

THE REALLY GOOD LIFE!

(*The Life of Christ Series*)

The Gospel of Luke

SPIRITUAL CARDIOLOGY

(*Testing for Heart Conditions with the Word*)

The Stress Test

When physicians suspect heart problems in their patients they may request a stress test to help them see whether serious conditions may exist within the ailing person's heart. After attaching several electrodes to pressure points on the patient, they will need to either walk on a treadmill or take some medicine which replicates similar exercise stress. The physical exertion produced will cause pressure on the main heart valve that pumps blood from the heart to the rest of the body. The stress test helps the patient and their doctor understand one's overall fitness or alert them to the need for further tests to ascertain the true condition of the heart.



The stresses of life are like the heart stress test – as life's pressures exacerbate, our spiritual heart responds in a healthy manner or in an unhealthy way. A primary stress test of the Lord is His holy Word – how does our innermost being (heart) react to the Person of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible. Healthy souls hear, receive, and produce righteous lifestyles when they read and hear the truth of scripture. Unhealthy souls have an apathetic, antagonistic, or amused response to preaching and/or teaching of God's Word.

Stresses of this life always reveal what kind of heart we really have and whether the Word of God is where we turn for godly wisdom and instruction. If we discover that our heart isn't as spiritually-based, Christ-centered or eternity-focused as we thought, the diagnosis is for us to stop living in denial about ourselves being a Christian and humbly turn to the Lord Jesus for the open heart surgery we need to receive everlasting life.

The parables of Jesus about different kinds of hearts proves that only one of the four types of heart really has the life of God – the receptive, obedient, fruitful follower of Christ. What are the stresses of life revealing about who you really are deep down inside? As God analyzes the charts of your spiritual stress test, what kind of heart condition does He see (hardening of the heart/ 'wayside', irregular heart-beat / 'rocky', congested heart / 'weedy' or whole-hearted commitment to Christ and His Word, the Bible)?

Parables

"All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.'" **Matthew 12:34-35**

A parable (Greek / *para* – along side & *ball-oh* – throw down) is a picture or story that is ‘thrown down along side’ a teaching or doctrinal truth that either reveals more clearly or conceals what is being taught. In **Matthew 12:34-35** Jesus is quoting **Psalm 78:2** and in **Luke 8:10** He quotes **Isaiah 6:9**. Both references are prophetic warnings to the listening audience that parables will do one of two things – either crystallize what is being said to an obedient hearer or disguise truth from listeners who have no intention of obedience. God the Holy Spirit knows what people's hearts are like and whether they will follow through on what He tries to teach them and delivers it accordingly parabolic form. It is His gracious blessing and loving-kindness to both make scripture rich and precious to us who intend to obey, but numbing the minds of those with hearts all ready set to disregard the teaching of God's Word.

'The Word of God' Parables
(The 'Seed Sowing' & 'Light Shining' Parables)
Solving the Mysteries of The Kingdom
Luke 8:10-21

Soul Samples of The Savior
(Understanding the Ways of Seed & Soil)
(see also: Matthew 13:3-23 & Mark 4:3-20)

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.” **Luke 8:11**

'Those by the wayside...'

(vs. 5 & 12)

“...are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” **8:12**

HARDENED RELIGIOUS HEARTS

(by habitual trampling of truth)

Example: The Pharisees and religious leaders
(becomes adversarial to truth)

'But the ones on the rock'

(vs. 6 & 13)

“...are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.” **8:13**

EMOTIONAL HEARTS

(spiritual enthusiasm that only lasts in church)

Example: impetuous crowds following Jesus for awhile
(becomes ambivalent toward truth)

'Now the ones that fell among thorns...'

(vs. 7 & 14)

“...are those who. When they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” **8:14**

PREOCCUPIED HEARTS

(congested with worry, wealth & world)

Example: rich, young man who almost followed Jesus
(becomes apathetic toward truth)

'But the ones that fell on the good ground...'

(vs. 8 & 15)

“...are those who, having heard the Word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” **8:15**

PREPARED HEARTS

(that love to hear, apply and serve faithfully)

Example: the apostles and lady disciples (8:1-3)
(becomes abundantly fruitful from the truth)

Lamp Stand Lessons of The Lord
(Understanding the Ways of Enlightenment)

(see also: Matthew 5:14-16 & Mark 4:21-25)

“No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lamp stand, that those who enter may see the light. **For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.** Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever does not have, even what he seem to have will be taken from him.” **8:16-18**

Doers & Don'ters?
(Membership in the Family of God)

(see also: Matthew 12:46-50 & Mark 3:20-21, 31-35)

“Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.” But He answered and said to them, “**My mother and my brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it.**” **8:19-21**