

DYING LIKE A SEED



Lesson 12 for
September 17,
2022

Some Greek people came to Jesus, and he introduced the plan of salvation like this: “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24 NVI)

Jesus was referring to His redeeming death, but this also applies to the spiritual experience of every believer.



- **The process of the seed:**
 - Falling to the ground: Humbleness
 - Dying: Dying to self
 - Bearing fruit: Listening and obeying
- **Hindrances to growth:**
 - Self-sufficiency
 - Replacements



THE PROCESS OF THE SEED

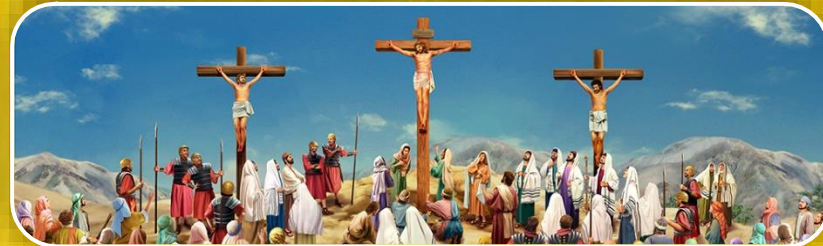
FALLING TO THE GROUND: HUMBLENESS

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” (Philippians 2:5)

What is the “mind” of Jesus that Paul encouraged us to have?

Jesus “humbled Himself” (Phlp. 2:8). He renounced his rights as the governor of the universe. He became a servant of humans and died on the cross (Phlp. 2:6-8).

Renunciation and service preceded His redeeming death. What are you willing to renounce? Are you willing to serve others like Jesus did?



Many times, humbling ourselves and renouncing our rights involves subjecting ourselves to the crucible.

DYING: DYING TO SELF

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1)



A sacrifice involved the death of an animal. Our sacrifices involve the death of self. Our sinful thoughts and desires must die (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).



What will change after we offer ourselves as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God” (see Rom. 12:2)?

A renewed mind and an experimental knowledge of God’s will for our lives.

Every sacrifice has a cost, a crucible. The death of self is painful. However, it’s also indispensable to have a new mind, a mind that understands “the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5).

BEARING FRUIT: LISTENING AND OBEYING

"Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10 NIV)

1 Samuel chapters 2 and 3 tell the story of three different people who heard the voice of wisdom and responded quiet differently.



The sons of Eli heard their father and didn't obey him
(1S. 2:22-25)



Eli heard the voice of the prophet and obeyed partially
(1S. 2:27-36; 3:13)



Samuel heard God's voice and obeyed Him
(1S. 3:10-11, 15-19)

The Holy Spirit expects a response when He talks to us. We must not silence His voice. He's sharing God's will for us. Our response must always be obedience.

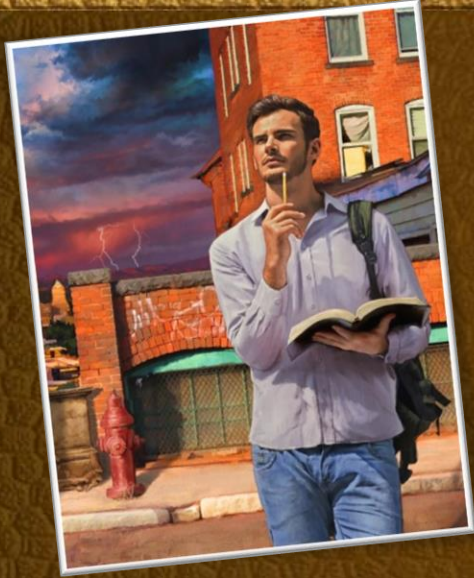




HINDRANCES TO GROWTH

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

“Saul said, ‘When I saw that the people were scattered from me [...] then I said, the Philistines will now come down on me [...] Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.’” (1 Samuel 13:11-12)



We must trust God’s Word when making decisions. Trusting ourselves instead is a source of trouble.

That happened to Eve (Genesis 3:6), and the consequences were terrible. Let’s analyze Saul’s case (1S. 13:11-12).

1. He observed (“I saw”)
2. He assessed (“I said”)
3. He acted (“I felt compelled”)

Saul had received precise instructions from God, but he was afraid (1S. 10:8; 13:8). He was led by his own feelings and created a different plan that was supposed to “improve” God’s. He failed because he trusted himself.



REPLACEMENTS

"The angel told me to give Zerubbabel this message from the Lord: 'You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my Spirit.'" (Zechariah 4:6 GNT)

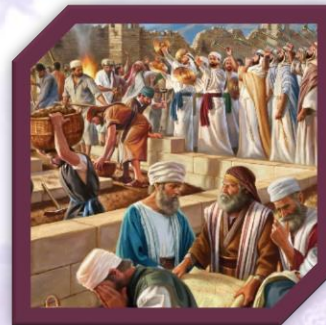
The seed must face many troubles after falling to the ground and dying (for example, severe weather).



As we grow spiritually, the spiritual "fruit" will depend on how we handle those troubles. The only sure way is to trust God's plan.

However, we tend to seek replacements: human logic, our own experience, denying the issues...

Zerubbabel faced many issues when rebuilding the temple. He didn't trust his own strength but trusted God instead. God encourages us to trust His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit (Zec. 4:6-9).



“We need to understand how necessary it is that we die to self. Self-crucifixion will place souls on vantage ground. I entreat those [of you] who profess to be Christians to die to self that you may be stirred with a new life by the Holy Spirit's power. Satan is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. Daily we need the converting power of God, or we cannot walk in the footprints of Christ. As the mind is enlightened in regard to what is purity and sanctification, and the heart responds to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, a daily conversion will be the result.”