

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator:

Please don't feel you have to cover every question. They become increasingly deeper and more thoughtful toward the end. It may help to highlight questions you want to be sure to cover, depending on the dynamics of your group and the time available. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions for January 17—Luke 8:4-15

Title: Show Me the Way

Read Luke 8:4-15—*And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

Question: You may find verses 9 and 10 perplexing: *he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'* Jesus is quoting here from Isaiah 6:9 as he explains to his disciples why he teaches in parables. Why do you suppose Jesus cloaked in parables his teaching about the kingdom of God? When you encounter in your Bible study a difficult parable like this, what is your response?

Question: Peppy taught us that the sower is the teacher, the seed is the Word of God, and the fertility of the soil is the condition of the human heart. Is it possible or advisable to use modern gardening techniques as we make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20)? Discuss in the group what would be the likely effect on discipling if we broke up the hard-packed ground, removed rocks and pulled up thorns and only planted where the soil has been tested and fertilized? Or is that the job of the Holy Spirit exclusively?

Question: I think even as believers attending Connect Group, we have within us areas of fertile soil, hard-packed ground, rocks and thorns. Share with the group what your fertile soil is. What are your rocks? Your thorns?

Question: Peppy chose this parable to show us where we are on our journey from "here" to "there." Share with the group ways you can fertilize your soil or soften the hard packed ground of your heart so the Word of God can take root, thrive and bear fruit for the kingdom. How much of this personal soil preparation is up to you? How much is the Holy Spirit in you, or is it a cooperative effort between God and you?