



Gardening: Pruning | April 25, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Pruning is the hardest part of gardening, but it also may be preventing you from experiencing everything you can in your faith life.

Key Verses

John 15:1-3 (NIV)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."

Discussion

For many people, the hardest part of gardening is pruning. There's something very challenging about cutting and trimming a plant that is already growing and flowering. For some, pruning could actually be a little like FOMO – we could be fearful of cutting off a branch that has the potential to grow into something, missing out on whatever it could become. But most professional gardeners would agree and say that pruning is necessary in order to grow the healthiest plants possible. If we spend time trimming, we'll actually have better, healthier plants and a bigger yield.

1. What do you think pruning could look like in your own personal life, not just in the garden?
2. When you think about the process of pruning as it relates to your own life, why might it seem countercultural or hard to accept? Does the concept of FOMO and pruning resonate with you? Why or why not?

Many of us struggle to adopt the process of pruning in our own lives. It can be very easy to continue saying yes to things, especially "good" things like volunteering at church or leading a bible study, even when our plates are already full. But when we say yes to everything, we miss out on the opportunity to invest enough time in the things that will bear the most fruit. In order to experience all that God has for us in those things, and to limit the "noise" and distractions in our lives, we have to learn how to say no and to prune even the good things in our lives.

3. What are some things (even good things) in this season that occupy your time? What have you said "yes" to?
4. In this season of life, do you feel overcommitted? Like too much is on your plate? Why or why not?

In John 15:1-3, Jesus calls himself the vine, and his father, the gardener. In the passage, Jesus explains how God uses the process of pruning in order to make Jesus a more effective spiritual leader. God cuts off the branches that are not bearing fruit, as well as prunes the ones that are bearing fruit, so they can be even more fruitful. There are things in each of our lives – things that we say yes to – that we do on a regular basis that do not bear fruit or carry any meaning in our lives. God's desire is to cut and prune those things so that you can be even more effective and experience even more meaning in life.

5. Have you ever experienced pruning in your own life? Said no to something so you could be more present in something else? What was the result and how did it make you feel?
6. What is at least one thing in your life you think God would like to prune? What is one thing in your life you could invest even more time into because of a decision to prune the other?

What's Next?

God wants you to experience life to the full – not life consumed by commitments that eat up all of your time and energy and keep you from being present and investing in what matters most.

This week, think about some of the things in your life that aren't bearing fruit – relationships, commitments, etc. Is there anything in your life that you could quit? Even if it's something good. Name something that you would like to cut or prune in your life so that you can be more focused, more present, and experience more of what God wants for you in this life.