

# Growth – Part III

## *Hindrances to Growth*

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# Growth: Outline

- ▶ Part I – Introduction
  - ▶ What is a biblical model for growth?
- ▶ Part II – Purpose
  - ▶ What is the biblical purpose for growth?
- ▶ Part III – Hindrances to Growth
  - ▶ What causes “failure to thrive”?
- ▶ Possible future topics:
  - ▶ God provisions for growth
  - ▶ Practical steps for promoting growth
  - ▶ Work of Holy Spirit

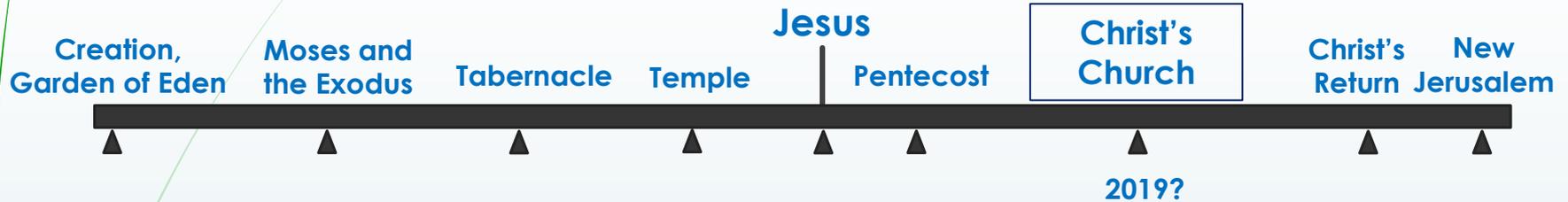
# Part I Summary: Biblical Model of Growth

**Psalm 1:1-4** Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.



- Righteous are like a tree; strong, growing, rooted
- Planted in next to water, the life giving stream of the Holy Spirit (John 7:38)

# Part II: God's Glory Thru the Ages



- Spiritual growth is becoming more like Jesus. But why?
- What is man's purpose for existence?
- What is the biblical paradigm for life purpose?
- **Answer: God's Glory!**

**1 Cor 6:20** For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

# Part II Summary: Glorifying God

- ▶ God's intrinsic glory can not be added to or take away. How can we "bring" God glory? What does that mean?
- ▶ We magnify and reflect God's intrinsic glory to other people who do not see it; put it on display

If ours is the privilege, purpose and duty to reflect God's Glory, what are the implications on:

1. Our walk with God?
2. Our witness toward others?
3. Our paradigm and worldview?

- ▶ We have a lot to growing to do!

**John 17:4** I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

# Part III: Hinderances to Growth

**1 Cor 3:1** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

- What caused this Spiritual "Perpetual Infancy" at Corinth?
- Why don't we grow?
- Remember, we are in spiritual warfare!



# Part III: Hinderances to Growth

**2 Cor 2:11** lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

- ▶ We need to be aware of Satan's techniques to keep us from maturing as Christians
- ▶ This is WAR!
- ▶ What are the biblical reasons for "failure to thrive" spiritually?
  - ▶ Jesus answers these questions in the parable of the sower (Matt 13, Mark 4, Luke 8)
  - ▶ Mark 4:13 "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

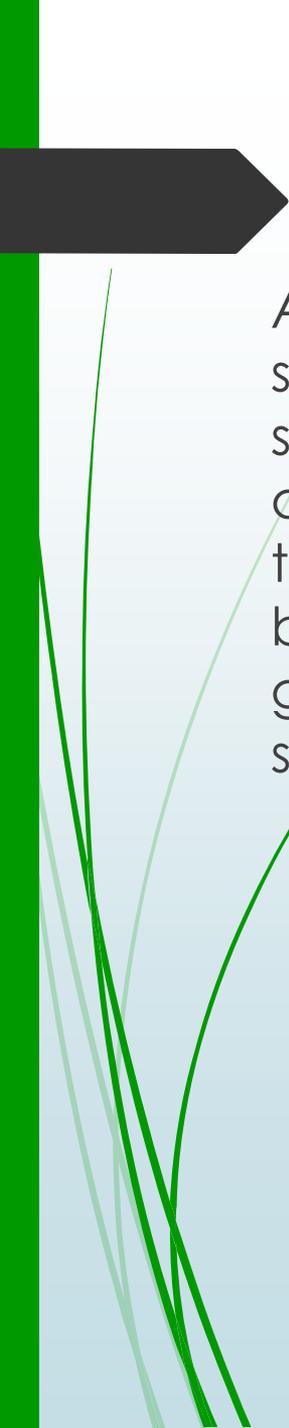
# Parable of the Sower

**Mark 4:1** And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. 2 Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: 3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. 5 Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. 7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. 8 But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." 9 And He said to them, "He who has ears

