

CULTIVATING THE SHALLOW HEART-2

Retain God's Word

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.
- Matthew 7:26

Shallow-heartedness is characterized by...

- never getting beyond the “thinking about it” stage
- the kind of righteousness that keeps only enough rules to stay out of trouble, not really allowing God to change you from the inside-out
- listening to God's Word and never acting on it
- faithful in good times, but fall away during times of adversity

As someone put it, “Beware the barrenness of the busy life.” To withstand the storms of life, it is imperative that we take the time to listen to God's Word—not merely for information, but allowing it to take root, and change us from the inside-out. *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says....The man who looks intently into the perfect law... and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.”* (James 1:22, 25)

Welcome

There's a big difference between *hearing* (passive) and *listening* (active). Share a humorous time when you weren't really listening to someone (and got caught!), because you were preoccupied with something else.

Worship

Ask someone to lead your group in a time of worship around the theme of “delighting in God's Word,” using a passage such as Psalm 1 or 42:1-2.

Word

Read Matthew 7:24-27, sharing whatever background information you'd like to provide.

1. What's the main point of Jesus' parable? (survival depends on building on a solid foundation) Why is active listening such an important *spiritual* skill?
2. The difference between the two houses Jesus described is subtle. A lot of people would think they were exactly the same. What are some of the tangible indications that someone is building on a solid foundation? (they're acting on what they hear, growth is obvious in their life, they persevere through difficult times)
3. The storms of life have a way of revealing what's really inside a person. How have you seen the “orange-juice principle” (squeeze the outside, get what's on the inside) at work? What's the “orange-juice” principle revealing about *you* at the moment?
4. Read **James 1:22-25**. Would you characterize your time in God's Word lately as more of a *glance* or a *gaze*?
5. What are some practical ways you could absorb and retain more of God's Word? (read...meditate—John 8:31...memorize—Psalm 119:11.)

Works

Spend the remainder of your time ministering to, and praying for, one another.