

# WEEK 1 -HOW TO READ PARABLES (THE FOUR SOILS)

## EARS TO HEAR

the parables of Jesus

***To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge.***  
**Matthew 13:12**

## OVERVIEW

Parables invite us into a deeper meditation, rather than simply spelling out spiritual facts. By pondering parables in this way, we are drawn into profound wonderings about our mysterious God and have the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak into our own lives in often profound ways. Even with the parable of the four soils, which Jesus does explain, we realize there are still many layers which need to be peeled back as we consider what the parable means. "Are we one of the four soils? Is God the farmer? Can we change what kind of soil we are?" As we'll see, this parable is a provocative image which should lead us to deep consideration of the values we've made central to our lives.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to have "ears to hear"? Do **you** have "ears to hear"?
2. What kind of soil is in your heart? How can it be improved?
3. Is the message of God's radical, upside- down kingdom going to produce fruit in your life?
4. Does your understanding of God's kingdom involve the radical transformation of the broken world around you, or does it boil down to you staying out of trouble so you can go to heaven when you die?
5. Is your faith today deeper than it was a month ago? A year ago? A decade ago? How deep are your roots? Are you growing in Jesus or are you going through the motions?
6. How much of your worldview and opinions right now are shaped by news networks, social media, protest movements, and angry conversations? Is your faith interwoven with a political ideology right now?
7. How much of your life is shaped by a genuine wrestling with the Holy Spirit and the words of Scripture?

