

# How To Be Blessed By God's Word

A MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—will be blessed in what he does.

— JAMES 1:25

The Kingdom of God is like this: A man scatters seed in his field. He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the head, and finally the head full of grain.

— MARK 4:26-28,  
NEW CENTURY

Look around and you'll find Bibles everywhere. And yet, just having a Bible in your possession doesn't mean that you'll get the benefit from it. Jesus' well-known parable of the sower is a timely reminder of the various ways in which people respond to God's word—the defensive, the superficial, the preoccupied, and the receptive heart.

But don't make the mistake of categorizing yourself in one of these categories. He's not talking about types of people as much as different attitudes of the heart. Let's face it, we find ourselves floating back and forth among these four attitudes, don't we? God wants to bless your life, but His work in your life this coming year is contingent on maintaining four essential attitudes toward His word:

1. Cultivate an open heart (vss 5, 12)
2. Allocate time to listen (vss 6, 13)
3. Eliminate the distractions (vss 7, 14)
4. Cooperate with God (vs 15)

## WELCOME

Complete the following: *"Next year looks better to be because.... Next year may be a problem because...."*

## WORSHIP

Ask someone to come prepared to lead the group in a period of praise and worship of the Lord. The song, "Thy Word" (449), would be a good song to sing as you transition into the Word segment of your group meeting.

## WORD

### Read Luke 8:1-15

1. How can fear, pride or bitterness cause us to be defensive—and prevent God's word from penetrating our hearts (vs 12)? Are there any other factors that have caused you to be closed toward something in God's word?
2. How well were you able to spend consistent time in God's word last year? According to this passage, what is the most obvious indication of a superficial attitude toward God's word (vss 6, 13)? By contrast, how does God's word develop roots in your life that would enable you to handle adversity?
3. Someone has said, "Beware the barrenness of a busy life." Which of the three "weeds" is most capable of crowding out God's word in your life (vs 14)?
4. What is the key to cultivating a receptive heart, according to Jesus (vs 15)?
5. If God were to take a spiritual x-ray of your heart at the moment, what would it reveal? What kind of "crop" have you been producing lately?

## WORKS

What "crop" do you want to raise this coming year? Much of your spiritual growth and contribution toward God's Kingdom will be in direct proportion to the personal and consistent time you spend in His word. Write down a couple of sentences that describe the way in which you intend to apply the truth of this lesson.