

5-Day Study Guide | Soil & Seed – The Keys to the Kingdom: Soil That Endures the Sun

Speaker: Chad Everett

Main Scripture: Mark 4:1–20; Jeremiah 17:7–8; John 7:38; John 14:17; Colossians 2:6–7

Sermon Overview

In this message, Pastor Chad teaches from Mark 4 about the parable of the sower. The Word of God is the seed, but the condition of the heart—the soil—determines the fruitfulness of that seed. Many hearts are like stony ground: shallow on the surface but filled with hidden rocks underneath. God is coming for those stones—offense, unforgiveness, bitterness, hidden sin—because He wants His people rooted deeply enough to endure the heat of trials, persecution, and pressure.

When we are rooted in Christ, not politics, platforms, or opinions, our stability and sustenance flow from Him. As Jeremiah 17 reminds us, the one who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted by the river, unafraid of heat and still bearing fruit in drought.

This study guide is designed to help **individuals, families, students, new believers, mature believers, and Roads Groups** dig deeper into this sermon by opening the Bible each day, examining what Scripture says, and applying it to daily life.

How to Use This Guide

- **Open your Bible each day** to the Scriptures listed. Let God's Word answer the questions, not just your opinion.
- **Engage with the questions** in your context—whether you are a new Christian, a mature believer, a student, an individual, a family, or part of a Roads Group. Each set of questions is written with you in mind.
- **Apply what you learn.** Each day ends with a practical application step, with options for individuals as well as adaptations for families with kids or teens.
- **Dig deeper.** The benefit of studying this sermon is that your heart will become stronger, more rooted, and able to endure the heat of life. As you study, invite the Lord to reveal any **stones**—offense, bitterness, unforgiveness, or hidden sin—that He wants to remove so your roots can grow deeper and stronger in Him.

Day 1 – The Sower Sows the Word

Focus: The seed is the Word of God, and the condition of the soil (our hearts) determines its growth.

Scriptures: Mark 4:1–9, 14; Colossians 2:6–7

Quote from Sermon: *“We do not sow what we feel, what we think, or what others say. We sow the Word of God.”*

Big Idea: The seed is always good. The question is: what’s the condition of my heart?

Discussion Questions:

- *New Christians:* What does Mark 4:14 say the sower is planting? How can you begin to plant this in your heart?
- *Mature Christians:* According to Colossians 2:6–7, what does it look like to be rooted and built up in Christ daily?
- *Jr. & Sr. High Students:* How does the parable of the sower challenge you about the influences you allow into your life?
- *Families with Young Children:* Read Mark 4:14 together. How can we “plant” God’s Word in our hearts as a family?
- *Families with Teenagers:* How does this verse apply to your daily life right now, and what will it look like once it has matured in your life like a seed growing to fruit?

Application: This week, start each morning by reading one verse out loud together. As you read, remember—you are **planting a seed** of God’s Word in your heart that will grow and bear fruit in the future.

- *Family w/ kids:* Make it a short verse and ask your child to repeat it with hand motions, showing how the “seed” is planted.
 - *Family w/ teens:* Share the verse in a group text and answer: *How does this verse apply to daily life right now, and what will it look like once it has matured in your life like a seed growing to fruit?*
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Day 2 – Stony Ground and Hidden Rocks

Focus: On the surface, stony ground looks fine, but hidden issues prevent depth.

Scriptures: Mark 4:5–6, 16–17

Quote from Sermon: *“On the surface it looks good, but underneath are rocks and stones—hidden issues no one has dealt with.”*

Big Idea: God wants to expose and remove hidden “stones” in our hearts so the Word can take root.

Discussion Questions:

- *New Christians:* What does Mark 4:16–17 say happens when the Word is received with gladness but has no root?
- *Mature Christians:* What “stones” or hidden issues can limit your spiritual growth, and how does Scripture call us to deal with them?
- *Jr. & Sr. High Students:* When life gets hard, what makes it easy to give up on God's Word? What root system do you need?
- *Families with Young Children:* How do we act when something is hidden in our heart, like anger or jealousy? How can Jesus help us?
- *Families with Teenagers:* Write down one “stone” (a habit, attitude, or hidden issue). Share together: *If this stone is removed, what kind of growth could take place in your life? What fruit might show up later because the seed has room to grow?*

Application: Pray each night this week: “Lord, show me any stone in my heart and help me remove it.”

- *Family w/ kids:* Use small rocks—place them on a table and let each child name one thing they want Jesus to help them with.
 - *Family w/ teens:* Have each teen write a “stone” on paper, crumple it, and throw it away as a symbolic act—then talk about the **seed (Word of God)** they should plant in its place and the **fruit** that could grow once the stone is gone.
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Day 3 – The Heat Is Coming

Focus: Trials, pressure, and persecution will come. Roots make the difference between withering and enduring.

Scriptures: Mark 4:6, 17; Jeremiah 17:7–8

Quote from Sermon: *“The issue is not removing tribulation and persecution, but rather deepening our roots.”*

Big Idea: The issue is not removing the heat but developing deeper roots.

