



Links Players

Fruit Of The Good Soil

And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A Sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose, they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13: 3-8, ESV)

When I arrived at Fox Chapel CC for the 2024 US Senior Women's Championship, I felt more prepared than I have in years, but I also knew some flaws still lurked – in my swing, my putting confidence, and my heart.

It's been nearly two weeks now, and I'm still processing my four rounds. I am pleased and disappointed with how I played and responded. I experienced moments of good soil that produced calm, clarity, solid execution, and relational connection. I also scorched the ground that I walked with negativity, self-sabotage, harmful words, and body language that impacted myself and other people.

The Parable of the Sower is often misinterpreted as a parable of judgment. In his blog post, *A Failure of Potential* (With God Daily, May 17, 2024), Skye Jethani writes, "Jesus is not condemning those who lack understanding, fold under persecution, or allow the cares of the world to strangle their life with God. Instead, he is grieving for them. The story is about disappointment, not judgment."

Staying in judgment is much easier than feeling the sting of disappointment. The problem, however, is that judgment keeps us staged in a doing mode that doesn't influence change. Disappointment opens the door to honest reflection that moves us toward character and behavior growth.

I instinctively go straight to judgment when I have done something wrong or failed to do something. I waste precious time ruminating on my failures and trying to convince myself that next time, I will do better. It's a hideous cycle.

Jethani adds, "N.T. Wright equates sin with "subhuman behavior." It is the failure to reach our full potential as those created to reflect the image of God. "Sin," he notes, "is not the breaking of arbitrary rules" but "missing the mark as regards full, free, and genuine humanness."

Reaching our full potential is not about achieving the outcomes we desire (although that is fun). "The good soil that receives the seed and produces fruit simply represents people who have become what

God always intended for them to be—creatures living in unity with him that reflect his image and character through all they do,” Jethani says.

Becoming good soil is a life-long journey. Keep asking Jesus to help you cultivate the ground to reach your full potential in unity with his image and character.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the creativity of your Word. Help us move away from judgment and instead receive the seed that produces fruit that will reflect your image and character in our lives.

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