

## Be Careful How You Listen

### What's the big danger of being part of BEC?

*That we receive lots of good Bible teaching through Sundays, Home Groups and our own Bible reading but don't really grow and mature. Does the word of God that we receive remain in us? Does it produce a harvest in us? Are we doers not just hearers of the word?*

### What's the big aim this term in Home Groups?

#### **... To be those in whom God's Word Dwells Richly (Colossians 3:16)**

*Notice that this is in a group setting where we're teaching one another as we do in Home Groups. We don't just want the word to superficially dwell among us for 45 minutes and then be lost. We want it to dwell in us richly.*

#### **... To be those who store up God's word in our hearts (Psalm 119:9-16, Psalm 95:7-8, Hebrews 3:7-4:7)**

*Notice that it's not just about more in our minds (though our minds do matter). It's about our hearts because our hearts are the engine of who we are, how we think, what we do and what we say.*

#### **... To be Jesus' family who are doers not just hearers of God's word (Luke 8:21, James 1:21-25)**

Jesus says that the mark of being part of his family is that we don't just hear his teaching and nod our heads and enjoy it. Being one of Jesus' family is about doing what he teaches. Application is vital.

**We want to be the good soil who hear the word, hold it fast, in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. (Luke 8:15)**

### Luke 8:4-25

#### What's so special about reading the Bible?

***Our Privilege when we read the Bible - Every time we open the Bible in Home Group something incredible happens (8:22-25)***

*The one who powerfully stills the storm with a word speaks to us every time we open the Bible. Just think about where you read your Bible, picture your Home Group on a Tuesday evening, think of Hall Cross and here on a Sunday - God is speaking to us!*

*Fellowship with one another and with God (1 John 1:1-4) (Triangle Diagram)  
God wants fellowship with you! He speaks so that we might know him. As we draw closer to him we also draw closer to each other.*

## **What is our responsibility as we read the Bible?**

### ***Our Responsibility when we read the Bible (8:8, 18, 21) - Be Careful how you listen***

*v8 - Pay attention, listen carefully.*

*v18 - We are responsible for how we listen and respond to God's word. We have a say in which soil we will be. We're not passive soil.*

*v21 - We have a responsibility to do what we've heard. That's the real mark of Jesus' family.*

*"Every sermon increases either our salvation or condemnation" (C Simeon)*

Therefore whenever we open the Bible we must be very careful how we listen. We have the most amazing privilege but also a great responsibility.

## **Suggested Questions for Home Group**

Starter Questions - How many times do you think you read the Bible or studied the Bible or heard it preached in 2016? What impact did all this have on you?

*The aim here is simply to help us see that most of us take in a large quantity of Bible. This is a good thing, we certainly don't want to encourage our group to receive less Bible teaching. The question is what we do with the Bible that we receive. That's what this session is all about at the start of the new year.*

### **Read Luke 8v4-25**

1. Look at v22-25 where Jesus speaks and the storm is instantly calmed. This same Jesus speaks to us with the same power through the Bible. **How should this shape our attitude and approach to reading and studying the Bible?**

*Encourage the group to talk honestly about how we approach Bible studies, quiet times and sermons. Do we come to home group expecting God to speak powerfully to us or do we often just go through the motions not really expecting God to speak to us? If we remembered who it was who was speaking to us, what difference would it make?*

**2. Now look at v8, v18, and v21. What is our responsibility when we come to the Bible?**

*Here we want to see that we are responsible for how we listen to God’s word. We are to be those who don’t just hear God’s word but put it into practice (v21.) We are not just to sit passively under God’s word on a Sunday or in Home Group. We are to be active listeners.*

**3. Now look at the parable of the soils in v4-15. Use the table to work through the passage.**

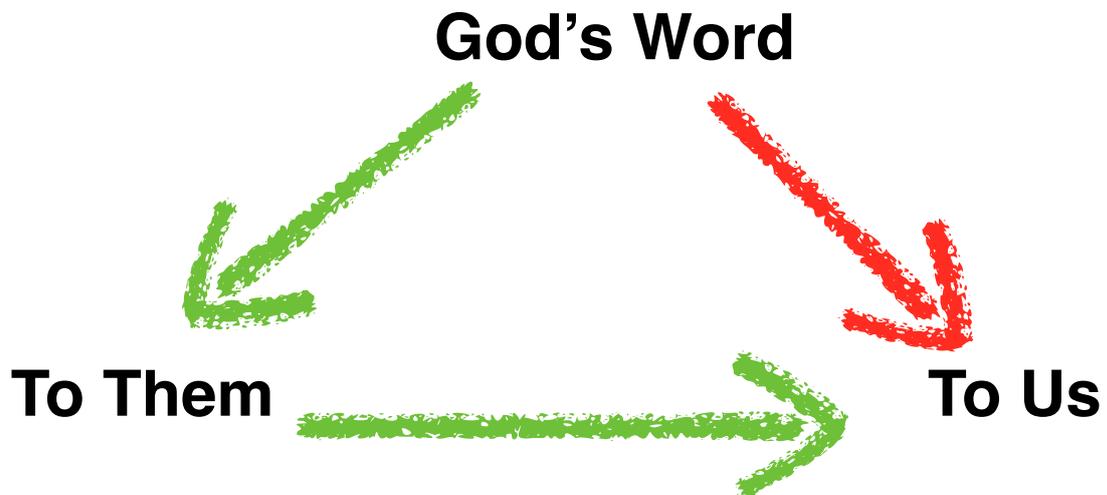
*For each soil ask “Why does this soil tell us we need to be careful about how we listen?” What’s the danger for each soil? Then turn to the application and use the questions to think about what practical things you can do as individuals and as groups to help you be the good soil.*