Discussion Questions:

- *New Christians:* What does Jeremiah 17:7–8 say happens to those who trust in the Lord?
- *Mature Christians:* How do you prepare for “heat” by strengthening your root system in Christ?
- *Jr. & Sr. High Students:* What pressures (school, friends, online) test your faith? How does God’s Word help you stand strong?
- *Families with Young Children:* How does a tree need roots to keep standing in a storm? How do we need roots in Jesus?
- *Families with Teenagers:* Each day, share one pressure or “heat” you faced. Then answer: *How did trusting God help you endure? What would it look like in the future if your roots continue to deepen in Him through times like this?*

Application: Choose one habit this week (daily Bible reading, prayer, worship) and commit to deepening your roots by sticking with it.

- *Family w/ kids:* Draw a tree with roots and add words on the roots that describe ways you stay close to Jesus.
- *Family w/ teens:* Share daily in the group chat one way you faced pressure and how you leaned on Jesus—and reflect on what fruit that root habit could grow over time.

Day 4 – Offense Is a Trap

Focus: The Greek word *skandalon* means “a trap.” Offense is one of the stones that block growth.

Scriptures: Mark 4:17; Matthew 18:7; Ephesians 4:31–32

Quote from Sermon: *“Offense is a trap. We’ll never have deeper soil until we admit it and let God pull that stone out.”*

Big Idea: Offense keeps us shallow; forgiveness opens space for deeper roots.

Discussion Questions:

- *New Christians:* What does Ephesians 4:31–32 say we should remove and replace in our hearts?
- *Mature Christians:* How does unresolved offense limit your ability to endure trials?
- *Jr. & Sr. High Students:* When are you tempted to hold grudges? How does God’s Word tell you to respond?
- *Families with Young Children:* How can we forgive when someone hurts our feelings?
- *Families with Teenagers:* *If forgiveness is the seed, what Bible verse or truth do you need to start planting in your heart so that forgiveness can take root and eventually bear fruit?*

Application: This week, identify one person you need to forgive. Pray and choose to release the offense.

- *Family w/ kids:* Role play saying, “I forgive you” with each other.
- *Family w/ teens:* Share one forgiveness verse you’ll begin planting in your heart, and talk about what kind of fruit that seed might produce.

Day 5 – Rooted in Christ Alone

Focus: Our stability and sustenance come from Christ, not politics, platforms, or people.

Scriptures: Colossians 2:6–7; John 14:17; John 7:38

Quote from Sermon: *“I am rooted and built up in Jesus, not in my favorite political party, not in my favorite news feed. Jesus is my stability, not who’s in office.”*

Big Idea: When we are rooted in Him, rivers of living water flow within us no matter what happens around us.

Discussion Questions:

- *New Christians:* According to Colossians 2:6–7, what happens when we walk in Christ?
- *Mature Christians:* Where have you been tempted to place trust outside of Jesus? How does Scripture redirect you?
- *Jr. & Sr. High Students:* What voices or feeds influence you most? How can you stay rooted in Christ instead?
- *Families with Young Children:* Who helps us grow like roots in the soil—TV shows or Jesus?
- *Families with Teenagers:* At the end of the week, answer this: *If being rooted in Christ is the seed, what fruit do you want to see in your life six months or a year from now?*

Application: Each morning, declare out loud: “Jesus, You are my stability and my sustenance today.”

- *Family w/ kids:* Say it together at breakfast, with hand motions.
- *Family w/ teens:* Post it as your group chat status for a week, then share at the end how that declaration is beginning to shape your life like a seed growing to fruit.

Bonus Reflection – Responding in a Kairos Moment

God is calling His church to recognize **kairos moments**—seasons of testing where roots are revealed. Social media reactions won’t change the world, but deeper roots will change *you*, and God can use a rooted believer to impact others.

As you reflect, invite the Lord to **reveal any stones**—offense, bitterness, unforgiveness, fear, or hidden sin—that are limiting your depth. Let Him remove them so your heart is open for His Word to take root and grow.

Reflection Questions (Open Your Bible and Answer From the Word):

- What does **Psalms 139:23–24** teach us to pray about our hearts being searched?

- How does **Ezekiel 36:26** describe the change God wants to make in our hearts?
- What warning does **Hebrews 3:12–13** give about the condition of the heart?
- How does **Jeremiah 17:9–10** describe the Lord’s role in searching and testing the heart?
- What step of obedience can you take this week to allow God to remove a “stone” from your heart so His seed can go deeper and bear lasting fruit?

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord... they will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes.”
—Jeremiah 17:7–8

Families with Young Children: Have kids draw a picture of a heart. Talk together about how God sees what’s inside our hearts and wants to help us take out the “rocks” so His Word can grow.

Families with Teens: Have each teen look up one verse about God searching the heart (e.g., Psalm 139: 23–24, Jeremiah 17: 10). Discuss how it applies to real struggles they face and what “fruit” would look like if they let God remove a stone in that area.
