

Principles for a Productive Life.

Part 4: Protecting your “garden”

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Aug 14th

REFLECTION: We’ve been examining one of the Scripture’s favorite analogies to understand how to be more Fruitful or Productive in the most important areas of life. A productive life (*like a successful garden*) involves several important phases. We’ve already looked at the:

Planning Phase: *What crops (relationships) will I plant/cultivate? How much of my “land” (life) will I dedicate to these relationships? How much “room” will I dedicate to each relationship?*

Preparation Phase: For example, before the seed is planted you want to: Remove obstacles (*Decision phase: Establishing priorities*); Plow the field (*Conviction Phase*); Remove the roots and rocks left from the plowing process (*Confession Phase*); and Adjust the chemistry for the new crops. (*Forgiveness, removing bitterness*).

Planting Phase: Be intentional, informed, and aware that what gets planted in the soil of our souls: Will Grow; Spread; Bear Fruit; and Reproduce!

DIRECTION: The next phase of developing a productive garden or life is the “Protection” Phase.”

- Is. 5:1,2 “My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: ‘And he fenced it’”
- Job 1:10 “⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ‘¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house’”
- Ps. 80:12 “Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?”

“HEDGES” (Fences) ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE...

1. They Identify Boundaries. (Territory and Responsibilities)

Healthy Relationships (And Gardens) Have Clear Boundaries.

“Fences make good neighbors!” Boundaries help everyone to know where the “lines” are.

A. Boundaries Mark Territory

1) Boundaries help identify the lines of ownership and responsibilities.

This is what Satan was referring to in Job 1:10 *“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?”* (See also Ps. 34:7)

2) Clearly marked boundaries help eliminate border disputes.

Pr. 22:28 *“Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.”*

2. They Keep The “Crops” From Becoming Contaminated.

A. Some Types Of Crops (and relationships) Tend To Spread If Not Contained.

1) Grape vines will travel great distances if not “tied off”.

2) Grape vines must be directed (tied off) in order to be Productive! Pr. 22:6 *“Train up a child (hānak: to narrow {dedicate}) in the way he should go: ...”* (See also Pr. 29:15)

B. Some “crops” (relationships) need to be “exclusive” in order to be effective.

1) Spouses (SS 2:16; Jms 4:4; 1Jn 2:15)

2) Parents (Mt 23:9,10; Eph. 4:6)

3) Even some types/levels of friendships.

This is the principle behind 2 Cor 6:14-18! “come out from among them and be separate...”

3. They Protect The Crops.

A. Fences provide a “safe place” to grow and develop. Eph 5:28-29 *“...He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, (to brood, foster growth) even as the Lord the church:”*

B. If the fences are damaged or removed, it leaves the plants/fruit vulnerable.

Is. 5:3 *“I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:”*

C. This protection is Critical during specific seasons of development. S of Sol. 2:15,16

“take us the little foxes, that spoil (hābal: destroy) the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

1) One of Satan’s most effective temptations is to eat the fruit of relationships before they mature.

Premarital intimacy is like of picking blossoms before they develop into satisfying fruit! (1 Cor. 7:1,2)

2) Not all “enemies” are actual enemies:

a) Children, pets, etc. can still reek havoc in a garden.

b) Well meaning family / friends can crowd out or hinder other relationships.

3) Not all “enemies” look like enemies! (Wolves in sheep clothing Mt 7:15)

a) Most of us enjoy seeing a fox, deer, or raccoon, but not in our garden! 2 Cor. 11:14

D. Some “little foxes” to guard against.

1) Over commitment. (Busy-ness) *“Redeeming the time...” Eph. 5:16*

a) To Redeem implies to pay a price or exchange for something more valuable.

b) This is the whole premise of this series. We must “Redeem” time / energy in order to cultivate the “crops” that are truly valuable.

2) Stress/worry. Mt. 6:28 *“why take ye thought...” Phil 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; ...”*

miramnao: anxious {From merimna: distracted} Stress/worry distracts us from what’s truly important!

3) Fantasy: (Material, Romantic, Sexual) can lead to dissatisfaction and triangulation.

(allowing a third party {real or not} into your “garden of Eden”).

Conclusion:

What’s true of physical “fences/hedges” is also true of emotional and relational “boundaries”!

<https://www.boundaries.me/>

The Hebrew word for “hedge” is šûk; Which literally means “ to entwine”.

Relational “Fences” are made up of commitments and experiences that are woven together to form a shared “barrier.” This is true of:

➤ Our human relationships! “Companion” in Mal. 2:14 comes from hābēr: to knit together!

➤ Our Spiritual relationships! Shared commitments and experiences work together to form a “hedge of protection”. This is at the heart of the word “Fellowship”: Koinonia: partnership, fellowship, communion. (See Mt 11:29; John 14:21: 1 Jn 1)

Application:

Take an honest and objective look at your relational gardens. (with God and others)

1) Do you see evidence of some “foxes”? (Are you willing to chase them out?)

2) Take some time this week to “walk the fences” of your critical relationships.

Are there any “holes” where some “foxes” can get in? *If so purpose to patch the wholes.*

3) That means we must spend time “mending the fences” in our relationships with:

Honest Communication (Eph 4:15), Humble Confession, (1 Jn 1:9) and Sincere Forgiveness. (Eph. 4:32)