

“Tilling The Soil Of The Heart” #3

- Ron Stullenbarger -

We are looking at a vital spiritual practice to all those seeking to grow in God: *tilling the soil of the heart*. Jesus spoke in Matthew 13 of two different types of soil — hard and soft. God longs for us to till the soil of our hearts that we might be receptive to the seed of His word and bear fruit.

One of the most powerful tools in tilling the soil of our hearts is **Scripture**. Each time you open the Bible you are looking at a miracle. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”* When you are reading the Bible, you are reading the very word of God, breathed out by Him and powerful in its ability to reveal both the character of God and your identity. Romans 12:2 says, *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”* When you renew your mind through Scripture, you allow the Bible to transform your heart into fertile soil that bears everlasting fruit. So let’s look at a few ways we can use Scripture to renew our minds and allow it to mold and shape us into disciples who are in tune with and receptive to the love and leading of God.

There is a wealth of power and wisdom within God’s word as it reveals His love and faithfulness to His people. Stories of God’s deliverance and provision to an ungrateful people demonstrate not only God’s faithfulness then, but also the great lengths He will go to for those ransomed into His family now by the blood of Christ. The story of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins is both heart wrenching and life giving. That He would willingly endure one of the most heinous, tortuous methods ever created assures us of the love God has for us. That He would experience separation from His heavenly Father for the sin of the entire world points to the depth of His love for us. Reading stories like these and meditating on their meaning and application will make us receptive to the presence and will of God. They can empower us to live in grateful obedience to His plans and purposes.

As Paul wrote in Second Timothy, the Bible is also a useful tool for life-giving correction. Correction from God is an important and wonderful part of being His son or daughter. His correction resembles a skilled gardener pulling the weeds out of soil, making room for seeds he has planted to receive nourishment and thereby flourish into fruit. You see, God doesn’t correct out of anger or frustration, but rather out of His rich love, patience, and desire for us to walk in the abundant life He has prepared for us. Proverbs 3:12 states, *“The Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”* So, opening our hearts to Scripture like Ephesians 4:29, *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear,”* is incredibly powerful. Pulling out the weeds of corrupting or negative talk will create space in the soil of our hearts for the nourishment of God’s Spirit, yielding the fruit of speech that does indeed *“give grace.”*

Open your heart to the power of God’s word in tilling the soil of your heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to teach you by speaking directly into your life using the words of Scripture. May your time in prayer be marked by the inner voice of the Spirit and transformation of the heart.