

## INTIMACY THROUGH CULTIVATING OUR SOIL

I believe the following passage of scripture is one of the best answers on how we can cultivate closeness with the Lord. Just like the temple parable of approaching God in various degrees of closeness through the outer court, the inner court and the holy of holies... we have a choice of bearing 30, 60 or 100 fold fruit in our abiding closeness in Him. This scripture tells us HOW.



**Matt 13:3-9 NKJV**

Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 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. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

**Matt 13:18-23 NKJV**

"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 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. 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. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

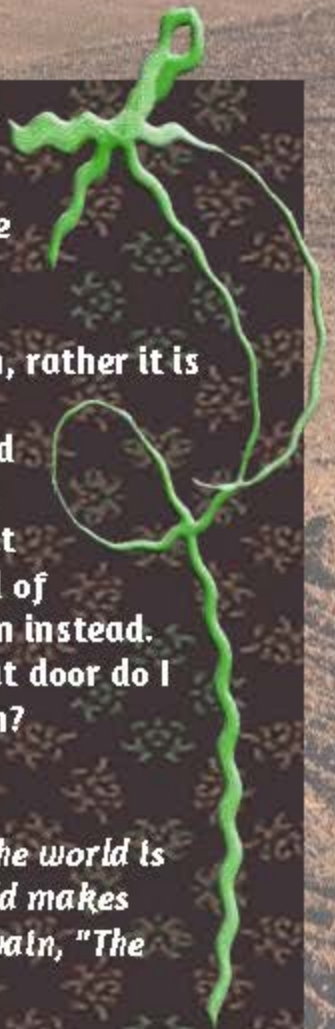
## WALKING IN THE RIGHT PATHWAY

We need to learn how to walk in the ways of God. His ways are the right pathway of aligning our faith and choices with scripture.

When we walk in the wayside, it is not walking directly in His path, rather it is in the general direction but with compromise and disobedience. Throughout the years, the closer I get to God, the more I understand that carnal choices really do affect my level of intimacy and relationship with Him. For instance if I watch something on TV that is defiled with the world's standards and against scripture, instead of hearing from Him that night, I get to receive a slimy demonic dream instead. This clearly gives me feedback about my choices for intimacy. What door do I knock on when I turn on the TV and whom am I fellowshiping with?

*James 4:4-5 NKJV*

*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. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?*





## REMOVING THE STUMBLING STONES

Even when we are walking in God's ways and living right, there will be stumbling stones in our path. It is impossible to get through the Christian life without having to overcome offenses. Even Jesus, Who was sinless had to forgive and overcome accusation.

However we can keep from multiplying more stumbling stones by believing scripture, and then making different choices. Learning obedience to scripture is like teaching a child that the rocks in the fire are hot. You teach them in a lesser degree what hot feels like. Once they understand, some children see the fire and never get near. Those who do get increasing doses of hot until they learn.

There are many kinds of stumbling stones that can cause someone to stumble. I believe the most prevalent ones are un-forgiveness, accusation and judgment. How do we keep from tripping? It is just like the hot rocks in the fire.

If we believe scripture and that God means what He says, we are promised if we dont forgive, we will not be forgiven. We are promised if we judge others, we will be judged. And we are taught that what we sow, we reap and so we should treat others as we would have them treat us. Thus we refrain from accusing others so we dont receive a harvest of accusation in return.

One may wonder how does overcoming offenses relate to knowing the Lord in an intimate way? Because God is love and if we don't learn to love, we don't know Him. When we do not forgive, when we accuse and judge we are not loving others and we are not loving God.

*Matt 25:45-46 NKJV*

*Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*



## REMOVING THE DISTRACTING CARES OF THIS WORLD

In the Greek, the word "cares" means a distracted, divided mind or heart. God has given us a unique ability to only have one thought at a time. We were created to be single minded and focused. If we have one thought in one moment, but then have a totally unrelated thought the next, we have a divided mind and it lures us away from our closeness with God.

*Luke 10:41-42 KJV*

*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

How do we overcome distraction to get close to God? It is very simple! Scripture tells us to PRAY about whatever is distracting us!

*Phil 4:6-7 KJV*

*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

*1 Peter 5:7 KJV*

*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

*1 Peter 5:7 AMP*

*Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully. [Ps 55:22.]*

**I**f I tried to condense intimacy with God down into one nugget, I would say desperation and intimacy are good matches to cause and effect. Why? Because the world, the enemy and our own hearts are completely PACKED with distractions. Each and every distraction lures us away and challenges our values and priorities to test what or whom do we really love? What or whom we love will end up consuming our time and putting all else as second and third place. Some of us it takes a life time to cull through the stuff to find out the answer to that question. And some of us it just takes some genuine suffering.

**PRAYER:** Lord teach me to PRAY about everything that steals me away from You. When I am distracted by worry, fear, anxiety... remind me to put those very same issues that are dividing me from You, right back into Your loving care. I want to hear You more, I want to see what You are doing more, and I want to understand You more. In Jesus Name, amen.