



## Leader's Guide - A Deeper Faith

Luke 8:4-8 | Pastor Jon Gerlach | April 19, 2026

### Session Overview

This session helps participants wrestle with why faith that once felt vibrant can fade over time. Using the parable of the sower and the surrounding context in Luke 7-8, the group will identify the 'rocks' that prevent deep spiritual growth and explore how to cultivate a resilient, rooted faith that endures beyond emotional highs.

### Session Flow (60-75 minutes)

#### 1. Welcome and Icebreaker (10 min)

Think about a time when your faith felt especially strong—maybe after a retreat, mission trip, or powerful moment with God. What made that season feel different, and what changed afterward?

*Purpose:*

To help participants recognize the gap between emotional spiritual moments and sustained spiritual depth, and begin identifying what prevents lasting growth.

#### 2. Scripture Reading (5 min)

Read Luke 8:4-8 aloud.

Optional: Also reference Luke 7 (Centurion, Widow, John the Baptist, Sinful Woman) to explore different responses to Jesus.

### 3. Discussion (40-50 min)

Use 6–8 of the following questions depending on time and group size. Prioritize depth, honesty, and application over covering every question.

#### Leader Coaching Sidebar: A Deeper Faith

- Help participants connect the parable to real-life spiritual patterns.
- Keep the focus on the condition of the heart, not external circumstances.
- Draw out both emotional experiences and long-term habits.
- Encourage vulnerability, especially around doubt and struggle.
- Move consistently toward application—what needs to change?

#### Discussion Questions

**1. Why do you think spiritual passion often fades after powerful encounters with God? What does that reveal about the difference between emotional experiences and rooted faith?**

*Leader Note: Help the group distinguish between momentary inspiration and sustained transformation.*

**2. In Luke 8, Jesus describes different types of soil. Which soil do you most identify with right now—and what evidence do you see in your life that supports that?**

*Leader Note: Encourage honest self-assessment, not idealized answers.*

**3. The sermon suggests that ‘rocks’ prevent deep roots. What are some specific ‘rocks’ (expectations, distractions, sin patterns, or assumptions about God) that can quietly limit spiritual growth?**

*Leader Note: Push for specific, personal examples rather than general ideas.*

**4. Looking at Luke 7, we see both strong faith (the centurion) and struggling faith (John the Baptist). What does this tell us about how faith behaves under pressure?**

*Leader Note: Help participants see that doubt and growth can coexist.*

**5. How can unmet expectations about God or the church lead to spiritual stagnation or distance from Him?**

*Leader Note: Explore emotional roots of disappointment and disengagement.*

**6. What role do distractions (busyness, digital noise, comfort) play in keeping your faith shallow rather than deep?**

*Leader Note: Help participants identify everyday patterns, not just major issues.*

**7. What is the difference between healthy doubt that leads you toward God and prideful doubt that pushes you away from Him?**

*Leader Note: Guide the group to see posture of the heart, not just the presence of doubt.*

**8. What habits or rhythms help cultivate deep roots in your faith—and which ones are currently missing or inconsistent in your life?**

*Leader Note: Move from problem identification to growth practices.*

**9. Why is it difficult to remove the ‘rocks’ in our lives, even when we know they are there?**

*Leader Note: Expose resistance, comfort, and fear.*

**10. What is one specific ‘rock’ God may be asking you to remove right now—and what would it actually look like to take that step this week?**

*Leader Note: End with clear, actionable ownership.*

#### **4. Application and Prayer (10-15 min)**

Invite each participant to identify one ‘rock’ in their life that is limiting their spiritual growth. Ask: “What is one specific step you can take this week to remove that obstacle and grow deeper in your faith?”

#### **Closing Prayer Suggestion**

Lord, thank You for Your patience and Your desire for us to grow. Reveal the things in our lives that are keeping us from deeper faith. Give us courage to remove what stands in the way, humility to receive Your Word, and endurance to grow roots that last. Amen.