

If the word you have heard is faithful to scripture and is therefore true, then the reason for a lack in spiritual development is limited to a very few things. The following questions and assignment are designed to help you identify AND address them.

1. In Jesus' parable of the seed and the sower, the devil comes *immediately* to steal away the Word. We also saw this tactic of satan in other places.
Ask yourself:
 - In my deepest heart, am I truly convicted and convinced that every time I hear the Word, satan will attack, challenge and seek to steal it?
 - Does/has this REALLY bother me enough to think about at all?
 - How do I live as if I am aware of this truth or as if it really matters to me?
2. The difference between the four hearts in Jesus' parable of the seed and the sower is what they **did** with the Word when it was sown into their hearts.
 - Even if I spent **NO** time in God's Word during the week, I hear it here at church every week. What do I do with the Word I've heard?
3. Jesus, James & Peter all tell us that tribulation, persecution, trials & temptations arise for the sake of the Word we've heard.
 - When troubles, trials, temptations come...do I simply react, or do I consider that what is happening is (at least in part) an attempt from satan to dislodge God's Word from my heart or at least to challenge its influence upon and within me?
 - What can I do to make myself more aware that I AM in a spiritual war?
4. We are told that our great hope (expectation) is being conformed to His image.
 - How often do I think (dream) about and find delight in the work of the Holy Spirit within me, changing me into Christ's likeness?
 - Is it an active desire to cooperate with the Spirit's work in me?
5. Scripture assures us that if we will maintain this hope within our hearts and set our focus upon Christ that we will become diligent about our purity and God will keep our hearts in perfect peace through agreement with Him.
 - Is Christ-in-me, really a genuine hope I maintain and nurture in my heart?
 - Are my thoughts about this **at least** as pleasing to me as my thoughts about other things? (My favorite TV show, movies, video games, music, politics, other relationships...etc.)

Your success at being a "doer" is a direct result of the answers to these questions.

Assignment:

1. Section off time IMMEDIATELY following your hearing the Word to...
 - meditate on it
 - give your heart over to it
 - seek God concerning it
 - ask for the Spirit's help towards bearing fruit
 - **Pray** for your brothers and sisters who will also undergo attack due to the word they have heard.
 - Remember Jesus' words to Peter, *"Peter, satan has asked for you that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail you..."*
 - Prepare your heart for hearing the Word next week.

2. DO NOT PLAY THE VICTIM! There is a reason why your mind is not focused upon Christ and your hope is found in other things...It is NOT the fault of someone else.
 - Make a determination to take notes on yourself...
 - What does my mind think about most?
 - How often do I tend to blame things on others?
 - How often do I "escape" rather than being watchful?
 - What are the things I escape to instead of God?
 - What are my most frequent "triggers"?
 - How much time do I spend escaping an hour... a day...a week?
 - When I consider turning my focus towards cooperating with the Spirit's work of forming Christ in me instead of escaping...what goes on in my heart? (what do I feel, think, desire..etc.)

3. Spend some time with this question...It is NOT as simple and direct as it appears.

Do I really know and believe the love God has for me?

- What is the basis for your belief of God's love for you?
- Again, take notes on your thoughts, feelings, reactions to this probing question.
- When you consider the love God has for you...what comes to mind beyond the obvious sacrifice of His Son?
- What do you see as potential roadblocks to living in awareness of His love for you?