<b>Be careful how you listen... (Luke 8:4-15)</b>		
<b>Type of Soil</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>How?</b>
<b>Path (v5)</b>	<i>We can hear God’s word but Satan loves to snatch it away (v12)</i>	<p><b>How should we pray before, during and after a Bible Study/ Sermon/Quiet Time?</b></p> <p><i>Pray during the week expecting God to speak. Pray for those leading/ preaching but also pray for ourselves to receive it. Pray that God wouldn’t allow Satan to snatch away what we hear.</i></p> <p><i>Pray at the beginning of the study but also at the end of study and pray about what we are going to hear/read not just needs of the group. This is a spiritual battlefield so let’s pray accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>Pray that God would help us not only to hear and understand what he’s saying but also help us to do what he’s telling us to do.</i></p>
<b>Rocky Ground (v6)</b>	<i>We can hear God’s word and initially respond with joy but it doesn’t last because of tough times (v13)</i>	<p><b>How can we prepare for trials so that we won’t wither when they come?</b></p> <p><i>This is perhaps the hardest of the application questions so don’t worry if you don’t get too much from it. Try to focus the discussion on how we prepare before trials come rather than how we respond when trials come. One simple way to prepare is to make sure that we are regularly hearing the Bible taught on Sundays, regularly studying it in Home Groups and regularly reading it for ourselves. These will help us to develop the perseverance we need when tough times come.</i></p>

