



## New Year: Renovate | January 4, 2017

### Discussion Guide

#### The Scoop

Is it time for a reset, tear down, start over kind of year? Remember: Renovating takes planning and time. If you have a long view, you can build on a new foundation.

#### Key Verse

##### Matthew 13:3-8 (NLT)

*A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup>As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup>Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup>Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*

#### Discussion

Some of us have a green thumb and others of us don't. Either way, gardening takes patience, planning and preparation. It also takes the proper soil for each plant to thrive. Like most things, the foundation of good gardening starts from the ground up.

1. Share your experiences with growing plants or gardens...the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Shauna Niequist in her book *Present Over Perfect* talks about how she had gotten to a point in her life that her priorities were so out of alignment with who she wanted to be that she needed to tear down and start over with a new foundation. While a complete renovation may be needed, many of us don't plan and prepare for what it takes to both tear down and rebuild with a healthy foundation

2. Have you ever been in a spot where you needed to make major changes or adjustments? Explain.
3. If you are feeling this way about your life right now, what do you think you would need to do to plan for a major renovation?

The parable of the sower tells a story of a farmer whose seed lands in a variety of soils. Much of his efforts were for nothing because the seeds landed in a place with a bad foundation. The only seed that thrived was the seed that landed in good soil. Continuing with a bad foundation will always yield less than desirable results.

4. What characteristics, habits, or elements create a healthy foundation/soil in your life?
5. If there are things in your life that contaminate your soil or prevent you from growing a healthy yield, what might you do differently to start this year?

#### What's Next?

Not all of us are in need of a complete overhaul. However, take time to look for symbols of weeds or bad soil. Take the time this week to plan and prepare. Then decide how you will begin the tear down and rebuild process. What weeds need to be pulled, how might you till your soil, and what things would you need to include in your life to nourish your soil?