

The Parable of the Cheerios

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LESSON AIM: To better understand the parable of the sower. Jesus divided all people into 4 main categories and only one of those categories are made up of saved people. The other 3 are either intentionally ignoring God or are so caught up in worldly activities that they become people with good head knowledge but do not love God. Our aim is to move these people out of their current group and into the group of the saved.

PART I:

1. Review **John 21** but concentrate on **verses 15-17**: When Jesus is asking Peter if Peter really loved him, what point was Jesus trying to make to Peter? In verse 15 Jesus says, “.....do you love me more than these?” what is the “these” that Jesus is referring to in this passage? Some commentaries think Jesus is referring to the other disciples so discuss this as a possibility? Does that answer really fit the situation? Why is the term ‘commitment’ such a negative word to people? Is ‘commitment’ really controllable on our part?
2. If Heaven is such a wonderful place, why are we so anxious to remain here on earth? Does this attitude about heaven give any indication of our spiritual condition? Should we speed up our passageway to heaven, after all, it is a wonderful place and why not just become a Christian and then commit suicide?
3. What is a parable? What is so important about understanding a parable? Why did Jesus speak in parables? Why did Jesus seem to want to keep the Pharisee’s and people of that same nature from hearing his teachings and understanding them? Discuss **Isaiah 6:9-10** and how that fits into this parable.

4. Read the parable of the sower in the following books: **Matthew 13: 1-23**; **Mark 4:1-12** and **Luke 8: 4-15** and discuss any differences between the gospel accounts of this event. If the seed is the word of God and we are the soil, what are the plants that emerge from the seed?

Part II.

1. What concerns you most in life? Is it wrong to have these concerns? Are you concerned about the 'group 3' people? Are you a 'group 3' person? What are some of the characteristics of a 'group 3' person?

2. When we sin is it always due to our own choice? Are we ever forced to sin beyond our will?

3. Do you "love Jesus more than these?" What are some of the things that keep you from loving God? Is there room for improvement?

4. Consider what a 'checklist Christian' is and is not. Discuss the varying degrees of heaven and the varying degrees of hell. Are there different levels of punishment in hell? Are there different levels of rewards in heaven?

Part III.

1. Discuss the parable of the Cheerios. What do you see in the person who chooses not to put the single cheerio's in the bowl? What do you see about the person who is held accountable for his actions and attitude regarding the Cheerios?

2. How can you encourage a 'group 4' person? What is our responsibility toward anyone who is other than a 'group 4' person?

3. Group 4 people love God however they still sin, right? If they still sin then what is the real difference between a group 3 and a group 4 person? Many of us try not to sin and fail so we try harder and we still fail and we are discouraged by that. So, discuss the idea presented wherein you are told to quit trying so hard and start loving more.