

Living Connections Bible Study



Time to Plow

Text: Matthew 13:3-9; Hosea 10:12; and Jeremiah 4:3

Prayer:

Icebreaker: Why is it that some Christians get tremendous encouragement and blessing from attending church, while others show little interest, even to boredom, and go away indifferent and unmoved?

1. In the propagation of the Kingdom of Heaven what four types of soil (hearts) does the seed, the Word of God, come in contact with? And what lesson does this teach us about our potential to produce a spiritual harvest? Matthew 13:3-9

2. What does every good farmer/gardener do if they expect their seeds to grow and to get a good crop at harvest time? What spiritual lesson do we take from this?

3. What two verses call us to the vitally important work of heart plowing?

Hosea 10:12 _____

Jeremiah 4:3 _____

4. What is fallow ground?

5. Discuss Charles Finney's definition of what it means to break up the fallow ground and the importance of this to our spiritual lives and a future harvest:

To break up our fallow ground is to bring the mind into such a state, that it is fitted to receive the Word of God. Sometimes our hearts get matted down and dry, and all run to waste, till there is no such thing as getting fruit from them until they are all broken up, and mellowed down, and fitted to receive the Word of God. It is this softening of the heart, so as to make it feel the truth, which the prophet calls breaking up the fallow ground.

6. Explain what it means in farming and in the cultivation of our souls when we say that *plowing is foundational*.

7. What must we be on guard against lest we develop a spiritual hardpan?

Hebrews 3:12-13

8. How does spiritual plowing help us get rid of spiritual stones (obstructions in our hearts)? Matthew 13:5-6

9. How does plowing control the spiritual thorns that threaten to choke out the good seed of God's Word from producing fruit for God? Jeremiah 4:3; Matthew 13:22

10. Do an inventory, making a list of potential thorns that could grow and go to seed, strangling our spiritual lives.

11. How does spiritual plowing prepare our hearts to receive the *rain of righteousness* and blessing that comes from God's Word?
Hosea 10:12; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 6:7; Isaiah 44:3; Matthew 5:6; Psalm 81:10-16

12. Why is plowing seasonal? Isaiah 28:24-25

13. What two lessons do we learn about spiritual plowing from Hebrews 12:11

Think about it this week:

The key word here is *afterward*. After the plowing, after the weeding, after the cultivating, after the pruning, and after the watering, then comes *the Harvest*. When God first cuts into our lives we are quick to complain and to question God's *all-knowing* hand. But for those who have not resisted the plow, and have tasted the blessing and fruit of the harvest cry out: *Drive on O ploughman of eternity and plant your seed that all may see the fruit of your righteousness revealed in me.*

In short, if we want to be fruitful, we must experience the plow, but having been plowed under, we shall know a glorious harvest.

~ Ted Rendall