

Sustainable Christianity: How To Cultivate a Lasting Faith

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Part 1 of 3: Sustainable Christianity – What is it? (The Problem of Unsustainable Faith)

The primary question regarding ‘Sustainable Christianity’ is, will you be _____ and _____ to the end of your days here on earth?

This is not about ‘eternity’. If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ for eternity, you are forgiven and saved for eternity – that will not change. (Eph. 1:13-14; 1 John 5:11-13, etc.)

What can keep us from ‘finishing the race’?

A close look at two parables Jesus used to address sustainability of faith reveals **three specific barriers** that can lead to unsustainable or unsustained faith:

Mark 4:14-20 ESV – Sower of Seeds

“¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Soil 1: beside the road – taken away by Satan

Soil 2: rocky places – receive it with joy; affliction or persecution; immediately fall away

Soils 1 and 2 – have not come to faith in Christ

Soil 3: Seed sewn w thorns –

Soil 4: good soil – hear the word, accept it, bear fruit 30, 60, 100X

Which one are you? Look back at your life...

Barrier 1: Thorns of _____ or _____
“...concerns of this life...”

Barrier 2: Thorns of _____
“...deceit of riches...” “...desire for other things...”

1 John 2:15-16 – ‘Worldliness’ Defined

“¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”

Desires of the flesh: _____ or _____

Desires of the eyes: _____ or _____

Pride of Life: _____ or _____

They are not wrong, in and of themselves. But when we put them above God...

Theologians have a word for this. It is called _____.

At the heart of every ‘sin’ is a questioning of God’s character, His goodness.

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(Continued)

These thorns “enter in”, “choke the word”, “it proves unfruitful”

Barrier 3: _____ for Trials and Difficulties

Matthew 7:24-27 NASB - The Two Builders (Given as the final message in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’)

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

Trials and Difficulties will come... It’s a fallen world. Bad things happen...

What can help us to finishing the race, and finish it well?

We need to have **two specific goals:** (back to Jesus’ parables on sustainability)

Mark 4:20 ESV – Sower of Seeds

“²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Sustainable faith: hears the word, accepts it, and _____.

Goal 1: I must become a _____ Christian.

Two types of Fruit:

- 1) Fruit of the Spirit – Becoming more like Christ (Gal. 5:22-23, Rom. 8:29)
- 2) Fruit of good works – Lives affected for Christ (Matt. 5:16, Eph 2:10)

Matthew 7:24-25 NASB - The Two Builders

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.”

Sustainable Faith: Hears the word, acts on it, and is _____ for _____ and _____.

Goal 2: I must become a _____ Christian.

How can we have this kind of sustainable faith? How can we accomplish these two goals?

I believe it starts with getting to know our Father’s actual _____ over what we think it is – getting to know God’s _____ over our own.