**Be careful how you listen... (Luke 8:4-15)**

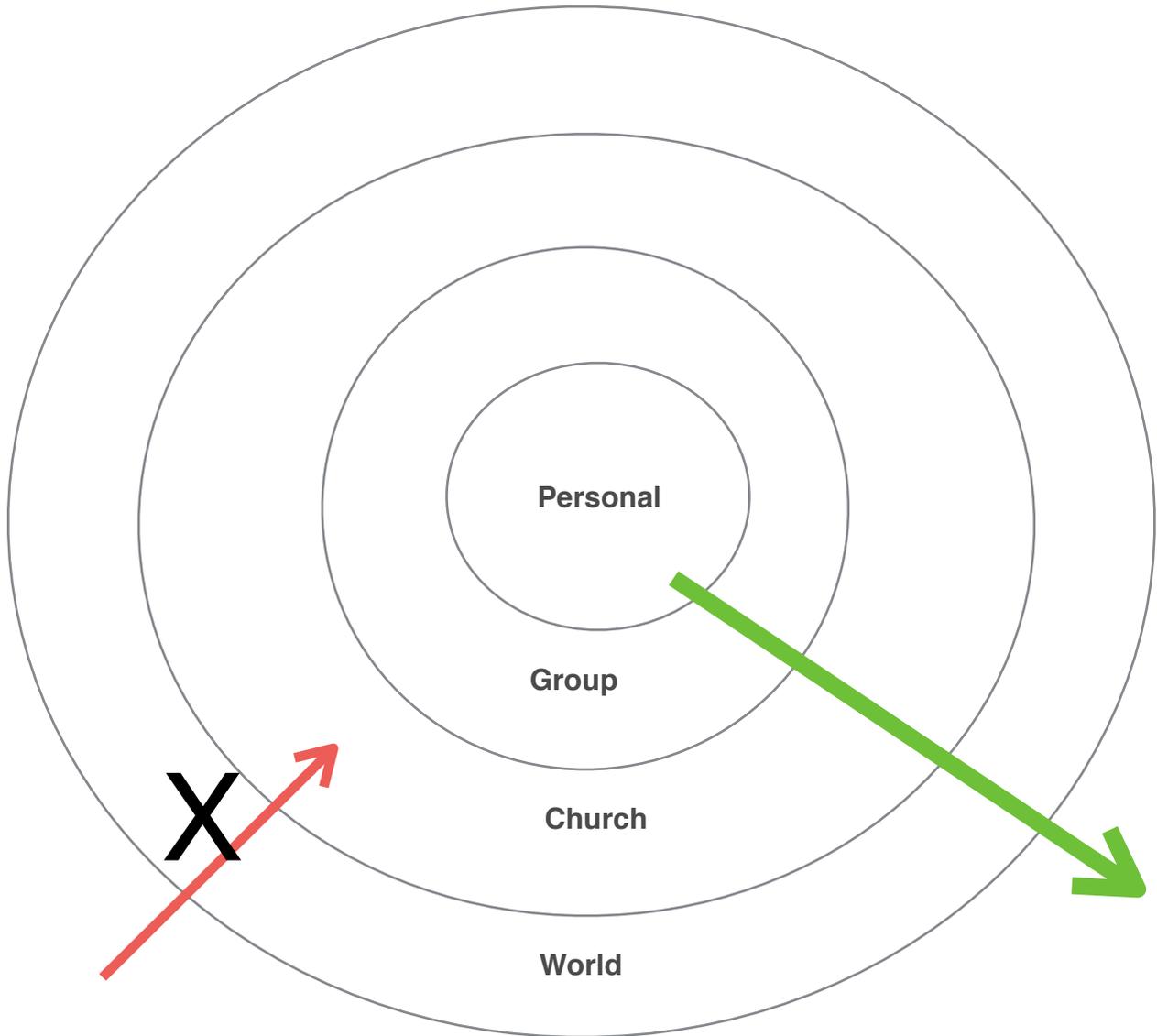
Type of Soil	Why?	How?
<p><b>Thorns (v7)</b></p>	<p><i>We can hear God's word but it's choked by either the good or bad things of life (v14)</i></p>	<p><b>What good and/or bad things do you find most distracting?</b>  <i>In our busy affluent lives there are so many good and bad things that can distract us from spending time reading, hearing and studying God's word. For each of us there will be different things such as work, the busyness of family life, social lives, leisure etc. In many cases these are good things, gifts that God has given us to enjoy. The danger is that these good things become distractions.</i></p> <p><b>What good or bad things get in the way of you being at church/ Home Group/ having a Quiet Time? What can you change?</b>  <i>This requires a bit of real honesty. Perhaps therefore it would be best to break the group into smaller groups of 2s and 3s to discuss this. For some of us our weekends are so full of things that we don't have the time or energy to be at church on Sundays. For others of us the busyness of work during the week makes home group hard to get to. Similarly there could be all types of distractions that stop us reading the Bible for ourselves. Hopefully the group can help one another to see what practical changes might help.</i></p>
<p><b>Good Soil (v8)</b></p>	<p><i>We will produced a harvest if we hear God's word, retain it in our hearts and persevere in obeying it (v15)</i></p>	<p><b>What will help us to retain God's word after a sermon, Home Group or Quiet Time?</b>  <i>Writing down 1 thing that you are going to change/ do because of what you've read/heard. Come back to that every day in your Quiet Time and pray about it.            Choosing 1 verse from the passage that you are going to memorise to help you apply God's word.</i></p> <p>What will help us to keep on obeying what we've heard from God's word?  <i>Focus more on application - see second session.</i></p> <p>What practical things could you do differently to help your group be better at doing and not just hearing God's word?  <i>Encourage the group to read the passage before coming.            Begin each week by talking and praying about the applications from the previous week? How have things changed? How can the group keep praying for one another? If you agreed to memorise a verse then can people remember it? How has it helped them?</i></p>

**God's Word to Them → God's Word to Us**



1. What was the message to them?
2. What is the underlying principle that still applies today?
3. Where or how could I apply that principle?
4. What are you going to do or change to apply this principle?

## Circles of Application



*How does the big principle of this passage apply to each ring of the diagram?*

## A.P.P.L.I.C.A.T.I.O.N.S. QUESTIONS

Is there any.....

**A**ttitude to adjust?

**P**romise to claim?

**P**riority to change?

**L**esson to learn?

**I**ssue to resolve?

**C**ommand to obey?

**A**ctivity to avoid or stop?

**T**ruth to believe?

**I**dol to tear down?

**O**ffence to forgive?

**N**ew direction to take?

**S**in to confess?

*Some of these questions will be more relevant to some passages than others. Don't feel that you have to get an answer for every question. Instead use them as a guide to help you see different types of application.*

*These questions are courtesy of Chris Green (Vicar of St James, Muswell Hill, London)*

## **Bible Reading Questions**

- 1. What do you learn about God?**
- 2. What do you learn about yourself?**
- 3. What do you need to repent of and change?**
- 4. Is there a promise to believe or a warning to heed?**
- 5. Does this passage help you see what you love more than God? Is there something that will help you love God more?**
- 6. Is there something in this passage that will help you love your church family or your community more?**