# Parable of the Sower cont.

to hear, let him hear!" 10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. 11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12 so that 'SEEING THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE, AND HEARING THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND; LEST THEY SHOULD TURN, AND THEIR SINS BE FORGIVEN THEM.' " 13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time.

# Parable of the Sower cont.



Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. 18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, 19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

# Types of Ground

- Seed received differently by different types of soil
  - **Wayside**, but birds came quickly and ate it
  - **Stony Ground**, not much depth of earth
  - **Thorny Ground**, choked out by thorns
  - **Good Ground**, grew and produced a crop
- Jesus using a metaphor to illustrate how people react upon hearing the truth
  - **Wayside** – hard heart, no penetration, word is removed
  - **Stony** – Received with gladness at first, but unwilling to yield, growth is limited
  - **Thorny** – Received and growing, but did not guard against worldliness, growth is stifled
  - **Good** – Soft heart, ready to obey, healthy growth

# Stony Ground

- Malnourishment caused by shallow roots
- Shallow soil dries up quickly and nutrients depleted quickly

Mat 13:5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

Mat 13:20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Luke 8:6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.

# Stony Ground

Mark 4:5 Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.

- ▶ **stony ground:** Beds of solid rock, usually limestone, lying under the surface of good soil. They are a little too deep for the plow to reach, and too shallow to allow a plant to reach water and develop a decent root system in the small amount of soil that covers them.
- ▶ Shallow Christians caused by shallow roots
- ▶ Example shallow roots

# Examples

- ▶ Practical application of stony ground
- ▶ Some like the idea of being a Christian, but are not willing to die to themselves and become a disciple of Christ
  - ▶ Believer vs. Disciple
- ▶ Double mindedness (James 1:6-8)
- ▶ No deep conviction, following other's convictions
- ▶ No deep study, meditation, prayer, fellowship
- ▶ Difficultly reveals the truth of their faith ("...it withered away")
- ▶ Peter writes about this condition...

# What Stony Ground Looks Like

2 Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

# Thorny Ground

Matt 13:7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

Matt 13:22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

## ► Worldview

- Natural man looks at life with an inward focus
- Spiritual man looks at life with a Christ focus

1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

# Thorny Ground

## ► Sin

Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 Pet 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

# Thorny Ground

## ➤ Avoiding Truth

- Self-confrontation is essential to growth; be honest, judge ourselves

2 Thess 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

- Denying truth leads to being lost
- How much more does it stifle growth?

Prov 15:5 A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent.

# Thorny Ground

## ► Bondage to Law:

Gal 5:1 do not be entangled with yoke of bondage

Gal 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to be justified by law*; you have fallen from grace.

Col 2:20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

2 Cor 3:6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

# Thorny Ground

## ► Affairs of This Life:

2 Tim 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

# Thorny Ground

## ► Fellowship

Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

# Examples

Practical applications of thorny ground

- ▶ Legalism becomes the focus
- ▶ Work, school, family, “religion”, entertainment, hobbies, wealth, fame, struggles, success, etc. dominate one’s time and attention
- ▶ Friends, acquaintances (in-person or on-line)
- ▶ Fear of man (men pleasing)
- ▶ Fear of embarrassment, Timidity
  - ▶ Lost opportunities
  - ▶ Lost growth
- ▶ Worry, anxiety, stress
- ▶ Lack of vision, direction, go with the flow

# Summary

- ▶ Satan's tactics are pervasive in two general areas:
  - ▶ Shallow roots due to a hard heart
  - ▶ Choking thorns due to loving this world
- ▶ We must recognize the enemy's movements in this area!
- ▶ Next time: Good Ground