



21 GRAMS

The Soul Struggle

#NP21GRAMS

Week 2
2 of 5
October 9, 2016

Bottom Line: We need to pay attention to what matters – God is primarily concerned about the condition of our souls.

Icebreaker: When most people say the word “soul,” what do they mean? How is this meaning similar and different from followers of Jesus?

Key Verse: *He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. . . . Then Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”* Mark 4:2-3, 9

Self-examination is good for our mental and physical health. As we grow older, health care providers advise that we take regular self-examinations and do a certain amount of self-maintenance. Mentally we are encouraged to rest and take breaks. We go on vacations to get out of our regular environment and relax. But what does it look like to do a self-examination of our souls? That is what Jesus lays out in the parable of the sower.

Jesus cared so much about this particular aspect of our lives that He made clear He expected the large crowd following Him to listen. He set up both the parable and the explanation of the parable with a repeated command, “Listen!” or “Hear what I am saying!” Why did He do this? Because He wanted to make sure He had everyone’s attention.

Jesus knew that as the crowds who followed Him grew, so would the people who followed Him only for the benefits He provides. But Jesus wants more for His disciples. God wants us to be happy and full in Him. He wants our soul to be healthy so that when anything comes at us, we can take it with joy. What matters most is not what we achieve or what we do, but the person we become. Once we become a person who is secure in Christ, we find the fullness that God desires for us. One way we can measure this is through the state of our souls. Paul wrote we should “examine [ourselves] to see whether [we] are in the faith.”

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight’s message, what stood out to you?

Dwight said we have a choice about the condition of our souls. Are we going to allow ourselves to have a hardened soul, a shallow soul, a cluttered soul, or a receptive soul? We need to allow God to heal our souls.

In Mark 4:1-20, why did Jesus give four different types of soils? What kind of faith is evident in each one?

Why do you think Jesus was so intent that people listen to what He was saying in this parable?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

If you had to say right now, what type of soul do you have – close-minded, emotional, divided, or decided? Explain.

How do we look closely at this aspect of our life?

What can you learn about your soul by devoting some part of your day to silent reflection? What benefit is there in pausing and being quiet before God?

Based on where your soul is right now, what is your next step? How does self-evaluation in conjunction with God’s Word and God’s Spirit guide the steps we take? Why do we need all three?

What are some steps you can take to grow this week?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together, as a group:

1. As you have thought about your soul these last couple of weeks, what has risen up in your heart? How can we help one another address the state of our souls? While we ultimately acknowledge that God is the One who repairs and grants growth to our souls, what part can we play in one another's lives to help care for our souls?
2. Thank God for caring about you and giving direction to you. Pray that you would care about the condition of your soul as much as God does. Ask that He would sustain you and cause you to grow fruit in new and increasing ways. Pray that as fruit is produced in your life, others would see God's work and glorify Him.

EVALUATION/ACTION **Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ**

Bottom Line: We need to pay attention to what matters – God is primarily concerned about the condition of our souls.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Day 1: Mark 4:9-13

Day 2: Mark 4:4, 15

Day 3: Mark 4:5-6, 16-17

Day 4: Mark 4:7, 18-19

Day 5: Mark 4:8, 20

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)