

Week Four: *Grateful people are willing to try more*
Luke 8:1-8

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read Luke 8:1-8. Who was with Jesus? Why are they mentioned by Luke?
2. In Luke 8:1, Luke makes a point of saying, “the twelve were with Him.” When they chose a replacement for Judas, one of the qualifications was that the person (Acts 1:21-22) should be a person who had been with them from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Why would that be considered important?
3. Even though they had been with Jesus and observed His treatment of people and had listened to His many messages, they still didn’t understand who He was and what He was sent by His Father to do. (See Mark 9:32.) What does this tell us about human nature... about us?
4. Read Romans 11:33-36. How much can we really know about God? Is that a good or a bad thing?
5. Would you want a God that was limited by your ability to understand Him? Explain. What does this imply when we are confused by God’s apparent inattention to our needs and prayers?
6. What is God doing or not doing now that has you a bit confused? What are you seeking clarity on in life?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater trust of God when His actions or inactions seem confusing in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Luke 8:2-3. How would you describe these women?
9. The first century Jewish culture (like many Middle Eastern cultures today) did not consider women as important as men. What do this and other references to women in the life and ministry of Jesus (as the objects of His mercy and as examples of faith) say about Jesus and Christianity?
10. What had Jesus done for these women?
11. What is the difference between simply knowing the Bible and experiencing God’s grace and presence in your own life? How does that change your faith in God?

12. Many theologians stress the value of “word and sacrament” as the only means of grace (i.e. the primary means by which God works to convert and strengthen Christians in their faith). What role does personal experience play in the life of the Christian who has experienced a personal blessing or in sharing your faith with others?
13. Read Acts 4:20, Acts 22:1-15, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and 1 Timothy 1:12-17. Did Paul only quote the Scriptures? Why do you think he laced his own testimony with personal accounts of his experience?
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more aware of the ways in which God has personally demonstrated His love and grace in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Look again at Luke 8:2-3. How did Luke describe the actions of the women in Luke 8:3? Why do you think he mentioned that? Why is that significant?
16. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:19-24. Does Jesus say, “Where your heart is, your treasure will be also?” or “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”? What’s the difference, and why do you think He said it this way?
17. God certainly cares more about our heart than our resources. What does His constant emphasis on first-fruit giving and tithing say about human nature and Jesus’ desire for us to establish godly priorities?
18. Is Christian giving something that is easy or hard for you to do? Were you raised in a home that made regular and generous gifts to Christian causes? How does our family of origin affect our own practice in this area, or doesn’t it?
19. Jesus went on to tell a parable about seeds and how they grow. Why would He use an agricultural example to teach in those days?
20. How might He change that story to engage us with a culturally relevant example?
21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for God to settle your spirit about the issue of financial support of Christian causes.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Read the parable of the seed as Jesus told it in Mark 8:4-8. What do you think the seed represents? (see verse 11) How is that seed cast?
23. What types of soil received the seed, and what do they represent?

24. Is there anything the sower can do to make the seed better? Explain the point of comparison.

25. What does the seed need to be most productive?

26. What can a farmer do to make his fields more productive?

27. What can we do to make our hearts more receptive to the seed of God's Word?

28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for an open heart to hear and do God's will for your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. Look again at the parable in Luke 8:2-8. What words did Jesus say to end this parable? What did He mean by that statement?

30. Is the truth still true if no one pays attention? Explain.

31. Is the truth as effective if it is heard but ignored? Do you think that is a common occurrence when it comes to God's Word?

32. Do you think most people accept responsibility for the consequence of their disobedience? Where do they place blame?

33. Jesus said the seed that finds good soil produces a good crop yielding good outcomes. What does that mean when we think of the seed as God's Word?

34. In your observation, what are some of the weeds of life that sprout up to choke the seed and limit the harvest?

35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to recognize the dangers that temptations present to limit your influence as God's witness in the world.