

# "Breaking Up Your Fallow Ground"

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*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. [HOSEA 10:12] [KJV]*

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## ~What is Fallow Ground? ~

**F**allow ground is ground that has once been tilled, but has gotten hard and lies in waste. This hard ground is waiting for tilling and to be made soft so it can



be prepared for planting. Farmers in Hosea's days had to till with mule or ox and plow, harvest by hand, weed with a hoe, and diligently seek God that He would, in His Grace, allow rain in the

proper amounts at the proper time.

Most of us live in a rural area and have been exposed to farming or gardening. As you probably know, the ground is plowed after the summer harvest to lay dormant over the winter months. The ground in the winter is barren with no plant activity. What if the fallow land was left this way and not tilled or broken-up? As you know the ground becomes crusty hard. This ground that is not prepared for planting will probably only grow a few weeds. Hope you understand what I'm saying here and you understand the process of planting. I want to relate this hard fallow ground to our heart today.

## ~How about our Heart?

Over a period of time while living in this secular world our heart can become as



hard and crusty as fallow ground does. But once the heart is softened, cleaned and planted with the right words, it will produce good fruit and not weeds. But when our hearts become hard, they will not receive the seed, the

Word of God. Weeds will continue to grow, and there is no market for weeds. Have you ever went to the store and said, "I want to purchase some weeds? You get the idea.

Sometimes we have to take a hard look at our heart. Is it fallow ground or is it ground that has been tilled and ready for the Word of God and ready for what the Lord has planned for our life? What I am getting at is, "that maybe we used to be better

Christians or Followers of Christ then we are today.” Maybe some of us have let our heart harden over time. Just as Hosea was addressing a nation of backsliders, maybe this message can apply to us as it did in Hosea’s day. We are to continuously examine our hearts. Because folks, as you may know, “it’s all about the heart.”

**~Are we growing in the LORD? ~**



We are to continuously grow in the Lord. It’s a proven fact that we are either growing in the Lord or we are backsliding in the Lord; we never stand still. Each day our knowledge and relationship with the Lord is changing. We are either in an improved, closer relationship with God or that relationship is slowly drifting away. I’ve used it before, but it still applies, the old Indian proverb; “we never step into the same river twice.” Life is continuously flowing.

Pleasing God is a matter of the heart. Sometimes we have a tendency to check everyone else’s heart before we check out our own. It’s a lot easier to look at someone else’s heart than our own. Most of us don’t even think to look at our own heart, but we are to examine our heart very carefully. This is the only way we will know if we are pleasing the Lord. Is our heart softened and ready for His will? I may be preaching to the choir, but I do know that it applies to me. As in my own life, I think we need to step aside, backup and look at ourselves in the light of Christ. And ask the question. Is my heart in the will of God? The very center of His will? Sin will and can, cloud up or short circuit the life line to Jesus. We live in a world of sin and cannot avoid its contamination. As recorded in Hosea, we are to break up and continue to keep the ground of our heart freshly plowed or tilled. It is an ongoing process, so look at your heart regularly.

**~Simple Understanding~**



The bible is written in such a simple language. A language anyone can understand and relate to. Such as the verse in Hosea, *Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.* [HOS 10:12] [KJV] We can all understand Hosea’s words about hard ground and relate it to a hard heart.

~Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) ~

Finney has given great clarity and definition to this Scripture in Hosea by saying:

“To break up the fallow ground, is to break up your hearts, to prepare your minds to bring forth fruit unto God. The mind of man is often compared to the ground in the bible. The work of God is the seed sown there, the fruit representing the actions and emotions of those who receive it. To break up the fallow ground therefore, is to bring the mind into such a state that it is fitted to receive the Word of God. Sometimes your hearts get matted down, hard and dry, until there is no such thing as getting fruit from them until they are broken up, and mellowed down, and fitted to the Word. It is this softening of the heart, so as to make it feel the truth, which the prophet calls break up your fallow ground.”



~ It's All About Repentance! ~

I looked in the Bible Encyclopedia and there was a comment on this verse of Hosea 10:12.

