

Talks – Gardening – myfishbites.com

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PowerPoint

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God's Gardening Tips



John 15.1–8 – 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. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Gardeners World



You may be like me and not really into gardens. But I was watching Gardeners World with my Nan who secretly confessed she watches it as much to see Monty's dogs as much as anything else!

I'm all for creating natural habitat for wildlife to flourish (e.g. bees) but isn't big into gardening. Without wild spaces for insects we won't have half of the plants, wildlife and colour around us. I'm a huge believer in wild spaces, in the need for us to get into the wild and of the importance of gardens. We've seen around the world how people cleaning up a street with gardens or giving urban streets a little flourish, or giving people flower boxes has meant areas being transformed and people taking pride in the neighbourhood.

There was loads of useful info in the programme – from what plants to plant; where to plant them; how to plant them; how to water them properly; what time of year to plant; how far down in the soil each plant goes; what time of year each plant will blossom and show off its flowers etc. It was quite a lot of information because each plant was unique. But all the plants needed attention, help, sun, water and nutrition. In John 15, we find one of the Bible books on gardening. God loves the creativity of flowers, gardens and the world around us. It's one of the many ways God shows himself to the world around.

The First Reality Series...



In Gardeners World there's a section where someone goes and transforms messed up spaces and gardens and brings them back to life. There's also the series 'Garden Rescue' where the team go in and rescue / transform gardens. This is all about restoration, colour, life, things flourishing, people given great spaces to relax. It's all in God's heart – to plant, to grow, to restore, for things to come into life.

So God understands gardens. In fact the opening scene of the Bible (Genesis 1 and 2) is set in a garden that God has himself planted! The very first Gardening Series was made by God who called it, "Big Eden.." He then created the first reality TV series where man was put into the garden and God brought all the animals to man and got Adam to name them all...

In Genesis 2.8–9 we read – "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Later on we find that God gets the man to work in the garden to work it and take care of it (the Amplified says God settled the man there to cultivate and work the garden).

So we see the importance of gardens – both for provision and for pleasure. God made trees both pleasing to the eye and for food. I imagine it's a bit like the original Willy Wonka when they see Wonka's chocolate garden! In the Narnia series, the winter set with Mr Tumnus was hidden from the youngest actress playing Lucy so that when she walked onto the set she was genuinely amazed at how incredible it was. That is the kind of thing God did in the beginning and has something even more special planned for the new heaven and earth!



Willy Wonka

Narnia



We see that God is a good gardener and that he is interested in bringing life, health and blessing to whatever he touches – for his glory. We begin to get a peak at how God sees us, what he's done for us and what he wants to do in and through us.

God working in us for us



In any garden, it's not the plants or the birds or the trees or the neighbours who are responsible for the garden – it's the owner. Jesus says that God is the gardener and Jesus is the vine and God's people are branches off the vine. Jesus isn't just any old vine – he's the true vine. You can know the true vine as it's connected to God the Father. I recently weeded a tree in the garden where one plant had got entangled in a tree. It was hard to know which branch was from what – so I traced back each branch. If it was attached to the tree it stayed. If it was attached to the weed it didn't stay!!

This is how we know what is from God. Does it bring glory to God? Is it something that is either in the Bible or follows a Bible principle? At the very least it will never go against God's word! So if you're thinking about a decision, give it this test – is it in line with the Bible and God's character? If not, don't do it.

We also see how God deals with us...

In Gardeners World, they were doing some pruning. They explained about some old roses and the trimmed them back to about 30cm above the ground.

Monty showed us how we take the tops off some plants to help them grow fully. Another guest on the show demonstrated how she cut took some cuttings from plants in the ground, cutting them under a leaf and then removing that leaf. All this makes the plant more fruitful.

[The Amplified Bible says that God brings “even richer and finer fruit.”](#)

So it is with us. There are things that God has to remove but we shouldn't worry because if God says it needs removing then it's no good for us. And who wants things that aren't good for you! God also works to make us more fruitful until we are fruit-filled. This is the place of perfect love and it's something that God is always working into us. In Ephesians 4 it talks about the perfecting of the saints. This doesn't mean we'll be perfect as only Jesus was perfect. But it means 3 things – that we're made complete; that we fit and work together; being matured. And that is what God is working in us. He's working to complete us for his good works; to help us fit in to the right places and people at the right times and the right way; and he's maturing us as sons and daughters of the King. The Bible in Hebrews tells us that no discipline is pleasant but later on it manifests visibly as good God fruit.

We should always keep our eyes and hearts and minds fixed on the long-term God plan and see as God sees. This is about the truth of the Bible being a bigger truth than what we see, think or feel. Your words are very important.

Fruit-Filled?



In Matthew 7.16 in the old Bible version Jesus warns that you will know Pharisees and religious nuts by their fruit (bad fruit). The flip side is that we should be know for our good fruit. That is what God is doing in you when there are times you don't understand. Don't get me wrong – bad things don't come from God but he will allow and use things to shape us to make us fruitful. Being fruitful is that we effortlessly produce God things out of our life and not bad things. As Joyce Meyer says, an apple tree doesn't go around all day straining to be an apple tree – it just is an apple tree and produces apples. This is the kind of effortless work that God wants to work with us to produce. The Amplified describes 'fruit' as "evidence of your faith." So is there evidence of our faith in our lives?

