

WHERE DO I STAND?

LESSON 171 → Luke 8:4-15

Her friend was the one who needed salvation, yet Avery felt the need to examine her own heart.



Avery groaned inwardly. She had asked Zoey to spend the night with her, and now Dad was getting out his Bible for family worship. What will Zoey think? She'll probably think we're really strange, Avery answered her own thoughts. I don't think her family reads and prays together.

"Come on, Avery. Let's go to your room and listen to that new song on your iPod," Zoey said, not noticing the family gathering in the living room.

"Uh, Zoey . . . I think it's time for our family devotions. Would you like to join us?" Avery asked, hoping Zoey wouldn't notice her red face.

Zoey looked a little blank, but she shrugged and sat down beside Avery on the couch. "What do I have to do?" she whispered.

"Nothing, just listen while my dad reads the Bible. It won't take too long," Avery whispered back, hoping that that was the truth.

"Tonight we're going to hear a story Jesus told while He was on earth. It's found in the eighth chapter of Luke." Avery's dad settled himself into the recliner. Looking down at the open Bible on his knees, he began to read. "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; . . ."

Oh, the parable of the sower, Avery thought. As she listened to the story of the seeds and the different types of ground they fell upon, she wondered if Zoey understood any of it. Avery knew that Zoey didn't come from a Christian home. Zoey maybe doesn't know that the different kinds of ground are supposed to be like people who hear the Word of God, Avery thought with a



HELP ME RECEIVE YOUR WORD, JESUS.

All my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. — Ezekiel 3:10

flicker of amusement. She is probably wondering why this story about farming is in the Bible!

“That’s an interesting story,” Zoey commented politely in the brief pause that followed the conclusion of the parable.

“It’s more than just a story, Zoey,” Mr. Holland said with a smile. “It is called a parable. It’s a type of illustration Jesus used to help people understand what He was trying to teach them. In this case, the seed is compared to the Word of God, the Bible. The different kinds of ground represent the different kinds of people who hear the Word of God. Some accept it, others reject it, some go along with it only for a while, and others let that ‘seed’ go deep into their hearts and begin to grow.”

“I’ve never heard this part of the Bible before,” Zoey said thoughtfully. “But it seems pretty important.”

Avery shifted against the cushions restlessly. She hoped her dad wouldn’t say too much more. She didn’t want Zoey to feel uncomfortable or be embarrassed.

But Zoey didn’t look embarrassed. She looked interested as Avery’s dad replied, “It is important, Zoey. We have to hear and understand, or Satan may trick us into thinking other things are more important.”

“How does a person know which type of soil he is?” Zoey asked, looking from Avery to her dad. When Avery didn’t answer, her dad spoke again.

“A person can choose which soil he will be. When we hear God’s Word, we must decide if we will believe it and act upon it. If we don’t, the devil will steal it away, and we will lose that opportunity to become a Christian.”

There was a moment of silence in the living room. Avery stole a look at her friend. Zoey seemed a little troubled, and now she stared at the floor

in front of her. “That sounds pretty serious,” she said.

“It is serious, Zoey. Have you ever heard that Christ died on the Cross to save you from your sins?” Avery’s dad asked.

“No . . . I used to go to Sunday school sometimes, but I never heard that,” Zoey replied, looking up.

Avery had heard about it all her life, it seemed. In fact she had been saved when she was a little girl. But that seemed so long ago.

Suddenly Avery forgot all about her dad and Zoey sitting there beside her as a thought flashed into her mind. Was that seed still growing in her heart?

She had supposed it was.

She had always assumed she was still saved. But was she really? Could she be like the stony ground that the seed fell on and grew only for a little while? Had she let her own interests and things she was involved in “choke” the seed that had once been growing in her heart?

Her attention came back to her friend as she heard Zoey ask. “How do people get Christ to come into their heart?”

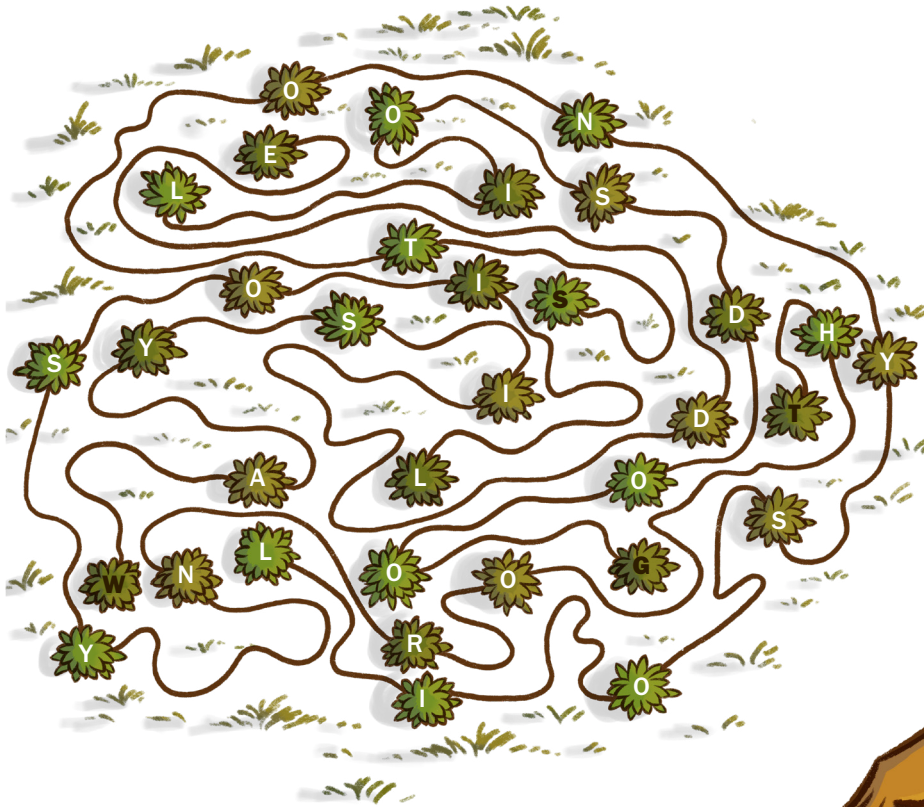
As Avery’s dad simply explained how to be saved, Avery sat silently next to her friend. Zoey needs this, she thought to herself. She needs to be saved. But maybe I need to think about myself. Am I bringing forth the good fruit that Dad read about? A lump rose in her throat.

“Thank you, Mr. Holland,” she heard Zoey saying softly. “I really appreciate your taking the time to explain this to me. I’m sure going to do some thinking about what you’ve said.”

I’m going to be doing some thinking about this too, Avery determined. I want to be certain my heart is like the good ground so I can hear and do the Word of God.

WHICH SOIL ARE YOU?

When the sower was planting the seed, it fell on different kinds of ground. There are four black letters in the maze below. Using these as the starting points, follow each path and write the words on the lines provided.



Put a check mark next to the kind of “soil” you would want your heart to be when the seed (Word of God) is planted.

“AND HE SPAKE
A PARABLE . . .”

