

Question #8

What do you think of the saying "choose your hard?"

Question #9

Read James 1:2-4 below. So hardship and joy are not mutually exclusive. What does this make you think about? Are there examples in your life of hardship and joy co-existing?

James 1:2-4 NLT

² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

TEACHING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS

James 1:7, KJV

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

In scriptural context (using NIV):

James 1:2-8, NIV

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ **That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.** ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18, ISV

But whenever a person turns to the Lord, **the veil** is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and **where the Lord's Spirit is, there is freedom.** ¹⁸ As all of us reflect the glory of the Lord with **unveiled** faces, we are becoming more like him with ever-increasing glory by the Lord's Spirit.

Luke 10:25-27, NIV

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷ He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew 22:36-40, NIV

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ **And the second is like it:** 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Luke 9:23, NIV

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and **take up their cross** daily and follow me.

John 16:33, NIV

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble.** But take heart! I have overcome the world."

TEACHING SCRIPTURE CITATIONS – Continued

Acts 14:21-22, ISV

As they were proclaiming the good news in that city, they discipled a large number of people. Then they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith. **“We must endure many hardships,” they said, “to get into the kingdom of God.”**

Matthew 11:28-30, NIV

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ **For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**”

James 1:2-4, NLT

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ **For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.** ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Luke 8:5-15, NIV

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the **path**; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. ⁶ Some fell on **rocky ground**, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷ Other seed fell among **thorns**, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on **good soil**. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.” When he said this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” ⁹ His disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰ He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, ““though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’” ¹¹ “This is the meaning of the parable: **The seed is the word of God.** ¹² Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³ Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. ¹⁴ The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. ¹⁵ But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.