In a garden, if we plant the right plants in the right time, in the right soil and with the right amount of care and nutrition, we can expect the plant to naturally become what it was made to be. That is what God does in us and helps us to do. An apple seed produces an apple tree. A God seed produces a Godly person. A Godly person is one who reflects God's nature and character. This for our benefit and for God's kingdom.

Connected



The next thing we learn is that we have to remain connected to the vine in order to flourish and be fruitful. Obviously if we remove a branch from a tree and its nourishment then the branch is not going to do very well... This is our life with God. Jesus says, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." My reply to God all the time is, "Without you, I don't want to do anything!" The branch needs the nutrition that comes from the vine itself. The branch can't go round saying to the vine, "I don't want your food – I'm getting my own food." It wouldn't work. Nor can we. The essential thing as Christians is being connected to the vine. We do this through the Bible, prayer, meeting together, worship and getting out there for God. You can bear fruit of a sort on your own but it won't be worth anything and won't last.

And there's quite a warning about branches that don't remain attached to the vine – they're thrown away into the fire! I'd rather burn for God rather than be a branch that just gets burned up! One way we can see if we're really living in God is that if we're not, we feel a bit empty or disconnected, or don't feel spiritually healthy. We may feel a bit blackened and burned up inside. The way back is to re-connect to the vine which has health and life and love and peace and joy flowing from it.

Jesus also says, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you."

This is a deep place of connection where God lives in you and you live in God. The Amplified calls this, “vital union”. I know a couple of couples who not only think very alike but are actually starting to look alike! That’s the kind of deep place God calls us to – except we get to look like him not him like us!!

But what an amazing promise from God. Out of this place of knowing God comes a place where the power of God flows through us. Sometimes we have to get rid of blockages, of sin, of unforgiveness. This helps God's power flow. But this Bible verse is an amazing promise from God to you!

God's Words In You

But the interesting part is that we not just remain in God but that his word remains in us. So what kinds of words are in you? Sometimes the words in me aren’t great! In fact God challenged me recently about the things I’d be saying – speaking to me from a Derek Prince quote on Facebook! I’d be speaking too many negative words, too much about what was wrong or not happening; too many times I’d complained, grumbled and not spoken life. But Proverbs 18.21 tells us that power of death and life are in the tongue. The Bible talks in the Psalms about our tongue praising God. Jesus also tells us to speak to your mountain (situation / trouble) about God and not speak to God about your mountain.

[“This the confidence we have in him – that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if he hears us, we know we have the thing we've asked him for.” \(1 John 5.14\)](#)

So what words are in you? God wants his word and his words to be in us. Our words and thought life can be brought into a place that lines up with the Bible and God’s truth. Paul tells us to take everything though captive that comes against God’s will and ways and bring our thought–life into a place of agreement with God’s truth. It’s in this place that we can ask God for things and see them happen. It’s that place of deep relationship – a symbiotic place. Symbiosis is described as a “close and often long–term interaction between two different biological species.” In our relationship with God and out of that relationship we see things happen in our lives and around us. But it’s a place where we have God’s word in us.



In the pictures above is a tree that was broken when another tree fell on it and had to be cut back. An expert came in and said the tree wouldn't grow again. But I felt that God said to pray God's word over the tree so I did! The tree went from having no life to growing loads of branches, stems and shoots within a few months (see the pic below)! God's Word works!!



Growing



When a plant wants to grow it needs certain things – air, warmth, nutrients, light and water. But the light is no good if the plant can see the light but isn't receiving light. The water is no good if it's dribble of water or if it's unable to get the water into it.

The **roots** of a plant take up water and nutrients from the soil. The roots also keep the plant steady and upright in the soil; they "anchor" the plant. The **stem** carries water and nutrients to different parts of the plant. The **leaves** use light from the sun, along with carbon dioxide from the air and water to make food for the plant. This process is called photosynthesis. All this work is taking what is external and making it internal.

The work is internal and goes on inside the plant. The plant is anchored, takes in nutrients. It then carries that water and those nutrients to different parts of the plant and uses the light from the sun and water to make food for the plant. Given the right conditions and elements, the plant flourishes because of what was put into it and then because that works on the inside of it to produce life and then reproduce life.

That is the work of a Christian and is a great model of what God does and how essential the word of God is not just to know but a place where God's words remain in us.

John 8.31-32 – “...Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’

It’s the word you know that sets you free. So get to know the word. This is for our benefit – in this place of living in God and his word living in us, we can ask whatever we want and it will be done. We can ask because the word that is in us is God’s will so we pray God’s will. God’s kingdom come, God’s will be done is a prayer that God is committed and covenanted to answer.

So our gardening guide ends. In reality the gardening guide is a guide to revival because healthy plants always reproduce. In our garden it’s forget-me-nots that are everywhere along with loads of species of birds because they have the right conditions. To see God’s glory cover the earth and to see revival, the process happens through us as we live out life with the gardener and work connected to him. It’s inevitable with God in us.