**“Break off your evil ways, - repent of your sins, - cease to do evil, -and then good seed of the Word will have room to grow and bear fruit.”**



When we plant our gardens, weeds are going to grow. The weeds are competing for the moisture, soil and sun. But as you know, you pull the weeds out, and let the good crop grow. If you don't pull out the weeds, they will take over the garden. Look at Hosea 10:12 again. *Sow to*

*yourself in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. [HOS 10:12] [KJV]*

There is no salvation without repentance. See what Jesus said in the Gospel verses below:

- *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** [MATTHEW 4:17] [KJV]*
- *And saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.** [MARK 1:15] [KJV]*

- *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* [LUKE 13:3]  
[KJV]

- *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.* [LUKE 17:4] [KJV]

### ~One by One~

As one writer put it; “Self-examination consists of looking at your life, considering your motives and actions, calling up your past and seeing its true character.” If our character is not as good as it should be? Have we made a change in our life to correct this sin? When you accumulate many small sins, together they add up to a lot of guilt and that guilt gets pretty heavy at times, makes it hard to function spiritually.



As Keith Green wrote; look at your sins that need to be repented of and cleaned up. Count them one by one and then do something about them one by one.


One example might be; have you stolen something from someone, if so, repent and then go make it right with them. Clean-up any guilt you may have in your heart. Ask the Lord as well as the other person for forgiveness. Let me tell you the story about one of my Christian brothers and what he did. I think it is a moving testimony of God’s love.



This Christian friend of mine stole a fire extinguisher from his place of employment many years ago. After keeping it for several years the Lord convicted him to return that fire extinguisher. He took it, had it serviced and cleaned-up; put it back in good working order. He went to the company; walked in the office and told the lady at the desk that he wanted to return a fire extinguisher he had stolen years earlier. The receptionist didn’t know what to do, this had nothing happened to her before. She called the manager, which by the way was this Christian’s brother’s ex-brother-in-law. He didn’t know what to think either. But the manager thanked him, and then took the fire extinguisher back into the plant. My friend had that burden lifted from him by the blood of Jesus Christ. Folks, as we have all said, “it’s a matter of the heart.”

This was just one small thing, but God convicted him of this one sin and he obeyed God and followed through on the conviction. I'm sure it was hard to face this wrong with these people, but he did the honorable thing. But, oh what a joy he had in his soul! You know we may be saved, but we do things at times that we need to repent of.

### ~Taking Our Eyes off Christ~

We can all take our eyes off of Christ. It's so easy to do in this secular world,  especially without the Holy Spirit guiding and directing us. Let us look at David in the Old Testament, "David was a man after God's own heart." But David sinned many times. Among his greatest sins were committing adultery with Bathsheba, discovered she was pregnant with his child and then had her husband Uriah killed. As



you know the story, David later took Bathsheba as his wife, but the child died on the seventh day. (2 Samuel, Chapters 11-12) And you all probably know David and Bathsheba were the parents of King Solomon. But David calls out for repentance and cleansing in Psalm 51. Let us take a look at this Psalm.

PSALM 51:1 *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

2 *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

3 *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

6 *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

7 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

8 *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

9 *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*

10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

11 *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

12 *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

14 *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

15 *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

16 *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*

17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

18 *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*

19 *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

As we look at what David did, we realize we are all sinners and only by the Grace of God are we forgiven of all our sins. Only by true repentance and forgiveness from God can we have salvation, joy, a free spirit, and live eternally with our Christ.



Having un-confessed sins in our heart will make it harder to have a real personal relationship with God. The reason a lot of people never experience God is because they haven't realized that they have to hate evil and then separate themselves from that evil and establish a walk with a Holy God. For God is Love, but He is also holy! We cannot come into the presence of God with sin in our life. So let us clean up our Spiritual Life and go into the presence of God.

**Let look at some of these sins.**

**Not Reading the Bible** – Get out that Bible and read it daily, over and over again. You can't get enough of God's understanding. Start at the beginning and go to the end as you would any other book. Don't let a day go by without reading the Word of God. It's our pathway and roadmap to eternity! *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* [2TI 2:15] [KJV]



**Unbelief** – Do you really believe what the Bible says? *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

[2TH 2:13] [KJV]

**How about our prayer life** – This is our way for a better communication with God. We



can't build a personal relationship with Him unless we pray and talk to Him.

