

Principles for a Productive Life.

Pro. 24:30-34; Isaiah 5:1-7

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, July 24th

John 15:16 *"I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit"*

1 Cor. 3:9 *"We are laborers together with God, Ye are God's husbandry"*

The "Garden" is one of the many analogies God uses to teach us his purposes, processes, and plans. This particular analogy is used often in scripture and is rich with many spiritual parallels. **Productive lives**

(like gardens) require proactive Planning. (Pr. 29:18)

How much "space" will you dedicate to it? What do you want to grow/produce? (*spiritually, physically, relationally, practically?*) **How much room will you give to each?**

Planning is based on Priority! (Mt 6:33) Most give God the leftovers of life.

Lk 14:33 *"likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh* (Apotas'sōmai: From Tasso: to arrange & Apo: in place, time, or relation to) *not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple."* (See Mark 4:19; Col. 1:16-18)

Productive lives (like gardens) Require practical Preparation!

Few would expect a healthy garden from just throwing seed in the back yard; Yet this is how many approach their key relationships with God and others! Pr. 24:30-34; Isaiah 5:1-7

Many believe good intentions & occasional effort will produce healthy relationships; Then wonder (and worry) about the weeds~! (Eccl 10:10) Preparation enables us to work efficiently

so we can work effectively. The primary difference between the outcomes in the parable of the sower (Mt 13) Is the amount of Preparation that was put into the soil! (2 Chr. 12:13,14; Lk 12:47)

Proper Preparation of a farm or garden involves:

1. Clearing the Field (Life) This is the Decision Stage.

A. Involves an investigation at what's already taking up room in your life.

1) Will you make the hard choices now for a fruitful life later. Mt 6:19-21; Phil. 3:7,8; Ro. 12:1,2

B. Involves a considered evaluation of priorities. Pr. 18:1

1) We must sacrifice the "Permissible" (Fun) for the Productive! (Fruit) Heb. 12:1; 2 Tim. 2:20,21
"If a man therefore purge himself from these, (The "wood, hay, and stubble" of 1 Cor 3:11) he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared (heteos (fit); adjusted, i.e. ready) unto every good work,"
If not: we can find ourselves *"caught in the Snare of the Devil and taken captive by him at his will" Vs 26*

2. Plowing This is the "Conviction" stage

Hosea 10:12,13 *"break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD..."*

A. As Plowing "turns the soil" to expose what's hidden beneath, (rocks/roots)

Conviction exposes the *"thoughts and intents of the heart"* (soul) Heb. 4:12

B. As plowing breaks the weed's roots, so Conviction (truth) breaks the devil's lies!

Jn 8:32; 2 Cor 10:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:25; Jer. 23:29 *"Is not my word like ... a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"*
Ps 51:6 *"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."*

3. Removing what plowing exposed. This is the Application phase.

A. The plow simply exposes what was hidden. *Now the real work begins!*

B. The longer you wait to remove the rocks / roots, the greater the chance:

1) The roots will grow and spread. Heb 12:15 *"looking diligently lest any root of bitterness springing up..."*

2) The rocks will blend in and be forgotten.

Satan can build "strongholds" out of these forgotten "rocks" of false reasoning! 2 Cor 10:3-5

C. Many farmers make "fences" from the rocks removed from their fields.

1) These rocks (habits) that once hindered us can become a type of guard or fence.

a) The memory of past sins (and their consequences) can form a hedge.

4. Adjusting The Chemistry. This is the initial Fertilization stage.

A. Crops need the correct chemistry in order to thrive or even survive.

1) Wise farmers "test" the soil. 1 Cor. 11:28 *"examine yourselves"* (dokimazo: test)

2 Cor 13:5 *"examine yourselves... prove your own selves..."*

B. Previous crops can leave a "chemistry" that can hinder future crops.

1) The soil of many souls are left acidic (bitter) by past relationships or experiences.

Heb. 12:15 *"any root of bitterness"* (pikria: acrid, acid, poison; from pikros to pierce)

springing up (phyo: germinate) *trouble you...* (enochle'ō: crowd)

a) If we fail to identify and correct this, it can poison future relationships.

Heb. 12:15 *"and thereby many be defiled"* (miai'no: to taint or contaminate)

Conclusion: Most gardens (and lives) will just "fill up" with little planning and even less preparation. Since *"the whole world lies in wickedness"* (1Jn 5:19) and Satan is *"the prince of the power of the air"* (Eph 2:2) then some of these "worldly seeds of Satan" will inevitably drift into our souls and seek to take root (and bear fruit)!

Application: In Jn 15:16 Jesus declared: *"I have chosen you that ye should bring forth fruit"*

What Preparations have you made to be a fruitful follower of Christ? We can prepare by partnering with God "the Husbandman" Jn 15:1 Will you prayerfully partner with God by:

1) Clearing your life of any obstacles that are hindering your spiritual growth?

The presumptuous sins of Ps 19:13 or Jms 4:17

2) "Break up the fallow Ground" of your soul and ask God to reveal any sin or attitude that lies hidden in your heart? Ps. 139:23-24 *"Search me O God and know my heart!"*

Ps. 19:12 *"cleanse me from Secret faults"*

3) Surrendering to God anything (habit, sin, attitude) that's hindering your spiritual growth? (Pr. 3:5,6; Ro. 12:1,2) Jn 21:15,16,17 *"Lovest thou me more than these?"*

4) Examining and Adjusting the chemistry (attitudes) of your soul? Ps 139:23-24 *"Search me, and know my heart: try me, know my thoughts: see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

Harvest time is coming! (2 Cor 5:10) We have a limited "season" to prepare and cultivate the soil of our souls. (Ps. 90:12; Jer. 8:20; Eph. 5:15-18)