

A. HEART CONDITION

- God's Living and Active Word is powerful and able to penetrate. But our exposure to the Word doesn't always produce fruitfulness.
- Jesus explained in the Parable of the Soils how that can happen. It's because our hearts are not in a place of readiness to receive. He gave 3 main reasons:
 - Lack of Depth --- The Word only lands on the surface level so roots never form. We must be selective with our information intake or the enemy can rob us of the benefit of what we've heard. (Mt 13:19)
 - Over-Commitment – The Word is received but only forms shallow roots and has minimal impact. All the other things we are pursuing keep it from being top priority. Let's let God have the Final Word on all of our commitments. (Mt 13:20-21)
 - Distractions – The Word doesn't become fruitful when we allow the worries, wealth and the world to compete with it. We have the choice to give all these things to God instead and to let Him become our primary focus. (Mt. 13:22)
- The parable concludes with those whose hearts receive the Word and it produces a harvest. Hearts that have the following characteristics allow it to be fruitful:
 - Hunger and Thirst: Ps 107:9 NLT--He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things
 - Openness: Ps 81:10b--Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.
 - Humility: James 1:21b AMP--With a humble spirit receive the word [of God] which is implanted [actually rooted in your heart], which is able to save your souls.
 - Patience: Ps 104:27--They all wait for You to give them their food in due season.
 - Surrendered: Jn 4:34--Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

- The wonderful news is that we can ask God's Spirit to express these traits in us every time we interact with the Word because He lives within us and empowers us.

- LISTENING EXERCISE:

Lord, I want Your Word to be fruitful in me. Show me which area of my life that:

-- Scripture is landing on the surface due to me having so much else filling my head:

-- The Word is not penetrating because I'm trying to pursue so many other things:

-- Something other than You and Your Word is taking top priority in my life:

-- Thank you for what You have shown me. Lord Jesus, please grow in me the heart attitudes that will allow me to listen, receive, and benefit deeply from what You say.

- Insights:

B. HEAD TO HEART

- If our lives are to be transformed by the Living and Active Word, it must penetrate beyond our minds and be received at the heart level: Ps 51:6 NAS--You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
- Jesus tells us in His parable how difficult that can be and we've seen it in our own personal experience as well.
- Here God speaks into a challenging situation explaining how His Word can be so fruitful that we can actually experience victory with no fear or discouragement: Josh 1:1-2, 6-9 NIV-- After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ²"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them...⁶Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. ⁷"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.
- Joshua had not only lost his mentor but was now stepping into a big assignment. He must lead the Israelites into Canaan and defeat the all the many enemies there.
- The call of God was a tall order! He commanded Joshua to complete this huge work and to do so with courage, without fear, and according all His previous instructions.
- God provided the key to how it would be possible to accomplish this job successfully and, maybe more importantly, to do so in a way in which his soul prospered.
- He instructed Joshua to keep the Word always on his lips and to meditate on it day and night. (v. 8)
- We are already meditating on many things that concern us. Whatever we sow into our thought life will yield its fruit:
 - Is 59:13b, 14b--Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood...And righteousness stands afar off
 - Ps 1:2-3 NLT--They delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
- Let's begin the practice of meditating on God's Living and Active Word so that we prosper in our inner lives.
- Insights:

C. HOW TO'S

- Biblical Meditation is an ancient practice that will impact every part of you (mind, heart, emotions, decisions, actions) for by it the Word becomes a part of you.
- Keep in mind these preliminary considerations as you begin this practice:
 - First and foremost, remember that when you engage with God's Word you are engaging with a Person! Jesus Himself is The Word. (John 1:1)
 - Begin your devotional time by inviting God to show you what He wants you to see: Ps 119:18--Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.
 - Read the Scriptures until something catches your attention. Stop there and focus on the truth that grabbed you trusting that this is God's message for you.
 - Take a few moments to think if this may be part of a theme. Has the Spirit drawn your attention to this principle in other ways recently?
 - Thank Him for speaking to you. Ask Him to plant this truth in your heart as you devote yourself to knowing it deeply.
- Now that the Lord has highlighted this truth, meditate on it. Take time to linger, to interact with Him and His message to you instead of rushing on to other passages,
- The Hebrew word for meditation means to utter, to sing, to remember, to celebrate, or to speak to oneself repeatedly. (Strong's H1897)
- This definition gives us some clues about how to approach the practice of meditation:
 - Read the Word aloud to yourself after writing it out first. Go back over it repeatedly. Consider each word or phrase: Pr 8:7a NAS—My mouth will utter truth
 - Sing songs containing the truth you're meditating upon: Ps 56:4--In God, I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust
 - Ask HS to remind you of times when God has performed this truth in your life or for someone else: Ps 77:11 NLT-- I recall all you have done, O LORD; I remember your wonderful deeds
 - Celebrate this truth in light of God's perfect faithfulness. Thank Him for what He will do in the future: Is 25:1 ERV-- LORD, you are my God. I honor you and praise your name, because you did amazing things. The words you said long ago are completely true; everything happened exactly as you said it would.
 - Speak God's truth out loud throughout your day: Ps 35:28--My tongue shall speak of Your righteousness *and* of Your praise all the day long.
- By looking at this truth again and again, it will enable you to take it down deep. You'll begin to see how God wants to use it in your life.
- When you revisit a portion of God's Word repeatedly it will gradually become rooted into your thinking. A mindset of biblical truth takes the place of your old beliefs.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
HS bring to mind a truth that You want me to know in the deepest part of my heart:

Lord, I want to focus on this truth through the practice of meditation as I meet with you this week. Open my eyes that I may see the Wonderful things you have for me!

- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION**• ONE THING**

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

• PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

• PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He his calling you to take. Write down your insights.