*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

[JAM 5:16] [KJV]

**Love for Souls** – Look at your family and friends. Do you have a burning desire to see them saved? *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* [MAR 16:15] [KJV]

**Care of the Poor** – Do you know about the conditions of the poor around you, and what are you doing to help them? *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* [GAL 2:10] [KJV]

**Missions** – Do you ever think of missions in foreign lands? Do you know which ones need help? *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* [MAT 28:19] [KJV]

**Love of things and possessions** – Do you need all your earthly possessions? Can you live a simpler and a more modest lifestyle and in turn help further the Good News Gospel? *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* [EXO 20:3] [KJV]



**Bitterness** – Do you have a grudge or a bitter spirit against another? Get it

right before God and that person! *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.* [LEV 19:18] [KJV]

**Slander or Gossip** – Have you repeated things about someone, not knowing if it is true or not? Even to tell the truth with intent to injure is slander. Remember what your mother probably told you; “If you can't say something good about someone, say nothing.”

*He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.*

[PRO 10:18] [KJV]

**Lying** – Any form of designed deception is lying. Do not call your lies by any soft names? If God calls them lies, they are lies! *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* [EPH 4:25] [KJV]

**Cheating** – Have you dealt with someone in a way that you would not want to be treated? You are to treat others, as you would want to be treated. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* [PHI 2:3] [KJV]

**Robbing God** – Are you robbing God of His tithes and offerings? *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.* [MAL 3:8] [KJV]

**Sabbath** – Are you honoring God on the Holy Sabbath Day for the full 24 hours? Are you keeping it Holy? *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* [EXO 20:8] [KJV]

This list above is just a suggested few; you may have your own list. Search out any other sins that need to be listed. It's important we know what they are! "The First Step."

### **~Making it Right~ ~A Personal Story~**

In 1977, 29 years ago I was leaving work from the company parking lot and had an accident, I backed into a car. You say, so what, that happens every day. What was so unusual about this accident was that I left the parking lot without letting the owner know what I had done. Over the years I thought about it a time or two. One reason I tell you this, it shows the way your heart can be hardened over the years and then softened by God when under conviction. Then about a couple of years ago I started getting convicted by the Holy Spirit about this accident. I thought about it more and more over the past couple of years. Then when I started thinking about doing this article, and every time I did I couldn't read about it or start writing the sermon before of the guilt. Sometimes when setting in these pews and listening to you guy's sermons, God would convict me of this accident and tears would come to my eyes. I finally got so much under conviction that I had to settle it with the owner of that car, which, by the way, lives out of town now. I have



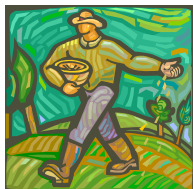
done a lot of things a lot worse than this, but God convicted me of this one sin. I don't know what else to call it but, sin. I did it and I wanted to repent and make it right with the owner of the vehicle I had backed into.

One night a month or two ago I got on the internet and as God would have it there was only one person in that town with his name. So I couldn't use that for an excuse anymore not to call him. I picked up the phone and dialed the number. All the time hoping that there would be no answer. (Can anyone here relate to this?) As God would have it, that person answered the phone. I explained to him what I had done and wanted to make it right with him. He graciously accepted by apology and said I owed him nothing.

There was a weight of guilt that was lifted off me. Only by the Blood of Jesus was this possible; a cleansing of the Soul, through repentance for someone that was wronged.

If you expect to reap a harvest, you sow to yourselves the right spiritual seed. So many Christians today, are sowing things in their life that are destructive and unprofitable.

Would you sow your seeds on fallow ground and expect them to come to harvest?



Only when the fallow soil is tilled and softened will it accept seed and grow. Just as our heart will not accept The Word of God if it is hardened as this fallow land! It's between you and God, no one else.

God doesn't use people who think they have it all together. He uses people who know that without Him, they'd be lost. Which one are you?

I want you to take a pen and paper out sometime today. I want you to write down at least five things that you can do to make yourself a better Christian or follower of Jesus Christ. It's a matter of cleaning the heart out, tilling and softening that heart so you can receive the Word and have a direct communication to our Lord. His line is always open.

Get rid of that guilt and be made clean in the name of Jesus Christ.

I want to get right with anyone here.



*I have gotten some information for this article from a number of different sources; internet, Bibles, dictionaries, and study materials from several different authors, etc. I do not take full credit for these writings since there are many. I did not keep up with this information in most cases in order to give proper credit. My comments and rewriting of the sources are in this article. I therefore cannot take full credit for this study. The full credit would have to go to Jesus Christ, the creator of all things. 06/03/2006*

*Dewey E. Fox, Servant of our Lord Jesus Christ*